

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sale Moor, Cheshire

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106345

Headteacher: Mrs D Penny

Reporting inspector: Mr J F Gornall
21257

Dates of inspection: 25th to 27th June 2001

Inspection number: 191597

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Old Hall Road Sale Moor Cheshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd. Fr. David Peters
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

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13723	Mrs J Overend	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Partnership with parents and carers
22575	Mr M Golds	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Equal opportunities	Key issues for action
8226	Mr S Birtwistle	Team inspector	Science History Design and technology Special educational needs	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
12394	Mrs C May	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Music	Pupils' welfare, health and safety

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is an average sized primary school with 189 pupils aged 4 – 11 years on roll. The school serves both the immediate Sale Moor area and also the wider districts. It draws from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds. The headteacher has been at the school for less than two years and the deputy headteacher for less than one year. Sixteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Twenty one per cent of pupils have special educational needs, including statements, which is again similar to the national average. There are six pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, one of who speaks English as an additional language. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of abilities but overall are broadly average. At the time of the inspection the Year 6 teacher was absent and a teacher provided by the local education authority taught the class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Holy Family is an improving school whose strengths outweigh its weaknesses. The headteacher and staff have focused attention on raising standards in English, mathematics and science following a dip in results in the national assessment tests. This is now paying dividends. Firm foundations are laid in the reception class where basic skills of speaking and listening, early reading and number are taught exceptionally well. This is built on successfully in Key Stages 1 and 2 by good teaching. Consequently, pupils achieve well as they move through the school. By the time they leave, the majority reach the standards expected of 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher and governors lead the school well. The cost of running the school is low. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading are high
- The provision and quality of the education for the under-fives is very good.
- There is a lot of good or better teaching.
- The school takes very good care of the pupils, promoting their personal and social development well.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent and the behaviour of pupils is very good.
- The school is very good at promoting positive attitudes towards learning.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of after school activities.

What could be improved

- The challenge provided for higher attaining pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Standards in information and communication technology throughout the school.
- The development of pupils' skills in writing including the provision of varied opportunities to use writing across the curriculum.
- How the school monitors and reports the progress of pupils as they move up through the school.
- Standards in music at Key Stage 2.
- The way the school works with parents.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997 and has made good progress in addressing most of the key issues identified in that report. Outstanding progress has been made in improving the provision for the youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage where there has been considerable

improvement in the quality of teaching. The reported underachievement of pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 1 has been addressed. The vast majority of pupils reach the nationally expected Level 2 by the time they are seven and a higher proportion than in all schools nationally gain the higher Level 3. The final key issue stated that an improvement was required in the quality of information contained in the reports sent home to parents. The school has only been partially successful in this respect but has designed a better format for this year. Linked to this the school has developed the quality of assessment procedures so that reliable and accurate information on pupils' progress can be passed on to parents. Since the last inspection the overall quality of teaching in the school has improved, particularly in English and mathematics.

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	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	B	C	D	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	B	C	D	D	average C below average D
Science	A	D	E*	E*	well below average E

The test results indicate that the school performed well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics in 1998. Since that time there has been a decline in test results so that the standard in English in 2000 was average, mathematics below average and science was in the bottom 5 per cent when compared to all schools. The poorer results in 2000 were adversely affected by a number of factors such as the class having a larger than usual number of pupils with special educational needs and being taught by a number of different temporary teachers.

The work seen during this inspection does not reflect the previous test results. Standards have risen in mathematics and significantly so in science. In English, standards in reading are well above average. The targets the school has set for 2002 are challenging but realistic. Pupils make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and reach or exceed the levels expected by age six in all areas of learning. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have made good progress and standards in reading and spelling are above average with a high proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 of the National Curriculum. Standards in writing are average. Standards in mathematics and science are good. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average, but many more pupils than previously are reaching the higher Level 5. Pupils reach average standards in geography, history, art, design and technology and physical education. Standards are not high enough in information communication technology (ICT) and music. Additionally the standards reached by some of the higher attaining pupils in some subjects are not as high as they could be.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of life in the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are friendly, very polite and show great respect for school rules and conventions.

Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils collaborate and co-operate effectively showing respect for each other and for adults.
Attendance	Very good. Unauthorised absence is rare and pupils are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is mostly good or very good. Ninety eight per cent of the lessons observed were satisfactory or better and of these thirty seven per cent were very good or excellent. Teaching in the reception class is mainly very good; as a result children make good progress. At both key stages the teaching in English and mathematics is of good quality. Introductions linked to previous learning are strong features in all lessons. The weakest element is the ending of lessons. On occasions plenary sessions do not bring pupils back to the start of the lesson. The teaching of many aspects of English is good, for example reading, spelling and punctuation but the teaching of writing is not as good.

At Key Stage 1, teaching is never less than good and occasionally is very good. Relationships within classrooms are very good and the atmosphere is relaxed but purposeful. Teachers manage and organise activities very well and maximum use is made of the time available for teaching. The organisation of the mixed Year 1 and 2 classes for literacy and numeracy lessons is undertaken efficiently. The pace of lessons is good. The effective and consistent management of behaviour is a strong feature of all lessons. Classrooms are interesting, happy and fun places to be.

At Key Stage 2 teaching is more varied, ranging from excellent to just one lesson deemed to be unsatisfactory. Overall, teaching is good and is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. Throughout Key Stage 2, teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects is good, with the exception of ICT and music. Planning is good, identifying clearly what is to be learned in lessons. Teachers use a good range of appropriate subject vocabulary and this results in the pupils being able to explain their work using correct terminology. The teaching meets the needs of most pupils well, including those identified with special educational needs. However, teaching does not always meet the needs of higher attaining pupils as well as it might.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and enhanced by many after-school clubs and activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Education plans for individual pupils are well written and regularly referred to and updated.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The school promotes clear aims, values and ideals, in line with its strong Catholic traditions. Knowing right from wrong, being tolerant of others and building effective relationships in a caring way permeates the life of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well; the support and guidance for pupils' personal, social and health development is very good. The way the school monitors and reports on pupils' attainment needs improving.

Parents are generally supportive of the school. However, the quality of partnership with parents is not as strong as it could be.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. A new direction for the work of the school has been established based on a shared set of appropriate priorities. There is a much clearer focus on improving teaching through careful monitoring and raising standards by setting higher expectations.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	They fulfil their responsibilities effectively and ensure all statutory requirements are met. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school knows the areas that need to be improved and is committed to the raising of standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its accommodation, grounds and general resources well.

The school has sufficient staff and the accommodation and learning resources are adequate. The school checks to see if it is getting best value by comparing costs of services and equipment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are happy to come to school and make good progress • The school promotes very good behaviour • The generally good teaching that takes place • How the school expects pupils to work hard and do their best • How the school helps their children to grow up and become mature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework given • Information about how their child is getting on at school • The way the school works closely with parents • The leadership and management of the school

About forty per cent of parents' questionnaires sent out were returned. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents. Whilst a minority of parents expressed doubts about the leadership and management of the school, the inspection team disagrees, finding it to be good. The school is much more focused in its approach to evaluating its own effectiveness and has set the right priorities. The quality of teaching is at least good and standards are rising. The school promotes excellent attitudes amongst the pupils and behaviour is very good. The inspection team does, however, agree with parents that more can be done to ensure a greater consistency in the quality and amount of homework provided for pupils. Parents should also be better informed of their children's progress. The headteacher and staff should now explore further ways of developing a partnership approach to listening and responding to suggestions or concerns made by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of children on entry to the reception class varies widely. Overall, it is broadly average. Provision in the reception class has improved considerably since the last inspection and now provides a very good foundation for the children's learning. The quality of the teaching is very good. By the end of the reception year, most pupils have knowledge, skills and understanding above that expected nationally in all areas of learning. Overall children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and reach or exceed the levels expected by age six.
2. With regard to standards it is important to note that the work seen during this inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2, does not reflect the previous test results for 2000. Standards have risen in mathematics and significantly so in science. In English, standards in reading are well above average. Pupils have taken the National Curriculum tests for 2001 and although results are not available as yet, it is likely they will reflect the inspection findings. The targets the school has set for 2002 are challenging but realistic.
3. By the end of Key Stage 1 in English, most pupils have made good progress so that standards in reading and spelling are above average with a high proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 of the National Curriculum. In the infant classes, pupils read fluently and with good expression. All pupils take reading books home and most are supported well by parents or relatives who regularly listen to them read. Standards in writing are satisfactory. Most pupils can write simple sentences with the most common words spelt correctly and with basic punctuation. Test results for the year 2000 show that standards for 7 year olds are above the national average in reading and broadly average in writing. At Key Stage 2, standards are broadly in line with those found nationally. Good progress in reading is maintained throughout the juniors and standards are above average. Pupils' writing skills are satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, however, opportunities are limited for pupils to develop sustained pieces of writing developing style or purpose.
4. Since the last inspection the school has enthusiastically adopted the National Numeracy Strategy and this has had a positive effect on teachers' expectations and the standards pupils achieve. Pupils in Year Two attain good standards. Pupils in Year Six attain the standards expected for their age in numeracy and all other areas of mathematics. At Key Stage 1 the pupils are encouraged to develop an enthusiasm for the subject which results in them making good progress in learning basic number skills. Since the previous inspection attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 1 has improved. By the age of seven pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100, they can recognise and find simple fractions and understand the operation of addition and are beginning to realise that addition can be done in any order.

