

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST BENEDICT'S ROMAN CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chatham

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118780

Headteacher: Mrs B Long

Reporting inspector: Mr J Donnelly
23637

Dates of inspection: 5 - 8 June 2001

Inspection number: 191662

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lambourn Way
Chatham
Kent

Postcode: ME5 8PU

Telephone number: 01634 669700

Fax number: 01634 865570

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A Casey

Date of previous inspection: 27 - 29 January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23637	J Donnelly	Registered inspector	Science History Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9724	B Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3687	G Bancroft	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Mathematics Music Physical education	
8696	A K Maula	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Benedict's Roman Catholic School for pupils aged four to eleven is located in Chatham, Medway. Pupils are drawn from a wide catchment area and come from a mixture of social backgrounds. Ninety-four per cent of the pupils are from a white, U.K. heritage.

The number of pupils on roll is 199 with 101 boys and 98 girls. There are 29 pupils in the reception class. Just under nine per cent of pupils claim free school meals, which is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs (30 per cent) is above the national average and four pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are three pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national average. A significant number of pupils leave the school during Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2) and there is evidence to show that a high proportion of these are high attaining pupils. An equivalent number of pupils enter the school during Key Stage 2 and a significant number of these have special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Benedict's is a very successful school with many very good features and some excellent practice. Pupils' achievements overall in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are good. Teaching is very good and, as a result, pupils are making very good progress and standards are rising sharply. The leadership by the headteacher is excellent. Staff are very hardworking and committed and offer parents and pupils a supportive and inclusive environment, firmly rooted in the beliefs and values of the Catholic Christian ethos of the school. Expectations for pupils are very high and challenging and they are supported within a safe and welcoming atmosphere. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good achievements in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Teaching is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and behaviour is very good.
- Moral development is excellent and the provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is very good overall.
- The headteacher is an excellent leader. Leadership and management throughout the school are very good.

What could be improved

- Swimming is not taught to pupils aged 7 to 11.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made significant progress and has successfully addressed all the key issues and weaknesses identified in the last inspection in January 1997. The quality of teaching has improved. Provision for ICT is now good. The assessment of pupils' achievements is now very good overall. The use of data and target setting is now well established and management is very good. Standards have risen at a greater rate than that found nationally, although there was a dip in results last year due to the high proportion of pupils in the Year 6 class with special needs who had entered the school after Year 3.

The capacity for the school to improve further is excellent because of the very high expectations and the hardworking, successful staff team.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	C	B
Mathematics	C	A	B	A
Science	C	C	C	B

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

The majority of children in the reception class make rapid progress as a result of the very good teaching and support they receive. By the time they start Year 1 their attainment exceeds that expected for their age and most have attained (or exceeded) the early learning goals.

The results of the 2000 national tests for pupils aged seven were well above average in reading and writing and in line with mathematics. In comparison to similar schools the pattern is the same. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 3 was above the national average in writing and well above the average in reading and mathematics. Overall the trend of improvement over time since the last inspection in 1997 is higher than the national average.

In comparison to all schools overall, standards in mathematics are above the national average and in line with English and science at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are good when compared with schools in similar circumstances.

The results of the 2000 national tests for pupils aged eleven were in line with national averages and above in mathematics. This is a slight drop in comparison to 1999, as a result of a large number of pupils with special educational needs in that 2000 cohort and a significant number of pupils leaving and others joining the class throughout the key stage. The inspection team found that standards were above the national average, particularly in Key Stage 2, as a result of very good teaching, target setting and a clear focus on raising the attainment of more able pupils. Pupils make good progress overall in all subjects and in their personal and social development which is very good. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress during their time at school.

Standards in ICT are above those expected nationally, in part due to the high quality of training undertaken by all staff and the high confidence this has generated.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent. Pupils want to learn and are interested in what they are being taught.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school building.

Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. They are very considerate and care for each other and respect their teachers. Relationships between everyone in the school community are excellent and a very important factor in learning.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory, but there is a growing trend of pupils missing school due to their parents taking them on holiday during term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall and has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Overall the teaching was never less than satisfactory and. it was good or better in 97 per cent of lessons, and in 46 per cent, it was very good, and 10 per cent was excellent.

Teachers have very high expectations, lessons are well planned and teachers' skilful questioning challenges the most able. Learning support assistants work very effectively in supporting less able pupils and they make an important contribution to their progress. Teachers know pupils well and show them great respect. As a result, pupils concentrate well, respond to their teachers, work purposefully and make good progress.