At Key Stage 2, by the time pupils reach the age of eleven they can work out calculations in their heads quickly. They possess a range of mental strategies to apply to number problems. Nearly all pupils show a good understanding of percentages and fractions. At Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress, but good planning by the teachers ensures that higher attaining pupils make good progress.

5. In science, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 continue to be good. The vast majority of pupils attain Level 2, the level expected of pupils of this age, and many reach Level 3. The school's performance is high in comparison with the national average for all schools. In one class, Year 2 pupils were recording their impressive knowledge of plants, many using the life cycle to confidently illustrate that knowledge. At the same time, Year 1 pupils were discussing what plants need for successful germination and growth, and were planting seeds in order to test their ideas. At Key Stage 2 in the last three years, standards in science have fallen to a point where they were well below the national average when results were last published. In response to this, the Governing Body, the headteacher and all staff have recognised the need for massive improvement, and have worked very hard to put a range of important measures into effect. As a result, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are now in line with the expected level. This marks a significant improvement, and a reversal to the downward trend. In Key Stage 2, most children are making satisfactory progress. However, whilst those pupils identified as having special educational needs are making good progress, the higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged by the work set for them.
6. Across the school, pupils reach average standards in most other subjects of the curriculum. Standards in art, history, geography, design and technology and physical education are typical of those found in most other schools. Pupils do not do as well as they should in ICT and standards are unsatisfactory. Additionally in music at Key Stage 2, standards are below that expected nationally.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards and their progress is good. This is mainly due to the targeted support they receive from their teachers and the skilled classroom assistants. In subjects other than English and mathematics, higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they should because the work provided for them is insufficiently challenging.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils' excellent attitudes, relationships and very high standards of behaviour and personal development are strengths of the school. This makes a significant contribution to their attainment, progress and the quality of life in the school.
9. Children in the Reception class have excellent attitudes to learning. They have particularly impressive listening skills as seen when they were learning

to use the 'Roamer' (a computerised toy) when they listened to the instructions very carefully and carried them out with great accuracy. In the music lesson observed they listened so well that they quickly understood low and high notes. They are very enthusiastic learners who come into class happily and move confidently from one activity to another. They demonstrate very high levels of independence and cooperative skills as illustrated when they sensibly practised throwing and catching working in pairs in physical education.

10. Pupils in both key stages are very enthusiastic learners who are eager to participate in all aspects of school life. They respond very well to their teachers and to each other. They show great interest in their lessons, exemplified by a Year 5 numeracy lesson where the task involved doing sums using a pizza menu for inspiration and all the pupils responded with enthusiasm supporting and encouraging each other. A further example is in physical education where all pupils try their best in lessons and are willing to support each other. Following short demonstrations of sequences of movement performed by individual pupils, others pupils who are watching will spontaneously clap to acknowledge their efforts.
11. The children are very well behaved. They are friendly, very polite and enjoy being helpful. They show great respect for school rules and conventions, for example, when they are quiet and respectful for assemblies and prayer times. Lunch in the hall is a pleasant social occasion and behaviour in the playground is good natured. The children move around the school in an orderly and sensible manner. Behaviour in the vast majority of lessons supports and enhances the learning process because it enables pupils to listen to instructions carefully and concentrate on the subsequent task. There have been no exclusions in the last twelve months.
12. The school actively promotes pupils' personal development. Pupils can co-operate and collaborate very effectively. For example, they show respect for others when they are expressing opinions or sharing their work. They show kindness in looking after others and demonstrate responsibility when carrying out their jobs such as when the Year 6 pupils look after reception children at lunch or break time. The children's response to charity appeals is commendable, as shown by their raising of over £1000 in a sponsored event for their link school in The Cameroon.
13. Pupils' attendance rate is very good and well above the national average. Unauthorised absence is rare and pupils are punctual. This allows a very rapid start to the school day and there is little time wasted. This all contributes to the children's learning as lessons get underway quickly.
14. Overall the school has maintained its high standards in these aspects and even improved them since the last inspection. Parents' very positive views of the school's success in promoting pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are fully justified.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching across the school is better now than it was during the time of the last inspection. There is far less unsatisfactory teaching now and the percentage of very good and better teaching has risen from 3 per cent to 37 per cent. Overall teaching is now mainly good or better and, as a result, is a particular strength of the school. Prior to the inspection, parents commented positively about the quality of teaching in school and the inspection team agrees with their comments.
16. In terms of early years education there has been a marked and significant improvement in teaching since the time of the last inspection. Teaching in the Reception class is mainly very good or excellent. At Key Stage 1 the teaching is never less than good and occasionally it is very good. One lesson in music was judged to be excellent. At Key Stage 2 teaching is more varied, ranging from excellent to just one lesson deemed to be unsatisfactory. Overall it is good at Key Stage 2. At the time of the inspection the Year 6 teacher was absent due to personal injury and a teacher provided by the local education authority took the class.
17. In the reception class most of the teaching in all areas of learning is of a very high standard ensuring that the children make very good progress. The teacher plans a very good curriculum for the pupils providing them with a range of 'hands on' practical experiences in all areas of learning. High emphasis is placed appropriately on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy such as speaking and listening, early reading skills and on children's personal, social and emotional development. The atmosphere in the classroom is happy and relaxed and yet purposeful. Staff have high but appropriate expectations of the children. Both the teacher and classroom assistant provide excellent role models for the children who are treated with respect and sensitivity. Staff make lessons fun and the children are excited and motivated to learn in all areas of the curriculum. For example, in a literacy lesson the teacher used colourful puppets to help illustrate a teaching point.
18. At both key stages, the teaching in English and mathematics has improved since the last inspection. This is in part because of the growing confidence of the teachers to respond to the more systematic and rigorous approach required by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, but also a result of higher expectations of pupils' attainment. For example, teachers' plans for lessons are detailed and cater for differing attainment levels within classes. Teachers have improved their knowledge and understanding of the subjects and the requirements of both strategies. Many activities are sequenced over a period of time to reinforce and support pupils' learning. In all lessons observed the teachers made a point of reminding the pupils how today's work linked with previous work that had been undertaken. This process encouraged pupils to think back and recall previous learning points, to enable them to quickly understand the purpose and content of today's lesson.

Introductions to lessons were strong features in all lessons observed at both key stages. The weakest element tended to be the ending or plenary session, which on occasions did not always bring pupils back to the start of the lesson to reinforce the initial aims and check whether they had been achieved.

19. In Key Stage 1, the good teaching is characterised by the establishment of very good relationships in which pupils feel relaxed and sufficiently confident to express themselves in front of others and their teacher. Teachers manage their classes efficiently and they organise activities very well; as a result, little of the time available for teaching is wasted. For example, learning resources and equipment are always set out before lessons begin and good routines have been established so that pupils know exactly where to sit for certain activities. This is particularly noticeable in the effective way the two teachers responsible for the mixed Year 1 and 2 classes co-operate and organise their literacy and numeracy lessons. The pace of lessons is good and teachers use a range of effective questioning strategies to elicit thoughtful responses from the pupils. Classrooms are interesting, happy and fun places to be. The effective and consistent management of behaviour is a strong feature of all lessons.
20. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features. The teaching is particularly strong in Year 5 and evidence from previous work in pupils' books suggests it is strong in Year 6 also. Throughout the key stage teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, with the exception ICT and music is good. For example, in science, the teaching of the methods of scientific enquiry is strong as in Year 4 where the teacher emphasises and reinforces the key elements of a fair test when investigating the thermal insulation properties of different materials. Teachers use appropriate questioning techniques to ensure pupils understand what is being taught. Teachers' planning is mostly good, identifying clearly what is to be learned in lessons. This is shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. The teachers use a good range of appropriate subject vocabulary and this results in the pupils being able to explain their work using correct terminology. Only one lesson during the inspection was deemed unsatisfactory and this was mainly due to the unusually poor behaviour displayed by a small minority of Year 4 pupils. Whilst the teaching of many aspects of English is good, for example reading, spelling and punctuation, the teaching of writing is not as strong. Writing lacks imagination and pupils (particularly the higher attaining ones) rarely correct or improve their own work or increase the complexity of events or characters. Across the curriculum few opportunities are afforded to pupils to write at length so as to develop sustained, accurate pieces of writing, developing for example, a particular style that meets the needs of a particular audience. The use made of drafting exercise books by pupils is a welcome introduction to support writing but at present there is some inconsistency in the way these are used. The teaching of mathematics is undertaken with enthusiasm and this helps to motivate and gain the interest of pupils. This is particularly evident in the mental and oral sessions at the start of lessons.