The teaching of English is consistently good throughout the school and has some very good features at Key Stage 2. Effective questioning, based on good subject knowledge and careful planning, enhances pupils' participation and understanding. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is good in mathematics. Often it is very good. Teachers are making very effective use of the techniques promoted by the National Numeracy Strategy and this has helped to maintain rising standards, particularly in pupils' oral and mental mathematical abilities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum overall fully meets the mission statement of the school. It is broad and balanced, though does not meet statutory requirements in physical education, as pupils are not taught swimming in Key Stage 2. Links with partner institutions are excellent The curriculum is enriched by a programme of extra-curricular activities and a wide range of educational visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good and pupils make very good progress. The co-ordinator ensures that pupils with special needs make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for the three pupils is good. Pupils make good progress.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall the provision for moral development is excellent. Spiritual and social development is very good and provision for cultural development is good. The school is satisfactorily helping to raise pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity in our society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school respects and looks after all pupils with very thoughtful care and concern for their welfare. The way teachers assess pupils' progress is very good and they make effective use of assessment information to plan lessons and work for individuals.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents' views of the school are very favourable. The school works very hard and successfully in developing a partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership is excellent; she has established a strong sense of team work and has a clear vision for the school. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators. Overall, leadership and management are very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are very committed to its success.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning, together with the analysis of end of year assessments, inform future practice and makes a positive contribution to the standards pupils achieve.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its available resources. Classrooms for Years 5 and 6 are, though, cramped and restrict the teaching and learning of these pupils, who also have to use outside toilet facilities.

There is a very good balance of experience and skills in the school staff. Training for ICT is raising standards, and resources overall are good. The staff make good use of the cramped accommodation for Years 5 and 6. Best value principles are applied well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The supportive, caring ethos of the school. • Teachers know their children very well. • The leadership provided by the headteacher. • Their children like coming to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming for children aged 7 to 11.

The overwhelming majority of parents were very supportive of the work of the school. The inspection evidence supports the positive comments made by parents and the inspection team agrees that the lack of swimming for pupils aged 7 to 11 is a weakness.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' achievements in lessons are good and the high standards have been improved since the last inspection in 1997.
2. Assessments of children aged four, undertaken shortly after they start school, indicate that their attainment is broadly in line with that found nationally for their age group in most areas of their learning. The majority of children make rapid progress based on the very good teaching and support they receive and by the time they are ready to leave the Foundation Stage of their education to begin the National Curriculum, their attainment exceeds that expected for their age and many have attained (and often exceeded) the early learning goals.
3. The results of the 2000 national tests for pupils aged seven were well above average in reading and writing and in line with mathematics. In comparison to similar schools the pattern is the same. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 3 was above the national average in writing and well above the average in reading and mathematics. Overall the trend of improvement over time since 1996 is higher than the national average
4. The results of the 2000 national tests for pupils aged eleven overall were in line with national averages in English and science and were above average in mathematics. This is a slight drop in comparison to 1999, as a result of a large number of pupils with special educational needs in that year group and a significant number of pupils leaving and others joining the class throughout the key stage. However the trend since 1996 has been one of improvement, slightly above the trend nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 6 is achieving above national expectations and that targets for the higher level 5 will be met successfully.
5. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders undertake a thorough analysis of the assessment data they gain about their pupils from a wide range of sources. This information is used effectively to compare the performance of the school with all schools nationally and with similar schools to identify trends in the attainment and progress made by pupils. They respond to their findings by modifying what is subsequently taught in order to further improve standards.
6. In English, the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds show that standards of attainment in reading and writing at the expected level 2 as well as the higher level 3 were above average nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Attainment at level 3 was above average in reading but well above average in writing. This represents the trend since 1998, particularly in writing and is reflected, to some extent, in the work of the current Year 2 pupils.
7. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening, is in line with national average for pupils aged 7 and above average for pupils aged 11. Pupils aged 5 to 7 listen carefully and respond to questions appropriately. Higher attaining pupils can sustain concentration and have started expressing their views. At the age of 11, the majority of pupils demonstrate well developed speaking and listening skills.
8. The most recent national tests in mathematics show attainment by the time pupils are seven to be close to the national average and above average by the time they are eleven. Inspection evidence shows attainment throughout the school to be above average. Inspection findings indicate these high standards are likely to be maintained over the next few years. Literacy and numeracy are well planned for across the curriculum.
9. In science, pupils' achievement is good overall in the lessons observed. The results of national tests for the year 2000 were in line with the national average. Following an analysis of these results the school has set challenging targets for more able pupils to gain level 5 and to improve the quality of investigative work. Inspection evidence shows standards rising as a

result of high quality teaching, including an emphasis on subject vocabulary and very good question and answer skills.

10. Evidence suggests that standards of pupils' attainment in art and design are above national expectations at age 7 and well above those expected nationally at age 11. Attainment in design and technology and music exceeds that expected for pupils' ages. In geography, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at age 5 to 7 and above expectations at age 7 to 11.
11. In history, attainment is satisfactory at age 7 and good at age 11, with particularly high quality work in project work and very good literacy links overall.
12. In ICT, standards of attainment are above those expected nationally, in part due to the high quality of training undertaken by all staff and the high confidence this has generated. Attainment in physical education is close to that expected for pupils' ages. However, very high standards are achieved in dance.
13. The overall achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good in relation to their prior learning and these pupils successfully achieve the specific targets in their individual education programmes which are regularly reviewed.
14. Support provided by class teachers and assistants enables the very small number of pupils learning English as an additional language to make good progress over time. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from classroom strategies such as questioning and repeated explanations, they have positive attitudes to learning and are well integrated in school. This contributes to their progress. The school's coherent approach to meeting their needs is reflected in the commitment of class teachers and support staff. This enables them to integrate well in the school community. More regular specialist support would enable the pupils to make accelerated progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes to the school and to their studies are excellent. They are very receptive: they want to learn. Pupils are interested in what they are being taught, and eager to take part in discussions. This was noticeable in the assemblies and in many of the lessons seen; for example, in a Year 6 geography lesson pupils were learning about varying weather conditions: all wanted to take part in the discussion. A spirit of enthusiasm pervades lessons at all levels of the school. Pupils in the reception year, working on 'The Wizard of Oz', showed this in their desire to answer questions and act as readers. Pupils' attitudes help them to achieve good standards.
16. Standards of behaviour are very high. Pupils behave very well in lessons and as they move around the school. They are considerate and they care for their fellow pupils. Pupils are well mannered and friendly towards adults and visitors. Bunches of daisies and daisy chains were offered to inspectors as spontaneous signs of welcome if they came onto the field at break and after lunch. Pupils are aware of the effect of their actions on others. Some older pupils are trained as bully buddies, but bullying and oppressive behaviour are not a problem so they act as counsellors in friendship squabbles. There have been no exclusions, either permanent or fixed term, for the past six years.
17. The way in which pupils respond to the provision for their personal development is excellent. Dialogues in assemblies and circle time show a high level of thoughtfulness and maturity. Pupils have welcomed the opportunity for responsibility offered to them through the School Council and are pleased and proud to be able to help improve the school. They took part in the discussion on whether girls should be able to wear trousers in winter terms and added their voice in letters to parents when the school decided that in order to protect a particular pupil no peanut products should be brought to school. Currently they are working on a newspaper. They also raise money energetically for charity. Relationships in the school are also excellent. Pupils work together very well, as in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, when they shared computers and co-operated very willingly, while in a Year 5 physical education lesson they were able comment

and explain techniques to other groups as they worked on a series of different jumps. Relationships between pupils and members of staff are also excellent. As a result, pupils have the confidence to answer questions and make suggestions in lessons; for example, in some mathematics lessons observed in Years 1 and 3 during the inspection. These excellent relations are an important contributory factor to the quality of learning in the school.