21. Whilst the quality of teaching is good or better in English and mathematics, it is not quite as strong in some of the other subjects of the curriculum. In most cases this is because, unlike these core subjects, the work provided for pupils does not take into account the needs of higher attaining pupils, of whom many are capable of working towards the higher levels of the National Curriculum.
22. In English and mathematics, activities are well pitched to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers take into account the specific needs identified in pupils' individual education plans. Classroom assistants are often effectively deployed to support these pupils, giving them close attention, monitoring their progress and giving immediate feedback. They offer lots of encouragement, celebrate their successes and this boosts pupils self-esteem.
23. Although the usual teacher for Year 6 was absent during the inspection, much was gleaned about the work undertaken in the class prior to the inspection from the examination of pupils' previous work and from discussions held with pupils. This indicated a very high work rate in Year 6 where much of the work is of very good quality and shows that pupils are challenged well.

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

24. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and includes all of the subjects of the National Curriculum. In addition, pupils are offered many opportunities for further learning beyond the school day in a good range of interest clubs. The school meets its statutory requirements for the curriculum, including those for children under five. Effective strategies have been established for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. This is reflected in the teachers' planning over the past year and the work found in pupils' books. In both cases the work provided for pupils is pitched at the right level for each age group as suggested by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement and the progress they make.
25. The vast majority of lessons are planned effectively to cover the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage Programme. Teachers' lesson planning identifies clear aims for lessons, and these are well prepared with appropriate resources being made available to allow full involvement for all pupils. Planning in many subjects makes good use of the exemplar schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. These are sensibly tailored to reflect the particular circumstances of the school. Literacy and numeracy are given high priority, and lessons are very well planned to meet the needs and interests of all children. The exceptions to this are in ICT and music at Key Stage 2. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT in classrooms are too limited, which means that pupils can go for long periods of time without using a computer. This slows their progress, and results in standards being

low because they do not get enough practice. In music, the lack of sufficient staff expertise is an obstacle to improving teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. The quality of the curriculum provided for pupils in the reception class is very good because it is well planned, thorough and is underpinned by an increasingly more difficult range of practical learning activities. This leads to a brisk rate of learning and the good standards that pupils achieve.

26. The school does well in planning for, and supporting, pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs. Their particular needs are identified early and their progress is carefully monitored. They are given good support in lessons, by their class teachers and by other adults when they are available. This support is effectively guided by the Individual Education Plans prepared for each of these pupils. These are reviewed regularly, and good links between home and school ensure that parents are fully involved in the processes. In their responses to the questionnaire and at their meeting, parents confirm that they are very pleased with this aspect of the schools' work.
27. In contrast to the good strategies employed for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs, the school is much less successful in its provision of opportunities for its higher attaining pupils. In literacy and numeracy, planning in lessons typically provides extra challenge for the pupils whose prior attainment has shown them capable of meeting increased demands. This approach is generally not evident in other subjects of the curriculum. There are too many examples in other subjects of children all doing the same work, when some are clearly capable of far more and should be stretched. As a result, the curriculum outside literacy and numeracy does not fully meet the needs and aptitudes of the higher attaining pupils, and this is an area which the school needs to improve. In this regard, the inspection confirms the view expressed by a significant number of parents that some pupils are not always fully challenged to reach their highest potential.
28. In some subjects including science, history, geography, art and music, opportunities for expressive or sustained writing by pupils, to reflect a particular style, purpose or audience are too limited. Opportunities for pupils to work independently, for example, finding out about more about subjects of the curriculum or undertaking research projects are limited. This is further hampered by the poor quantity and range of non-fiction books held in the school library. There are, for example, very few books on art and the work of famous artists, similarly a limited range of books about music or the work of famous composers. The quality of non-fiction books to cater for the needs of higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory.
29. By the time the pupils leave school they will all have had the opportunity to enjoy the same access to the wealth of extra curricular activities that are provided. All staff work hard to enrich the curriculum in this way. It is particularly noteworthy that in those activities which are traditionally seen as being either for boys or for girls, equal opportunities are provided; girls are encouraged to show their skills on the football field, and some boys have

begun to try their hand at netball. Pupils can also take part in a recorder club or singing group, a French club, a science club, or belong to a CAFOD group.

30. Effective arrangements are in place for pupils' health education. This area of the school's work has recently been reviewed with the local NHS Trust and has been found to be satisfactory. The school works closely with staff from the Trust in delivering its programme of health education. Aspects such as sex education and drug awareness are covered within the personal, social and health education curriculum.
31. The school promotes clear aims, values and ideals. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is, to a large extent, synonymous with the Catholic ethos which permeates every aspect of school life. The very good standard of behaviour observed during the inspection reflects the high priority the school places on moral and spiritual development. The principles, and practice, of what is right and wrong are clearly taught and reinforced. Parents wholeheartedly support this view. Rules and sanctions are displayed and shared with the pupils, who show that they understand their purpose, and the impact of wrongdoing. Daily acts of worship provide excellent opportunities for spiritual and moral reflection on issues and themes with social and cultural dimensions, and pupils respond well. Pupils are encouraged to value the non-material things in life, and to consider other people's feelings. This approach is not limited to assemblies and can be found in lessons. For example, in Year 3 literacy the objective was to improve the pupils' skills in writing letters, but the choice of writing to 'buddies' in Year 2 to better prepare them for the coming year and their big step into the junior department was a splendid example of the school's caring approach.
32. Pupils also take part enthusiastically in charitable works, through their supportive links with a school in the Cameroon, and as members of the Children's Catholic Society.
33. The school provides pupils with opportunities to exercise responsibility. For example, throughout the school, class 'VIPs' carry out a number of regular responsibilities which help in the smooth and effective daily running of the school, such as submitting registration numbers and carrying important messages. Year 6 pupils willingly and conscientiously undertake a range of tasks in their role as prefects, such as helping younger children at lunchtimes and breaktimes.
34. Good opportunities are provided to foster the development of inter-personal skills when pupils are asked to work in small groups or participate in large group discussions. They listen well to their teachers and each other. They are willing, confident and often eloquent contributors when questions are asked or views are sought. Opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss and make decisions, such as when they take on the role of different interest groups to decide how to respond to a new road development, or when they offer suggestions about how to carry out a scientific investigation.

35. Opportunities for cultural development are satisfactory. The strengths lie in the development of pupils' knowledge of their own cultural heritage. Whilst some work is undertaken to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society this provision needs to be extended to better open their eyes to the diversity and richness of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The well-being and health and safety of pupils are given a high profile and the school is a very supportive community where children are cared for well. The health and safety issues identified in the previous report, regarding damp and crumbling plasterwork in the toilets, have been addressed. The Health and Safety representative is very knowledgeable and conscientious and the caretaker and a school governor ably assist her in this role. All staff are aware of the procedures to follow and these are implemented very effectively.
37. The school has a healthy eating policy, which is adhered to very well. Pupils are encouraged to bring fruit for a snack and bottles of water to sip throughout the day. Staff know the pupils well and provide good role models of behaviour. Relationships are very good and pupils are confident in seeking help from adults and older children. Children in the Foundation Stage are very well supported by adults in the classroom and by older children at break and lunchtimes and quickly grow in confidence.
38. Good behaviour is promoted very effectively both in lessons and at other times during the day and rewards and praise are often used well to reinforce this. There is an effective anti-bullying policy and a 'message box' system operates to allow children to convey personal concerns to staff or ask for help in a discrete way.
39. The lunchtime supervisors contribute effectively to pupils' welfare through their provision of playground activities and their concern for the children's well being. For example, in the very hot and sunny weather during inspection pupils were encouraged to wear sun hats or to sit in the shade. The behaviour of the pupils at lunchtime is very good.
40. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is very good. Registration takes place promptly and efficiently thus maximising the time available for teaching and learning. Even the youngest children are aware of what to do if they are late. There have been no exclusions from school. The co-ordinator for child protection has been appropriately trained and the policy has been recently updated in line with LEA procedures. Child protection issues regularly feature on the agenda at staff meetings. All staff are aware of what to do should a suspected incident occur. Child protection procedures are good. The school's provision for the monitoring of pupils' personal development is good. Teachers know their pupils well and display a high level of care and concern for their welfare.

41. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have some strengths but also some weaknesses and are, therefore, satisfactory overall. The strengths lie in how the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are monitored and recorded. The school is beginning to 'track' pupils as they move up through the school in a much more systematic way. The assessment co-ordinator has made a positive contribution since taking up the role last September. She has analysed all test results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and shared these with colleagues. These in conjunction with teacher assessments are used to plan appropriate work for pupils and to set targets for the future. This is having a positive impact in raising standards in the core curriculum. The introduction of individual assessment books is also generating useful information on the performance of pupils. As yet, however, there are no formal systems for assessing other subjects of the curriculum. Additionally, although improved, there is some variability across the school in the informal methods used to assess the performance of individual pupils. For example, the way pupils' work is marked and commented upon. While some teachers provide constructive advice to pupils about how to improve their work, this practice is not consistent throughout the school. These inconsistencies are reflected in the variability in the information that is passed between teachers at the end of each school year.
42. Assessment of pupils with special education needs is good, and their Individual Education Plans are very specific and effectively used. They conform to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, and procedures are implemented consistently and effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The quality of partnership with parents is sound overall but there is some weakness in the provision, which the school has started to address. Many parents and carers have positive views of the school and in particular parents are happy that their children like school, that the children's behaviour is good and that the teaching is good. The inspection supports these views.
44. A significant minority of parents have concerns over information provided about their child's progress, homework, how the school works closely with parents, leadership and management and the provision of extracurricular activities. Of these issues, the leadership and management of the school are judged to be good and the provision of extracurricular activities is very good. However, while the school listens to parents' concerns and canvasses their opinions, communications with parents are not always clear enough. An example of this is the 'parental access' policy, which over-emphasises the formal procedures parents are asked to follow. Several parents have voiced their concerns about this aspect.
45. The school provides good curriculum information so that parents can help their children at home. This has included information on the National Numeracy Strategy and termly newsletters with the topics for each subject to

be studied. However while some good use is made of homework, the homework policy is not adhered to with the same consistency in the lower juniors as elsewhere. This has given parents concern over the variability of the quality and use of homework.

46. Information received by parents on their child's progress is unsatisfactory. This has been due in the past to the inadequacy of assessments on which to base progress judgments and also problems with the report format. The new reports to be used this academic year represent an improvement. However, the report format is inadequate in English and Mathematics because it does not allow sufficient space to be able to tell parents all they need to know about attainment, progress, what the children need to do to improve and how parents can help with this.
47. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the school. A small number of parents help regularly in school and their attendance at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) functions, assemblies, Masses and performances is reported to be very good. The PTA works very hard and successfully to support the school through fund raising and so provide much needed resources for the children.
48. Parents of pupils identified as having special educational needs are fully involved at all stages, and the school has successfully established strong formal and informal links with them, in order to provide consistent support and exchange information.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The school has undergone significant change in the last two years. The current headteacher took up post 18 months ago and within the last 12 months a new deputy headteacher has been appointed. Additionally, some of the members of the governing body are new to the school. The headteacher has achieved a great deal in a relatively short time. She has clearly established a new direction for the work of the school but has also managed to retain and further improve many of its former strengths, for example, the very good behaviour and excellent attitudes of the pupils. There is now, however, a much clearer focus on raising standards by improving teaching, setting challenging targets and raising expectations, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher has been successful in improving the quality of teaching at the school by establishing monitoring and evaluation procedures including classroom observations undertaken by key members of staff, including herself. This focus on classroom practice has been further supported by the introduction of a very good teaching and learning policy. The quality of teaching is now a strength of the school with a high percentage of good, very good and excellent lessons. She has instigated a full review of curriculum subjects and their corresponding schemes of work including how the development of reading is managed and resourced throughout the school. As a result of the findings from the previous inspection, the headteacher has

focused attention on early years education and standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1, both of which have improved significantly. Through these changes, together with other initiatives, the management of the school has reversed the downward trend in the performance of pupils in the core curriculum. The school can look forward with optimism to this year's national assessment results.

50. A minority of parents expressed concerns in the parental survey about the leadership and management of the school. During the meeting with parents, comments suggested this was a result of the uncertainty about the amount of change taking place and the dip in standards last year at Key Stage 2. Two thirds of parents who responded to the survey feel the school is well led and managed, with the remainder being unsure. The headteacher is aware, however, of the need to improve communications between school and home and also to ensure all her teaching staff are consistent in the way they relate to parents.
51. The school's mission statement permeates the life of the school and its aims are communicated to parents through the school prospectus. The school sets out to create a happy, caring Catholic community where each child can develop spiritually, socially, emotionally and to his or her full potential. These aims are consistently reflected in the work of the school. The leadership and management of the school is successful in establishing a culture that ensures pupils come first, recognising their needs as paramount.
52. Senior management and governors have successfully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. These have been particularly effective in improving provision and standards in mathematics. The headteacher has raised the profile of the role of the curriculum co-ordinator. Teachers responsible for literacy, numeracy and science have co-ordinated their subjects well and benefited from additional time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and feed back their findings to colleagues. The management of other subjects of the curriculum is mostly satisfactory. Teachers, support staff, governors and voluntary helpers are given opportunities to attend in-service training and this has improved both their knowledge and their support work in classrooms.
53. The school now evaluates its performance in a much more systematic way. Performance management arrangements are in place in the school together with the setting of individual targets for staff. Through the analysis of data and self-evaluation strategies, such as the monitoring of teaching, management has identified the right areas to work in and these are reflected in the School Improvement Plan. The strength of the plan lies in the fact it is addressing the right priorities. There are, however, some minor weaknesses. The objectives for each set of actions are not specific enough and, as a consequence, the success criteria to establish when objectives have been met are too vague. The headteacher is fully aware of these issues and has plans to strengthen them.

54. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Appropriate governing body committees have been established with clear terms of reference. The governing body works effectively to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The governors are aware of the school's priorities, particularly in relation to raising standards of attainment. Governors are proud of their school, and make a strong contribution towards the positive ethos for learning that currently exists. The governors' finance committee, headteacher and school administration co-operate effectively to monitor spending and ensure efficient financial control. All of the recommendations made following an audit of finance by the local education authority have been addressed and implemented.
55. The strategic planning and management of all resources are good. With the exception of music at Key Stage 2, the school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum for pupils at all stages of their education; they are deployed effectively. Very good use is made of the range of facilities provided by the accommodation and attractive school grounds. The school has plans to improve the facilities for early years education by providing a suitable space for outdoor activities. This improvement is long overdue and was part of a key issue identified in the school's previous inspection report in February 1997.
56. Provision for special educational needs issues is managed well. The co-ordinator is thorough and well informed of developments in her area of responsibility. She keeps detailed, useful and up to date records. Resources have been audited and developed and available support staff are effectively deployed. Good home/school links have been developed, and there is appropriate liaison with other agencies, such as education welfare, social services and educational psychologists.
57. Since the last inspection significant improvements have been made to the internal accommodation, parts of which were highlighted as being poor by the previous inspection team. Standards of cleaning and caretaking are high. The internal decoration is good in parts and satisfactory in others. A programme of ongoing refurbishment has been planned.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. The headteacher and governors should now take action on the following issues:
- a) **Ensure higher attaining pupils are more appropriately challenged in subjects other than English and mathematics, and that they make better progress, by:**
- identifying who these pupils are and monitoring their progress closely
 - planning and providing more challenging tasks for them

- ensuring greater consistency across the school in the expectations placed upon them

(paragraphs 5, 20, 21, 27, 82, 88, 95, 108, 118)

b) Raise the standards in Information and communication technology (ICT) at both key stages by:

- making better use of the available hardware and software in school
- putting the ICT Policy into practice and using an improved scheme of work
- ensuring the Programme of Study for ICT is applied across the school
- making better use of pupils' knowledge and experience gained from home
- monitoring the impact of the points above

(paragraphs 6, 20, 25, 86, 91, 115, 116, 118, 119)

c) Improve the opportunities, range and quality of pupils' writing by:

- increasing the amount of time provided for developing sustained writing
- providing more opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences
- ensuring writing in subjects other than English is given a much higher profile

(paragraphs 3, 20, 82, 95, 101, 108)

d) Improve how pupils' progress is monitored and reported as they move up through the school by:

- developing further the work already begun to improve the monitoring of the progress pupils make as they move up through the school
- ensuring information is recorded and reported upon between teachers, classes and key stages

(paragraphs 41, 46, 85, 92, 111, 113, 118)

e) Raise the standards in music at Key Stage 2 by:

- setting higher expectations based on the work already achieved at Key Stage 1
- improving the curriculum and ensuring it takes place
- increasing teacher knowledge and confidence at Key stage 2
- providing the co-ordinator with time to influence development of the subject and monitor the impact of the points above

(paragraphs 6, 20, 26, 120, 123, 124)

f) Improve further the partnership between school and parents by:

- ensuring effective and consistent reporting of pupil progress
- ensuring homework is provided in a consistent manner across the school
- seeking ways of ensuring parents feel welcome in school.

(paragraphs 43, 44, 45, 46, 50, 86)

In addition to the weaknesses above the following less important weaknesses should be considered by the governors for inclusion in the action plan.