18. Attendance at the school is satisfactory. The rate of attendance for the academic year was broadly in line with the national average. Most authorised absence is due to illness or to holidays taken during term time.
19. Standards of behaviour were high at the time of the last inspection report and they have continued to improve.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is very good with nearly six out of ten lessons very good or excellent and this represents good progress since the last inspection.
21. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good and children achieve well and make rapid progress. Teachers and their assistants and helpers show good knowledge and understanding of the foundation curriculum and the early learning goals. Planning is good, expectations are high and clear targets are set for the attainment and progress children are expected to make.
22. In English, teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers are making good use of the literacy strategy to raise standards. For pupils aged 7 to 11, the teaching of English is often very good. Effective questioning rooted in good subject knowledge and careful planning enhance pupils' participation and understanding. This, together with imaginative use of resources, provides appropriate challenge for pupils, while giving the lesson a brisk pace. As a result pupils are interested take an active part and learn well. In one lesson, the teacher made imaginative use of resources, challenged pupils throughout and the pace of the lesson was brisk. Most teachers generally use plenary sessions to reinforce learning. Support staff, where available, make a good contribution to pupils' attainment and progress especially those with special educational needs and English as an additional language.
23. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is good in mathematics. Often it is very good. Teachers are making very effective use of the techniques promoted by the numeracy strategy and this has helped to maintain rising standards, particularly in pupils' oral and mental mathematical abilities.
24. In science, teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers have high expectations, use appropriate subject vocabulary, place an appropriate emphasis on investigative work. Tasks are set which meet the needs of the pupils. More able pupils are challenged in their learning through well constructed questioning and so make good progress.
25. The quality of teaching and learning observed in art and design was good and had some very good features in both key stages. Teaching in design and technology is often characterised by good subject knowledge and expertise. Teachers' skilful questioning and imaginative use of resources encourage pupils to think about their work, although this does not always lead to modifications through evaluation. The quality of teaching observed in geography was good with some very good features. Strategies employed by most teachers enhance pupils' motivation whilst clarifying learning objectives and so make good progress. In history and ICT the quality of teaching observed was good with some very good features. Teachers intervene effectively to ensure a purposeful interaction whilst extending and consolidating pupils' use of subject vocabulary. Pupils concentrated for a considerable length of time in a history lesson on life in a Victorian school where the teacher took on the role of a 19th century teacher; the pupils were spellbound and they learnt very well. The quality of teaching for music is good and sometimes it is excellent, inspiring pupils to learn and produce work of a very high standard.

The quality of teaching for physical education is satisfactory. At times, when dance is taught, it is excellent.

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

26. The school has made considerable improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection which identified areas of the curriculum which did not meet statutory requirements or planning for some areas. Most of these issues have been addressed, and the planned curriculum is now broad and balanced, overall. There is, however, no provision for swimming for pupils aged 7 to 11. A well resourced ICT suite has been established to promote pupils' learning across the curriculum.
27. Most subjects have recently been reviewed in the light of Curriculum 2000 and are supported by recommended schemes and planning. This ensures that pupils' skills are built up logically and systematically as they move through the school. English and mathematics are given appropriate priority and all classes have daily literacy and numeracy sessions. All pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum. The special educational needs provision is very good and there is additional support available for pupils learning English as an additional language. Personal, social and health education, sex education and drugs awareness are taught well. The provision of homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and attainment. There are some strong links between subjects. However, some subjects alternate with each other within the term, which affects pupils' progress over time because art and design, for example, is not currently on the timetable for all year groups.
28. The curriculum is enriched by a programme of extra-curricular activities and a wide range of educational visits. Contribution made by the community to pupils' learning reflects the very good links that the school has established with various agencies such as Christ Church University College, Kent Business Partnership, The Prison Service and Groundwork Medway Swale. Relationships with linked institutions are good and these contacts support pupils' attainment and progress.
29. The school makes very good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
30. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The strong religious ethos of the school fosters care, self-esteem and courtesy. Assemblies provide opportunities for gaining an insight into different values as well as a time for reflection. Sometimes a sense of awe and wonder in the Natural World is evident. Pupils are enabled to learn about ancient Gods and Goddesses through history topics. They are encouraged to respond to religious teaching by relating it to their personal experiences. Opportunities for pupils' experience in art and design, music and literature heighten their spiritual awareness. Provision for daily collective worship, which fully meets statutory requirements, makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' spirituality. Currently there is insufficient emphasis on links with wider multi-faith communities that would further enrich the spiritual dimension of pupils' experience.
31. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. The school has a strong moral code which sets boundaries for acceptable behaviour. Its framework of values enables pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. Classroom activities and assembly themes often raise moral issues concerned with drugs and bullying. Good examples are always set by adults. The school's expectations of behaviour are high, and pupils are constantly encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their actions. This results in the school being an orderly place. Most pupils respond positively to school rules and show respect for each other and property. Most parents are happy with the values and principles that the school promotes.
32. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. The school fosters good relationships, and pupils are encouraged to work well together in class and they are given many opportunities to enjoy each other's company in extra-curricular activities. A range of

activities including circle time contributes to this aspect of pupils' education. The school provides some good opportunities for pupils to take initiatives and responsibilities such as those taken by pupils in Key Stage 2 for the School Council and the younger pupils. They learn to become good citizens and contributes to the profile of the school in the community.

33. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have opportunities to develop an understanding and appreciation of their own cultural heritage through art and design, music and literature. They also learn about festivals and, to some extent, different customs and traditions through history, geography and religious education. The school has made a good start in raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity through geography topics.
34. Religious education, assemblies and the daily act of collective worship are major contributory factors in the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's success in this respect is largely due to the leadership and personal commitment of all staff.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school places a high priority on the way it looks after the pupils in its care: it is central to the school's vision of the school and is very successful. Teachers make sure they know the pupils in their classes and use their knowledge very effectively in caring for them. Close contact with parents, so that they are aware of any circumstances which could affect pupils' welfare, is an important part of this. Attendance is correctly recorded and monitored efficiently. There are good procedures for child protection which are reviewed regularly and have recently been revised. All members of staff receive guidance. Procedures to promote discipline are highly effective. These procedures are clearly understood and applied consistently by all members of staff. The very high standards of behaviour seen in the school show how effective these procedures are in practice. Lots of rewards – for courtesy and kindness, for effort, for behaviour, for work – encourage pupils. There are good procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety, both within the school and on visits outside although the school is concerned about the relative isolation of the mobiles classrooms. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
36. There are very good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, achieved largely by setting it in a moral and social context where the children can see for themselves that such behaviour is inappropriate.
37. Class teachers keep clear and impressively detailed records of the progress, both personal and academic, that pupils make throughout their time in the school. They use these records very well to monitor how pupils are doing and to support and guide the progress they make. They note when a pupil is doing well, or needs extra help. The careful tracking ensures that class teachers build a detailed picture of progress as soon as a pupil starts at the school. As a result the standard of educational and personal support and guidance given to pupils is consistently very good. It helps to raise their standards of academic achievement. This is a significant improvement above the quality found at the time of the previous inspection when the procedures to assess pupils' academic progress were identified as a weakness.
38. The statutory procedures to assess the attainment and progress made by pupils by the ages of seven and eleven are met fully and annual reports for parents are thorough and detailed, providing an accurate picture of the abilities and achievements of each pupil.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. Parents' views of the school are very positive. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the pre-inspection meeting consider that their children like the school, that they make good progress there, that behaviour in the school is good and that their children get an appropriate amount of work to do at home. Parents also consider that teaching in the school is good, that they are well informed about progress and that they would feel comfortable to approach the school with problems or concerns. Parents think that the school is well led and managed, that it expects their children to work hard and that the school is helping them to become mature and responsible. The inspection team agrees with parents' highly positive views. A few parents who returned the questionnaire do not think that the school works closely with them or that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspection findings do not confirm the views held by these parents.
40. The school works hard to cultivate a strong partnership with parents. Teachers are always willing to see parents. Parents are consulted about prospective changes through letters, working parties or meetings on particular topics. Parents are sent good information about the school itself. There is a detailed prospectus. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date. At the start of each term parents are sent a list of the topics their children will study and booklets about the key stages. Parents receive good information about the progress their children make. There is a termly consultation evening and a full annual report. These reports give parents a clear view of what their children can do in the subjects they have studied and what they should do to improve, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Parents themselves contribute to the work of the school. Some work as parent helpers in lessons or are training to be classroom assistants. Parents listen to their children read at home. Attendance at consultation evenings is very high. Parents also support school functions and trips, for example the biennial residential visit for Years 5 and 6. The St Benedict's Association is very active. It raises substantial sums of money for the school as well as organising social events for parents and pupils. The Father's Day and Mother's Day shops are a charming example of this.
41. The good standards noted in the last inspection report have improved further.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The leadership by the headteacher is excellent and the leadership and management by key staff is very good. The school has very high expectations of its pupils and sets these out very clearly in its aims, values and mission statement. These expectations are very well met in practice and the supportive, caring, learning environment and culture of the school is of the very highest standard. The headteacher has been very successful in building a very good team of hardworking staff at all levels, who are clearly focussed on ensuring all pupils reach their full potential within a clearly defined Christian, Catholic ethos. High standards have been maintained and built on; progress since the last inspection has been very good.
43. The school has a good strategy for monitoring the quality of teaching across the school. Subject co-ordinators are empowered and make a very good contribution to the management of the school. Target setting and the analysis of pupils' work and ongoing remediation work to improve standards is very effective. Performance management is very well established at all levels and all staff contribute to a very successful school. There is a very good mix of staff expertise, experience and enthusiasm; clearly focused on raising standards further as a result of quality in-service training for all.
44. School development planning and evaluation are good in focusing all staff and governors on raising standards overall. The governing body is very effective in monitoring the work of the school. They have a very good knowledge of their responsibilities and are very committed.

45. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school is well maintained and cared for. The recent internal refurbishment and building work in some classes is good. The new ICT suite is already contributing to raising standards overall and is a very effective use of the available finance. However, there is no outdoor covered play area for pupils in the Foundation Stage class and this restricts the further progress in physical development. Years 5 and 6 are taught in mobile classrooms and share an outside toilet. Inspection evidence indicates that these rooms are cramped and were very hot during the inspection week and it is to the teachers and pupils credit that they manage this difficult situation very well. Learning resources are good.
46. The school makes good use of its allocated resources and educational priorities are supported appropriately by careful financial planning and management. Governors and the headteacher apply the principles of best value appropriately to the provision of resources and the use of allocated funds. Arrangements to closely monitor the progression of spending are well established. These include the provision of regular and detailed reports, prepared by the headteacher, for the governing body. The headteacher has recently undertaken a detailed audit of the school's financial procedures. Day-to-day spending is also monitored closely. These procedures are suitably linked to the arrangements for monitoring the progress of the budget across the financial year and are effective. Day-to-day administration by the office staff is good.
47. The headteacher and governing body do everything within their powers to ensure the school is able to benefit from the wide range of available financial resources in order to enhance the quality of educational provision for their pupils' benefit. The specific grants allocated to the school, including those for the support of pupils with special educational needs, are used appropriately for their designated purpose.
48. Effective use has been made of capital grants for the improvement of the school's accommodation. An example of this is the recently added library area and computer suite. Both these facilities are used well by teachers and their pupils and have contributed to rising standards in English and in ICT.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

(1) Provide swimming at Key Stage 2 to ensure statutory requirements are met.
(Paragraph: 131)

The Registered Inspector has discussed a few very minor issues with the governing body and headteacher and consideration should be given to including the following in the school development plan:

- The lack of a secure and covered play area for children in the Foundation Stage.
(Paragraph: 54)
- Cramped accommodation for pupils in Years 5 and 6. (Paragraph 45)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10	46	41	3	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	199
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	19
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	14	16	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	15	16	14
	Total	27	28	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90	93	90
	National	83	84	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	16	14	16
	Total	28	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93	90	97
	National	84	88	88

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	9	15	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	12
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	18	18	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75	75	92
	National	75	72	85

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	19	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79	79	79
	National	70	72	79

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

Where the number of boys or girls are fewer than ten, individual results are not reported.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	163
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	28.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	161

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	421 104
Total expenditure	427 220
Expenditure per pupil	2 158
Balance brought forward from previous year	25 363
Balance carried forward to next year	19 247

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	199
Number of questionnaires returned	44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	27	7	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	36	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	42	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	55	5	7	0
The teaching is good.	65	33	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	35	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	21	14	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	26	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	39	18	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	39	5	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	36	0	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	45	20	2	9

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

50. Assessments undertaken by the school shortly after children start indicate their attainment to be slightly higher than that found locally and nationally for their age group in most areas of their learning. Most children make rapid progress as a result of the very good teaching and support they receive. By the time children are ready to leave the Foundation Stage of their education to begin the National Curriculum their attainment exceeds that expected for their age and most have attained the early learning goals. Progress since the last inspection is good.
51. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good; children achieve well and make rapid progress. Teachers and their assistants and helpers have a good knowledge and understanding of the foundation curriculum and the early learning goals. Lessons are planned effectively. Clear and challenging objectives are set for all children. This contributes to their good progress.
52. The children respond very well. This is mainly because the activities provided for their learning are well matched to their needs and abilities, capturing their imaginations and challenging and inspiring them effectively. They benefit greatly from a variety of activities skillfully linked together by their teachers to ensure children realise the relevance and the relationships between the different things they do. For example, teachers link the work undertaken in language and music and movement very effectively, enabling them to address several areas of learning at the same and contributing significantly to the rapid progress made by the children.
53. A significant feature of the provision is the very good contribution made by learning support assistants and other adults. They are deployed very effectively and make a significant contribution to the planning and assessment procedures and they often take a leading role with groups of children. The children's work and the attainment and progress they make are assessed regularly and thoroughly. Teachers and their assistants use the information they gain from these assessments to plan what they will teach next.
54. A current shortfall in the provision is the lack of a covered area for outdoor play and the need for a secure area in which children can play outside without the need for constant adult supervision to ensure their safety.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. The quality of teaching in this aspect of learning is very good. Teachers expect good behaviour and the children behave well. Many are mature, patient and appropriately self-disciplined. They observe classroom rules and follow them well. Their movements around the school are well ordered and controlled and they are eager to be helpful often asking their teacher and assistants if they can do various jobs.
56. In a wide range of activities the children have quickly developed their awareness of the needs of others and are considerate towards each other. This is evident when they need to take turns when using equipment and when they work together in groups. A notable feature of their work is their ability to work independently when they are required to do so. Often they sustain their effort and interest without direct intervention from adults.