- Address the minor weaknesses in the clarity of the school's Improvement Plan
(paragraph 53)
- Improve the quality and range of non-fiction books in the school
(paragraphs 28, 102, 119)
- Implement the planned improvements in the facilities for outside play for the under fives
(paragraphs 55, 73, 75)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13%	24%	38%	23%	2%	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)	189
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	24
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	54
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	9	16	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	7
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	21	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (76)	84 (79)	84(76)
	National	83 (82)	84(83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	7	9
	Girls	12	14	16
	Total	20	21	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (76)	84 (79)	100 (97)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	10	16	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	7
	Girls	11	10	9
	Total	18	18	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (75)	69 (75)	62 (84)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	9
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	21	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (88)	81 (88)	81 (94)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	157
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	91

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	352863
Total expenditure	350368
Expenditure per pupil	1864
Balance brought forward from previous year	3998
Balance carried forward to next year	6493

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	189
Number of questionnaires returned	74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	41	4	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	45	14	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	38	4	7	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	45	20	11	1
The teaching is good.	47	39	8	5	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	30	18	14	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	34	8	11	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	34	13	4	3
The school works closely with parents.	24	44	19	12	1
The school is well led and managed.	26	41	14	12	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	50	12	7	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	54	19	8	4

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

59. Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the year in which they become five. Most children have attended one of several pre-school groups in the local area. The attainment of children on entry to the reception class varies widely, although it is broadly average. There are, however, differences in attainment between boys and girls on entry to school in the current year. The baseline tests show that, in September 2000, the girls' attainment was above average whilst that of the boys' was below.
60. The standard of education in the reception class has improved considerably since the last inspection and now provides a very good foundation for the children's learning. The quality of the teaching in all areas of learning is of a very high standard ensuring that the children make very good progress. By the end of the reception year, most pupils have knowledge, skills and understanding above those expected nationally in all areas of learning and the lower attaining pupils are achieving in line with national expectations. The gap between the attainment of boys and girls has closed considerably and there is no longer a significant difference.
61. A very good curriculum is planned for the pupils providing them with a range of 'hands on' practical experiences in all areas of learning. There is a good balance between the activities the children choose for themselves and those directed by adults. High emphasis is placed appropriately on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and on children's personal, social and emotional development. The atmosphere in the classroom is happy and relaxed and yet purposeful. Both the teacher and classroom assistant provide excellent role models for the children. The children are treated with respect and sensitivity. The staff have high but appropriate expectations of the children. They make lessons fun and the children are excited and motivated to learn in all areas of the curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Teaching in this area is good because the adults take every opportunity to encourage cooperation and good behaviour through praise and rewards. For example, they constantly reinforce the standards they expect so that the children felt secure and know where the boundaries of acceptable behaviour lie. As a result children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. All pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to school. They form excellent relationships with adults, peers and with the older children in the school. They respond very well to visitors and are extremely courteous and polite and are able to sustain a conversation with adults. They are confident to ask for what they need and always say please and thank you. Polite and courteous behaviour was frequently observed during the

inspection. For example, a child apologised for arriving late and another said 'excuse me please' then waited to be allowed to pass. Children have a very good understanding of school rules; they line up and walk about the school in a very orderly manner with little or no reminder from adults. They put their hand up to answer in lessons and are very clear about the rules of behaviour at lunchtime. Children co-operate well with one another, are able to take turns, work independently and concentrate for long periods. Children are able to dress and undress quickly for physical education. Because of the very high standards of behaviour in the class, the teacher and support assistant are able to use all the time available to teach and support children's learning. At every opportunity, the spiritual development of the children is fostered and the precepts of the Catholic faith are promoted very well. During class prayers the children thanked God for the beauty of the world and the fine weather and sat for a few minutes in quiet contemplation. The children are beginning to realise that there are other places and nationalities in the world and show a respectful interest in other people and the customs of those from other countries. For example, the Romanian child in the class brought artefacts from home to show the children. These are on display in the classroom and are handled with care by the children.

Communication, language and literacy

63. The previous inspection report stated that the speaking and listening skills of some pupils were limited. This weakness has been addressed by offering children much more planned opportunities to practice their skills. For example, the teacher's use of open-ended questions and her delightful manner with the children encourages even the most reluctant to contribute to class and group discussions. Children also have the opportunity to talk to one another as they work and play collaboratively. Although some children, particularly boys, entered school with poor levels of speaking and listening, all children have made very good progress. Those children with special educational needs do particularly well because of their early identification and good levels of support.

64. Children make excellent progress in reading. They love books and stories. Reading is promoted well in the classroom. For example, the captions in the role-play area (currently an aeroplane) are designed to foster an interest in the written word. There is a good selection of books. Children take books and reading activities home and parents are encouraged to read to and with their children every day. During the literacy lesson observed a puppet was used very effectively to promote reading and engage the children's attention. Phonic skills are very well taught by using active physical games. Children are also able to practise their phonic skills on the class computer. Children really enjoy the phonic activities provided for them and, as a result, some have an exceptional awareness of different sounds. Most children are able to read correctly the words suggested for the reception year that are listed in the National Literacy Strategy. Most children including those with special educational needs will attain the standard expected in reading by the end of term. Many children are attaining above the expected level.

65. Writing skills are promoted well across the curriculum and in children's play. For example, in a recent class project about animals, the role-play area was a veterinary clinic and children wrote down the details about 'pets' and their ailments. Their alphabetical knowledge was also practised in role-play as they filed and retrieved the cards containing this information. Children are taught to form letters correctly and practice this in a variety of ways every day. Children hold pencils correctly, are able to write their names on their work. They write for a variety of purposes and many children are able to write simple sentences with many words correctly spelt. In writing most children are attaining in line with expectations.
66. The quality of teaching is very good and often excellent. Both the formal tasks provided, and the teacher's questioning of the children are matched exactly to each child's needs. This, coupled with the pupils' enthusiasm for learning, has resulted in children making very good progress and most are attaining a good standard in all aspects of this area of learning.

Mathematical development

67. The children's delight in and enthusiasm for mathematics has been inspired by excellent teaching founded on a secure knowledge of how young children learn best and very well planned lessons based on the National Numeracy Strategy. The lesson observed was directly linked to the current seaside/holiday topic and all practical resources used were very carefully selected to support the topic and to reinforce and build on concepts already learned. The lesson was very well planned following the format suggested in the national numeracy strategy. The teacher's interpretation of these requirements turned the introductory and closing plenary sessions into fast moving mathematical games. The classroom assistant's skills were used very well to complement the teacher's own. A great deal of fun and learning took place simultaneously. Questioning was appropriately matched to the needs of the children and through this the teacher was able to assess the level of each child's attainment.
68. The independent tasks provided for the children are very well matched to pupils' different abilities. The most able children are appropriately challenged and are working by themselves on the early stages of Year One work. They are able to concentrate well on making up and recording their own addition sums to ten. The lower attaining children also concentrate well, stay on task and complete pre-prepared work sheets for practising counting and number formation. This frees both the teacher and support staff to teach the two remaining groups without interruption. The teacher promotes and fosters independent working very well by rewarding children with stickers when they work well. As a result of skilled teaching and excellent class management the level of children's learning and behaviour is excellent.
69. At the end of the reception year most children are attaining above national expectations. Lower attaining children are meeting national expectations.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. A weaknesses identified in this area of learning in the last inspection suggested too few learning opportunities were provided for children. This has been addressed well with the teacher providing a wealth of opportunities for children to explore and discover both inside the classroom and the local school environment. A good example of finding out by exploration and discovery was observed in a lesson when an electronic toy called a 'Roamer' was used. By asking questions and by trial and error, the children very quickly learn to programme it to go backwards or forwards for long and short distances.

71. The children are taken out of school on visits and recently visited a local veterinary practice as an introduction to a class topic. For the present topic about holidays, a pilot came into school to talk to the children about his job and the places he has visited. Some of the vocabulary used is now on display in the classroom. The school grounds are also used well to support children's learning. During the inspection, the children used picnic baskets made earlier to take out a picnic to eat in the shade of the trees. This area of learning is now taught very well. It supports children's learning appropriately across the whole curriculum and the children make good progress.

Physical development

72. This was also identified as unsatisfactory in the previous inspection partly due to the lack of an enclosed outdoor play space. Whilst this has not yet been addressed, the teacher provides a range of activities outside whenever possible and children are encouraged to bring wellingtons to school for use in wet weather. Providing a secure outside play area has high priority on the school development plan.
73. The teacher encourages children to gain in personal confidence when exploring the spaces around them. All are able to move with control and co-ordination, showing awareness of space and of others. These skills are demonstrated not only in physical education lessons but also in other subjects where the teacher encourages children to move to poetry and hop, skip and jump to reinforce concepts of number and to help children learn prepositions.
74. Children know about the importance of keeping healthy and the things that contribute to this. Healthy eating is given a high profile throughout the school and children are taught how to look after themselves when out in the sun. Children learn to use a range of large and small apparatus. In a very good lesson, children demonstrated very good progress in throwing and catching, balancing and skipping. Through skilled teaching, good planning and careful use of time and resources most children have attained the standard expected for their age in physical development. Whilst an enclosed outdoor play area would greatly enhance the provision for physical education, this area of learning is no longer a weakness.

Creative development

75. Provision for this area of learning is good overall. The weakness identified regarding role-play in the previous report has been satisfactorily addressed and children are now actively encouraged to use the well-planned role-play area and are appropriately supported in their learning. Discussions between the teacher and the children regularly take place to reinforce the activities undertaken.
76. In music, movement and dance the teaching is very good. The children are very enthusiastic and keen to learn. In these aspects of creativity, attainment is at a higher level than that of most children of a similar age. In the very good music lesson observed, children were able to distinguish between two rhythms and could count the notes in each pattern. They quickly learn to distinguish between high and low notes and are beginning to know the names of musical instruments. In the dance lesson observed, children used their imagination very well and tried very hard to follow instructions. They made excellent progress in their learning. In art children's progress is good. They are regularly taught to use a variety of media and tools correctly and have opportunities to practise these skills. Activities provided include observational drawing, using wax resist techniques, paintings and collage.