Communication, language and literacy

57. The quality of teaching in this aspect of learning is very good and children make good progress. Teachers make good use of every opportunity to develop pupils' communication skills. A notable example of this is when children begin activities in an order based on the initial sound of their name. As a result their speaking and listening abilities are developing well; for example, when children are late joining an activity others explain very clearly what the newcomers need to know to undertake the activity successfully. The youngest children receive very good support in developing initial letter sounds and the higher attainers can write the letter that they are sounding out correctly.
58. Very high standards are evident in reading and many children are enthusiastic readers. They are eager to retell the stories they know, and they do this with great accuracy. The oldest and most able read fluently and with good expression. Their understanding of what they read is evident from the insights they share and the deductions they make about the stories they have read. These high standards are based on a very well structured approach to guided reading founded on the National Literacy Strategy. The principles of this are applied very effectively by teachers.
59. Writing skills are also developing well. Many of the older children can write their name and record details about themselves in their books 'All about me'. The highest attaining children are already writing stories that are of a high standard. This very good progress is based on the sound structure provided by their teacher of writing over letters, copying below letters, leading to writing independently.

Mathematical development

60. The quality of teaching in this aspect of learning is very good.
61. Most children can count quickly and correctly up to twenty and many can write the digits of the numbers to twenty correctly. This ability is based on the frequent opportunities created by their teacher to reinforce and extend their learning in this area.
62. Children are encouraged successfully to use the correct mathematical vocabulary; for example, they are able to explain that estimating is very similar to 'having a guess.' Most children show rapid improvement in their ability to make a sensible estimate of a number of items they are shown and to check their estimate by counting and then checking the difference between their estimate and the actual number of items.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. The quality of teaching in this aspect of learning is very good.
64. The children have covered a significant amount of work in a very short time and their knowledge and understanding of the world is developing well. Their scientific knowledge is outstanding. They know that different substances melt at different rates, that some materials are attracted by magnets and others are not, and that some materials will float and others will not. They are growing seeds in the classroom and can describe what is happening and why it is happening in great detail and with enthusiasm. They also know a great deal about 'minibeasts' and are pleased to recount their knowledge. This is firmly based on the excellent range of learning opportunities provided by their teacher.
65. The children have made three-dimensional structures and can name and list the properties of many. They have also made hanging and glove puppets involving detailed and careful cutting and pasting. When using computers they show understanding beyond that expected for their age. They use drawing and painting programs very well. Many can word process and print information about themselves. Their teachers also enable them to access programs that help their number and spelling develop very effectively.

66. Teachers work effectively to ensure children's awareness of other cultures is developing appropriately and celebrations such as Diwali are discussed in detail and recalled clearly by the children.

Physical development

67. The quality of teaching in this aspect of learning is very good. At times the support provided for the children is excellent.
68. In music and movement, children went on a 'Bear Hunt'. They showed great awareness of the space around them and of the position of other children. The majority are well co-ordinated and move with good control. The high quality of their movement is based on frequent, well planned, opportunities for them to develop these skills. These opportunities include playing outside each day with large toys and using the gymnastic apparatus in the school hall. Other physical skills, such as cutting and pasting, making models, working with construction kits and handling tools and implements are also developing very well.

Creative development

69. The quality of teaching in this aspect of learning is very good. At times the support provided for the children's development is excellent.
70. Children show great imagination during the frequent and varied opportunities for role play to which they have access. These include the management of a garden centre, a travel agent's, a post office and a shop. Such opportunities make a significant contribution to children's speaking and listening and to their social skills. They also perform plays about the stories they have heard and written. During the inspection they acted out the story of the Gingerbread Man, showing their understanding of this story in great detail.
71. During music they use percussion instruments very well, keeping in time with the music, and establishing rhythms that match the pace of the movements they are performing and linking to their music.

ENGLISH

72. Pupils' achievement overall is good. The 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds show that standards of attainment in reading and writing at the expected level 2 as well as the higher level 3 were above the national average and were above those of similar schools. Attainment at level 3 was above average in reading but well above average in writing. This represents the trend since 1998, particularly in writing, and is reflected to some extent, in the work of the current Year 2 pupils.
73. The 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds show that standards were in line with the national average and in line with similar schools. Pupils' attainment at the higher level 5 is close to national average. The dip in the 2000 test results was considered to have resulted from the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The overall trend is one of improvement and the current Year 6 are achieving standards above national expectations.
74. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is in line with national average for pupils aged 7 and above average for pupils aged 11. Pupils aged 7 listen carefully and respond to questions appropriately. Higher attaining pupils sustain concentration and clearly express their views. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils demonstrate well developed speaking and listening skills. They contribute to discussion confidently. The school's current emphasis on the assessment of pupils' speaking and listening skills enhances the profile of this aspect of pupils' attainment and progress.
75. Standards in reading are above average throughout school. Pupils aged 7 have developed a good awareness of phonics leading to appropriate word attack skills. Most pupils read