ENGLISH

77. Standards are broadly in line with those found nationally and this represents a similar picture to the judgements expressed in the school's previous inspection of February 1997. Test results for the year 2000 show that standards for 7 year olds are above the national average in reading and broadly average in writing. When compared to similar schools, the results are the same with reading above average and writing average. Results for 11 year olds show that standards are broadly in line with those found nationally. Results for 2000 were, on comparison, below the average of those of similar schools. This was due to the Year 6 group of pupils including an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs together with some breaks in the continuity of teaching caused by a number of different temporary teachers being used. The school's English target for 2000 was for 69 per cent of pupils to reach the expected level (Level 4) and this was just exceeded. Inspection findings a year on from the 2000 test results show a significant improvement in the standards reached by the majority of pupils.
78. Current levels of attainment match national expectations in both key stages. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of language skills and experiences but overall are broadly average when compared to other schools. Baseline testing in September 2000, however, did show that the girls generally attained above the national average for girls entering reception whilst boys attained below the average level.
79. Speaking and listening skills are well developed throughout the school and pupils respond well to teachers' instructions. This is an improvement on the school's performance in the last inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 1 demonstrate that they are able to concentrate for long periods and that they are able to listen to others while waiting their turn to speak. In a Year 2 lesson for example, the teacher effectively used the topic of 'plants and animals' as an effective stimulus for promoting literacy and the pupils responded particularly well when answering questions. Many pupils are confident when speaking and are encouraged to take part in class discussions, for example, recalling events on holiday or during their visits to places linked to the particular theme. Teachers use question and answer techniques very skilfully to draw pupils in to class discussions ensuring all take an effective part. In a Year 1 literacy lesson a group of pupils were discussing both real and imaginary settings suggested in a story and were able to confidently offer their own opinions supported by reasons for their choices. Speaking and listening skills continue to develop satisfactorily in Key Stage 2. Many pupils are able to engage fully in conversations with each other and with adults, they listen well and offer timely responses. A few higher attaining pupils are extremely articulate and their personal vocabularies are of a high order. In a Year 5 lesson pupils were divided into five separate role-playing groups to argue for or against a proposed building of a road bypass through a conservation area. In this lesson, pupils

articulated well-thought out responses, speaking with confidence and a sense of real passion in support of their beliefs.

80. Standards in reading are very good throughout the school. Compared to the school's last inspection, standards at Key Stage 1 have improved and high standards at Key Stage 2 have been maintained. Letter sounds and blends are taught successfully to younger pupils, giving them a very good foundation for future learning. The majority of pupils at both key stages read fluently and with a high degree of understanding. They express their opinions about the stories they have read and use a wide variety of strategies when reading, such as phonics and using contextual cues. Pupils at Key Stage 1 develop their reading skills well. They are keen to read to adults and when asked can recall some of the stories they have read in the past. Most can talk about the main events in stories and describe the characters they have read about, offering their personal preferences for the ones they like best. Of the sample of pupils from each year group who were heard reading, the vast majority spoke of the support and help they receive at home from interested adults. Several readers from the sample are members of local libraries and spoke of their love of reading mainly fiction books. At Key Stage 2, pupils can use clues in stories to predict what might happen next. They can also accurately offer alternative words when completing passages of writing using contextual clues to the missing words. In a Year 3 lesson pupils could quickly read a printed exercise designed to identify the correct use of pronouns. In the same lesson most pupils when reading could recognise verbs and articulate how they related to the subject of the sentence. Older pupils enjoy the work of J K Rowling and during a Year 6 lesson were able to discuss in some depth the imagery suggested by the author in one of the 'Harry Potter' series of books. The majority of pupils have highly developed reading skills that enable them to cope with a wide range of texts, for both pleasure and learning.
81. Standards of writing at the end of both key stages are satisfactory. At Key Stage 1 most pupils can write simple sentences with the most common words spelt correctly and basically punctuated. Most pupils make good progress in spelling and by the end of this key stage can spell words accurately and with confidence. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed their writing skills to the extent that they can write complex sentences accurately with due regard to spelling and punctuation. At Key Stage 2, however, there are too few opportunities afforded to pupils to write at length so as to develop sustained, accurate pieces of writing, developing for example, a particular style or to meet the needs of a particular audience. The use made of drafting exercise books by pupils is a welcome introduction to support writing but at present there is some inconsistency in the way these are used. Throughout the school there is insufficient pupils' written work celebrated on display in classrooms in order to motivate or encourage an interest in writing. Pupils' handwriting is generally good and they try hard to improve the presentation of their work. The majority of older pupils are able to write neatly and fluently in cursive script. The introduction of a writing assessment book for each pupil is a positive step towards gaining a better understanding of pupils' progress and attainment.

82. The quality of teaching in English is at least good and often it is very good throughout the school. The school has built upon the already satisfactory to good profile at the time of the last inspection. This improvement is in part because of growing confidence of the teachers to respond to the more systematic and rigorous approach required by the National Literacy Strategy but also a result of higher expectations of pupils' attainment. As a consequence, the needs of higher attaining pupils are better met, because the work set for them is challenging and more is expected from them. For example, teachers' plans for lessons are detailed and link successfully the half-termly learning objectives to the weekly and daily plans for lessons catering for differing attainment levels within the class. Teachers have improved their knowledge and understanding of the subject and the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers manage their classes well and they organise activities very effectively. As a result, little of the time available for teaching is wasted. Many activities are sequenced over a period of time to reinforce and support pupils' learning. In all lessons observed the teacher made a point of reminding the pupils how today's work linked with previous work that had been undertaken. Introductions to lessons were strong features in all lessons observed at both key stages. The weakest element tended to be the ending or plenary session, which on occasions did not always bring pupils back to the start of the lesson to try to reinforce the initial learning objectives.
83. The behaviour of pupils in English lessons is very good. They listen to the teacher well and are keen to respond when prompted. A notable feature in many lessons is the way pupils positively react and support each other when working in pairs or small groups. Pupils enjoy their work and they display positive attitudes in all they do.
84. The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator has had the opportunity to observe colleagues teach English and following these observations offer constructive feedback. Improvements in the management and resources for reading across the school have been well co-ordinated and standards are high.
85. Across the school, insufficient use is made of ICT to support the English curriculum. Homework is used well overall to support learning in English, but there are indications that this is not the case in all classes; a point highlighted by a significant minority of parents.

MATHEMATICS

86. Pupils in Year 2 attain good standards. Pupils in Year 6 attain the standards expected for their age in numeracy and all other areas of mathematics. Since the last inspection the school has enthusiastically adopted the National Numeracy Strategy and this has had a positive effect on teachers' expectations and the standards pupils are achieving in the current year. Teaching in both key stages is good. Pupils are encouraged to develop an

enthusiasm for the subject which results in them making good progress in learning basic skills of number. The needs of higher attaining pupils are now better catered for because the work provided for them is sufficiently challenging. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 in all aspects of the mathematics curriculum and have made particularly good progress with their mental and oral skills. In Key Stage 2 pupils generally make satisfactory progress, but good planning by the teachers ensures that higher attaining pupils make good progress.

87. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good teaching in both key stages. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and in particular the National Numeracy Strategy is good. Planning is good, identifying clearly what is to be learned in a lesson. This is shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. The teachers use a good range of mathematical vocabulary and this results in the pupils being able to explain their work using correct terminology. The mental and oral sessions at the start of the lesson are delivered with enthusiasm using a wide range of equipment to help the pupils practice recall of number facts. The main teaching activities involve pupils practising their skills and in this part of the lesson teachers manage pupils and resources efficiently and effectively. The work found in books does, on occasions indicate some inconsistency in the work rate each term and the expectations placed on pupils in some classes.
88. There are no marked differences overall in the performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. They are skilfully included in the mental and oral sessions by the teachers' use of questions, which are carefully directed towards different ability groups. In the main part of the lesson work is suitably pitched at different ability groups so that all pupils can make progress.
89. By the age of 7 pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100, they can recognise and find simple fractions and understand the operation of addition and are beginning to realise that addition can be done in any order. By the age of eleven pupils can work out calculations in their heads quickly. They are confident in doubling and halving numbers and possess a range of mental strategies to apply to number problems. They recognise and use place value up to 1 000 000 and nearly all show a good understanding of percentages and fractions. Their knowledge of shape and space, and in particular the names of 3-dimensional shapes, is not as good.
90. Since the previous inspection attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 1 has improved. However, the pupils' ability to use ICT to develop their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding is poorly developed in both key stages, and the school has not moved forward since the last inspection. Teaching in Key Stage 1 relies less on published workbooks and pupils being taught only formal written methods and is now based on a broader approach to mathematics including informal methods of calculation. Pupils' understanding of the subject has increased as a result of better

teaching methods. Pupils' response to their mathematics work remains good and they are attentive and well behaved.

91. The subject is managed well. The mathematics curriculum was reviewed in 2000 and pupils' performance is now regularly reviewed. The school has received good help and advice from the local education authority and the co-ordinator has acted upon this. The co-ordinator is fairly new to the post and has monitored pupils' work and teachers' planning but as yet has not been able to monitor teaching. She has attended and led in service training and her knowledge of the subject is good. Work is beginning on setting targets for every class in the school and tracking pupils' progress against these targets. As yet though, it is inconsistent across the school and needs to be implemented in every class. The co-ordinator should also ensure there is a common marking policy across the school.

SCIENCE

92. The last three years have seen standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2 fall to a point where they were in the bottom 5 per cent of schools nationally when results were last published. In response to this, the Governing Body, the headteacher and all staff have recognised the need for massive improvement, and have worked very hard to put a range of important measures into effect. At the time of inspection, Year 6 pupils had recently completed their end of key stage tests and the results for this year had not yet become available. Current standards were judged on the basis of the work in their books, and from listening to pupils, as well as the most up to date teacher assessments. The school is right to look forward with some confidence to the test results. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are judged to be in line with the national expectation. This marks a significant improvement, and a welcome reversal to the downward trend.
93. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 continue to be good. The vast majority of pupils attain Level 2, the level expected of pupils of this age, and many reach Level 3. This is high in comparison with the national average. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are organised in two parallel, mixed age classes and teachers ensure that the work is effectively planned to meet the needs and prior attainment of all of the pupils, in a manageable way. They do this successfully by studying units of science from the national exemplar scheme of work, but where necessary using objectives suitable for younger or older pupils. This is done in order to better match the demand of the work to the growing knowledge and maturity of the pupils. During the inspection, these pupils were studying the growth and development of plants and animals in the local environment. In one class, Year 2 pupils were recording their impressive knowledge of plants, many using the life cycle to confidently illustrate that knowledge. At the same time, Year 1 pupils were discussing what plants need for successful germination and growth, and were planting seeds in order to test their ideas. In the other class, the children were recording their growing understanding of the life cycle of a butterfly, in different ways according to their age. They sang a lovely song as part of the

lesson, helping them to enjoy the wonder of life at the same time as reinforcing their scientific knowledge.

94. In Key Stage 2, most children are making satisfactory progress, but whilst those pupils identified as having special educational needs are making good progress, the higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged by the work set for them. In whole class discussion, children are better able to perform at their own level, making contributions at different levels of sophistication. However, in the work in books it is evident that insufficient consideration is given to the needs of the highest attaining pupils. For example, in the quality of pupils' scientific writing there is little to distinguish higher attaining pupils from other pupils. Teachers often start lessons or a block of related lessons, by using discussion or strategies such as concept mapping to elicit pupils' ideas or knowledge about the topic at hand. This helps teachers to assess the pupils' current knowledge or understanding so that planning can be better informed. Whilst this approach does often result in work for lower attaining pupils being set in a more supportive or accessible way, it does not often lead to the work set for the higher attaining group being more demanding. For example in Year 6, when studying adaptation of plants and animals and feeding relationships, lower attaining pupils were given gaps to fill in a food chain and cut-out pictures of animals with pieces of text to match. All other children recorded their own food chains and their own information about how animals are adapted to their environment. There were opportunities here for the higher attaining pupils to extend their work into more complex predator/prey relationships or to apply their understanding of adaptation to unfamiliar contexts, but these and other similar opportunities are not taken.
95. Throughout Key Stage 2 teachers exhibit good subject knowledge, and they plan their science lessons thoroughly and carefully, basing their plans on the national scheme, but with their own emphases. In particular the teaching of the methods of scientific enquiry is strong. For example, in Year 4 the teacher emphasises and reinforces the key elements of a fair test when investigating the thermal insulation properties of different materials, and the pupils show that they understand and can follow a systematic process. In the same way Year 5 pupils are skilfully led through the design of an investigation into the sound insulating properties of materials. The teacher's patient and knowledgeable use of questioning takes the class in a structured, step-by-step way through to the successful conclusion of a logical, practical and reliable investigation.
96. In the five science lessons seen across the two key stages, the quality of teaching varied across a wide range. In one lesson in Year 4, the quality of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. This was largely due to the poor behaviour of a small, but significant, number of pupils being ineffectively managed which had an adverse effect on the quality of learning for the other pupils. Even in this lesson there were strengths in the teacher's subject knowledge, lesson planning and preparation, and in the use of ICT to accurately measure results and show them graphically. In another lower Key

Stage 2 lesson teaching was satisfactory, and in two Key Stage 1 lessons it was good. In the Year 5 science lesson observed, the quality of teaching was excellent. The lesson was stimulating and enjoyable, and the strong relationships which had been established in the class provided the platform for children to contribute both with confidence and a willingness to offer tentative ideas and suggestions without fear. Questioning was perceptive and used at times to move the learning forward at a good pace. At other times the teacher lingered on an idea to ensure careful thought and full understanding. All contributions were welcomed warmly, and used positively.

97. Having had such serious concerns about science in the past, staff have taken a number of actions to improve matters, and the subject co-ordinator has played a leading part in this. Adopting the national scheme of work, with their own modifications and additions, has given teachers secure medium term plans from which to develop lessons. The co-ordinator has monitored plans and lessons, and teachers have been receptive to the suggestions and recommendations for improvement. In particular, the need for a stronger emphasis on investigative science was identified and acted upon, and this has been evident in lessons and in the pupils' books. There has been a major investment in new and better resources for science. This too has been evident in lessons, where sufficient good quality resources have allowed hands-on involvement and first hand learning. New approaches to end of unit assessment and recording have been introduced, although it is too soon for any judgement of its effectiveness to be evaluated.
98. This is a subject that has seen a great deal of commendable improvement. If it is to continue to improve, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on fully meeting the needs of the highest attaining pupils so that they can go on to achieve the high standards of which they are capable.

ART AND DESIGN

99. At the end of both key stages pupils attain the standards that are typical of most schools. In Key Stage 1 pupils are given plenty of opportunities for developing knowledge and understanding and for practising techniques. They have opportunities for using a range of tools, media and techniques and to study the work of famous artists. Pupils enjoy the subject, behave very well and are helped to move forward in their learning by both the teacher and classroom assistant. While the teaching of art is satisfactory, much of the work is very teacher directed and the teachers do too much for the pupils, including setting out the materials to use and helping children with their aprons.
100. In Key Stage 2, whilst the quality of teaching is satisfactory, the opportunities for pupils to practise techniques in art varies considerably from class to class. Use of sketchbooks, which were introduced prior to the previous inspection, is variable across the school in terms of amount of content and how it is improved upon. The most frequent opportunities for art occur in Year 4 and the children attain high standards in two-dimensional work. In a lesson prior

to the inspection the pupils had produced some very good pastel figure pictures showing movement, style and flair. The lesson observed was very well planned. The teacher is very knowledgeable and able to teach the children about the history of art and individual painters. He used the correct terminology and provided the opportunity for children to use the same techniques in painting as the artist they were studying. However, the children were allowed very little independence or choice. All resources including the colours to use were put out for them and this restricted the pupils' personal development. Evidence indicates that insufficient time is devoted to teaching pupils how to develop their recording skills from imagination, or from first hand experiences. As a consequence, pupils have few opportunities to write about art, for example, recording their observations to develop their knowledge and understanding or expressing their ideas or feelings.

101. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' strongest achievements are in observational drawing. For example, they produce some high quality sketches of rocks and musical instruments. Pupils have limited opportunities to study the work of other artists because there are very few art books in the library. The lack of works of art from cultures other than European was identified in the previous inspection; these resources continue to be very scarce. Another weakness in the curriculum is the limited variety of three-dimensional work.
102. The teacher in charge of this area of the curriculum became co-ordinator last September and is aware of the weaknesses in art. Since then ill health and pressures to raise standards in other subjects has meant that little progress has been made in developing the art curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards in design and technology are broadly typical of those found in most schools. It is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching as only one lesson was observed.
104. Planning for design and technology is based on the guidelines produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), which provides for an appropriate range of activities ensuring full coverage of the National Curriculum Programme of Study. The one lesson seen, together with discussions held with pupils in different classes in Key Stage 2, indicates that they use existing products along with research to build up knowledge that will inform their own designing and making.
105. The Year 5 lesson, displayed work and a portfolio of Year 4 design drawings of proposed money carriers which have not yet been made, indicate that pupils are led through a thorough, systematic approach to design. In this, pupils are encouraged to consider constraints, and the purposes of their intended product and to suggest alternative solutions. This is in line with what would be expected nationally.

106. Photographs of past products and discussions with pupils suggest that quality is given appropriate emphasis. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their recent design and technology work, and showed good concentration and interest in the lesson observed. Brief discussions with the subject co-ordinator reveal that despite having taken on the responsibility only recently, sound plans for subject development are in place. Included in this is the intention to undertake school-based in-service training to extend teacher expertise in order to build on what appears to be a secure foundation.

GEOGRAPHY

107. The last time the school was inspected standards in geography were in line with national standards and progress was satisfactory throughout the school. Despite the focus for the school being mainly upon literacy and numeracy, standards in geography remain in line with the national expectation. Higher attaining pupils however are not always sufficiently challenged by the work provided. There is, for example, little difference in the quality of pupils' descriptive writing, or the expectations placed on them.
108. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of local places and the teaching places an appropriate emphasis on fieldwork. Pupils are able to distinguish, for example, between physical features and man made features. In discussing an island that they had been studying pupils can identify features such as a jetty and bridge. They are also able to compare and contrast this environment with their own. Older pupils have achieved well when investigating the use of local shops because the teaching had challenged them to pose their own questions and present their findings. Pupils use appropriate geographical language and are able to articulate clearly as to improvements they would like to see in their local environment.
109. The satisfactory standards and teaching in Key Stage 1 are continued into Key Stage 2. The recent study of Grasmere in preparation for a residential visit has, for example, given opportunity for pupils to consider the effect of a natural disaster of foot and mouth disease on people's lives. Pupils in Year 5 have examined the differences between rural and urban areas and carefully phrased, probing questions by the class teacher have led them to a further understanding of the differences. Pupils were keen to discuss the two locations, Sale Moor and a small village in Derbyshire. They could describe clearly what the two localities were like as well as giving their own views about the places using appropriate geographical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 6 were able to use the correct terms accurately for the erosion caused by water such as hydraulic action, corrosion, saltation and traction.
110. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has ensured that planning corresponds to the national guidance but a full scheme of work for the school still needs to be completed. Similarly the good work started on assessment needs to be completed and implemented throughout the school. There has not been opportunity for the co-ordinator to undertake classroom monitoring of teaching although she has monitored the teachers' planning. Teachers

make good use of the resources available but a greater range of resources is required to make the teaching of the subject more effective.

HISTORY

111. It was only possible to observe two history lessons, both in Key Stage 2. As a result, no judgement is made about standards or teaching in history in Key Stage 1. Standards in history at Key Stage 2 are in line with what is expected nationally.
112. Year 6 pupils show a clear understanding of the conditions endured by people in Britain during World War II, and can demonstrate maturity and empathy in comparing them to their own lives. Work from Year 5 pupils shows how well they can use maps from different times over the last 120 years and identify changes in their own locality. They can identify and describe differences between their own lives and those of Victorian children. Pupils in Year 4 have built up a broad knowledge of the lives of workers in ancient Egypt, drawing on and interpreting available evidence. Some pupils offered impressive arguments, in the character of chosen workers, when 'weighing the heart' of the pharaoh in order to support or deny his entry into the realm of the gods. There are examples of effective use being made of empathy and description to support the development of pupils' writing, but this is not consistent across the key stage.
113. Overall, the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Planning is effective and based on clear lesson aims. Lessons are well prepared, with a good range of 'artefacts' being made available in the Year 6 lesson to help children fully understand what food rations actually were in reality. The pupils responded really well in this lesson, and learning was good. In the Year 4 lesson, the teacher successfully created a splendid, atmospheric enactment of Howard Carter's first sight of the inner tomb of the boy Pharaoh, the pupils 'freezing' in the form of wall paintings and statuettes around the sarcophagus. Most pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm in their history lessons. The subject is managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114. Standards in ICT are unsatisfactory and are below average at both key stages. This judgment differs from that made in the school's previous inspection where it was judged to be broadly in line with national expectations. The school has made little progress since the last inspection against a backdrop of the growing importance of ICT both nationally and the increasing use and potential being explored in most other schools. At present, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to acquire adequate knowledge, understanding and skills.
115. ICT is rarely identified on classroom timetables as a distinct subject to be taught. The alternative approach being adopted by classes is to use ICT equipment in the main to support other areas of the curriculum. During the

inspection there were some instances when this worked well, for example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson where, with the help of the teacher, a small group were navigating their way around a CD-Rom program to find out more about the life cycle of plants. Overall, however, such activities are rare and there is too much variability between classes. Discussions with pupils also revealed a wide variance in their access and use of the classroom computer. There was little recorded evidence of work associated with ICT in the work sample provided by the school and very little displayed around the school.

116. Pupils in Key Stage 1 understand simple commands on the computer keyboard and can use simple programs to support their learning. Some pupils know the names of the components of a basic computer workstation i.e. 'monitor, keyboard, mouse'.
117. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have used ICT to produce databases to support their work in mathematics. In Year 4 pupils have been able to support their work in science by generating graphs to show temperature changes of a liquid during an experiment. Pie charts have been produced to reflect the results from a survey of pupils' preferences. In Year 6, two pupils were observed accessing the Internet to research a history topic. Higher attaining pupils do not have access to the higher levels of the National Curriculum of which many are capable. In Year 3, the teacher keeps a check on individual pupils' use of the computer and the skills they are acquiring in a record book located on the wall next to the computer. She uses this to inform her planning for the next term. This practice was not evident in other classrooms.
118. A new ICT policy was introduced in April 2001 but has not yet been fully implemented. The policy contains useful guidance on monitoring and evaluating the impact of ICT on the curriculum and pupils' progress within it. The newly appointed deputy headteacher has been given the responsibility for co-ordinating the school's approach to ICT but has had insufficient time to develop the subject. Resources for ICT are satisfactory when compared to most schools, but at present are under-utilised. Additionally many pupils have computers at home but the links between home and school in developing learning and study support are not well thought out. In the school library only two non-fiction books could be found that had computers as a theme, one of these was published 16 years ago! This lack of resource limits opportunities to enhance pupils' motivation and build their knowledge about the world of ICT.

MUSIC

119. Standards in music are good in Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. This is mainly due to a lack of knowledge and expertise, which results in under-confidence in some teachers.
120. In Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is very good. All teachers are confident in the subject and ensure the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. In a mixed Year 1 / Year 2 class the teacher wasted no opportunity to

reinforce learning and extend pupils' skills. This lesson commenced with the register being sung in question and response 'echoes' and this proved highly effective. The pupils responded well, enjoying this activity and the happy business-like atmosphere continued throughout the lesson. They contributed well-considered responses for 'rain noises' and suggested where the alterations should take place in the pictorial 'score' of a composition they had created in a previous lesson. Pupils understood the value of silence in music and recognised how different musical elements can be combined to create the effect desired. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, made very good progress. Discussions with pupils reflected their keen interest in music.

121. In hymn practice pupils at both key stages sing very well with real interest and enthusiasm. They behave very well, listen carefully and sustain concentration. They understand the importance of good posture, show good awareness of the beat of the music and know when to sing loudly and quietly.
122. Standards in music at Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory. At present a combination of schemes of work are used In Key Stage 2 and this leads to some confusion regarding what to teach. The scheme previously relied on by the teachers is now supplemented by the national guidance. The standards required by the latter are more demanding and the teachers are in need of specialist support or training to meet them. On advice from the local authority's music adviser, Years 5 and 6 are working from the units of work intended for Years 3 and 4 in order to compensate for their lack of experience. Despite these difficulties, teaching was satisfactory in the lessons observed in Key Stage 2 where the old scheme was in use and good in the lesson based on the new guidelines. Pupils have few opportunities to write about music, for example, expressing their thoughts and feelings about a particular piece, or describing and contrasting music from various traditions or cultures.
123. The music co-ordinator, who has a good level of expertise, teaches in Key Stage 1 and finds it difficult, due to time constraints, to support colleagues in Key Stage 2. She is aware of the difficulties in Key Stage 2 and has sensibly ensured that many staff have booked for in-service training courses. Resources for music are mostly sufficient, although there is a need for more tuned percussion. The co-ordinator runs a recorder club and encourages parents to take advantage of this facility.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Standards in physical education are broadly typical of those found in most schools. In games, however, the standards pupils attain are above average. Lessons were observed in dance, gymnastics and outdoor games.
125. In dance and gymnastics, younger pupils are confident users of space and they enjoy physical activity. They can respond to music well in order to create imaginative and appropriate sequences of movement. Most of the pupils

move well maintaining balance, a good sense of direction and awareness of others around them. Older pupils maintain their enthusiasm for gymnastics and take a full part in lessons. They carry and handle equipment safely and demonstrate care for others whilst doing so.

126. In games, pupils at both key stages develop their skills well and are able to apply them in competitive small team games. They show good skills in finding and using space during team games or when working in pairs. They are able to throw and catch both small and larger balls with confidence. Pupils' skills develop well, for example, younger pupils are able to throw a large ball to a receiver's left or right side, whereas older pupils are able to throw a small ball to a 'target area' identified by the teacher. Many pupils benefit from being able to attend after school clubs in football, netball and cricket and these opportunities further enhance their game skills together with the ability to use them in competition.
127. All pupils enjoy their lessons, behave very well and are eager to participate. They get changed for physical education quickly and, as a result, lessons start on time without any delay. Pupils listen attentively and this ensures very little time is lost during teacher explanations or when instructions are given. All pupils work well together, supporting and encouraging each other. This was particularly noticeable in one lesson where older pupils had to work in pairs to develop a unique sequence of synchronised jumping movements using a bench and mats. Pupils willingly demonstrate their skills in front of others and are confident when speaking about the choices of movement they made. Following short demonstrations by pupils, either as individuals or in pairs, many other pupils show their support and encouragement by spontaneously clapping.
128. At both key stages, the quality of teaching and learning is mostly good and often very good. Lessons are well thought out and achieve a good balance between teacher direction and purposeful activities. Throughout the school, good class management and timely intervention in the work of individuals are strong features in the teaching, promoting hard work by the pupils and encouraging them to make good use of the time available to practise their skills. A further strength of the teaching is how pupils are often challenged to think about ways of improving the quality of their own performance.
129. The school hall is spacious and well equipped with a particularly well-maintained floor area. The school benefits from, and makes effective use of, large playing fields that are also well maintained. The hard surface play area is adequately sized for lessons. The leadership of the subject is good.