accurately, fluently and with understanding. Pupils aged 7 have few opportunities to develop their skills of finding books in the library. Older pupils aged 11 are independent readers. They read, and can retrieve information, from a variety of texts. Higher attainers respond to plots and characters, expressing opinions about authors and, in some cases, their use of language. Many pupils of average ability show good comprehension skills. Less able pupils including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress, when given support. Many pupils in both key stages enjoy reading poetry.

76. Pupils write for different purposes. Pupils aged 7 use a range of adjectives to describe the setting and characters in a story and higher attainers use complex sentences. A significant minority, particularly younger pupils, have difficulty with expressing themselves unaided. By the age of 11, many pupils demonstrate well developed knowledge and understanding of the content and style of narratives and description. Pupils of all abilities, particularly higher attainers, show confidence in creative writing and pay increasing attention to grammar and punctuation. This was observed in Year 6 when pupils developed a dream sequence. Some pupils aged 7 to 9 produce writing based on a comparison of authors and their books, while others use verbs and adjectives to describe the moods and feelings they come across in stories. Throughout the school pupils write poems paying particular attention to rhythm and the use of similes and metaphors. Some of these poems vividly describe moods and feelings associated with different situations. Some higher attaining pupils' paragraphing skills are under-developed and handwriting and presentation lack care and attention with some pupils, amongst those aged 5 to 7.
77. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school and is often very good for pupils aged 7 to 11. Effective questioning rooted in good subject knowledge and careful planning enhance pupils' participation and understanding. When teaching was very good, imaginative use was made of resources, pupils were challenged throughout and the pace of the lesson was brisk. Planning for these lessons is linked to homework, and good organisation and management have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. Most teachers generally use plenary sessions to reinforce learning. Support staff, where available, make a good contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.
78. Teaching and learning often has very good features for pupils aged 7 to 11. Most pupils show high levels of motivation and concentration. Many work independently, when encouraged to do so. This is partly due to pupils' positive attitudes to work and their very good standards of behaviour. They are enthusiastic about activities and collaborate well. For example in Year 2 pupils learn about the characters in the book by Roald Dahl "The Twits", they identify many adjectives and use them to construct many interesting sentences in group work based on ability. This helps pupils to make good progress. Lack of concentration has a negative effect on learning for a minority of pupils throughout the school and their progress tends to slow down as a result.
79. The National Literacy Strategy is well established and this, together with the home reading scheme has raised pupils' standards. Literacy skills are well developed across the curriculum. English is well managed; this is reflected in planning, resourcing, assessment and monitoring. The school has appropriately identified the need to raise standards in writing. The improvement in this respect has already resulted in a school achievement award. The co-ordinator is aware of the areas needing further development. Progress since the last inspection is good.

MATHEMATICS

80. The 2000 national tests show pupils' attainment by the time they are eleven was above the national average and the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 is well above the national average. Inspection evidence shows attainment throughout the school to be above average. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress.

81. Recent assessments undertaken by the school show the oldest group of pupils contains a significant proportion of pupils achieving standards well above national expectations. This is confirmed by the findings of the inspection and is the result of the good quality of teaching, the impact of the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and very good overall development of the subject under the guidance of the subject leader. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and resulted in rising standards and an improved quality of teaching.
82. A significant proportion of the pupils now in Years 2 and 6 are likely to attain levels above the average expected for their age in the annual tests. Inspection findings indicate these high standards are likely to be maintained over the next few years.
83. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is good. Often it is very good. Teachers are making very effective use of the techniques promoted by the National Numeracy Strategy and this has helped to maintain rising standards, in line with the national pattern, particularly in developing pupils' oral and mental mathematical abilities and their use and understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. However, the practice of asking pupils to explain how they have arrived at their answers during oral and mental mathematics is also not used with sufficient regularity as a means of extending and affirming their mathematical understanding.
84. At the start of lessons teachers explain to pupils what they are expected to learn and at the end of each session they check pupils' learning. This contributes to the good progress.
85. The ability of seven-year-olds to count up to and back from one hundred in fives is well established and reinforced well in other subjects, such as geography and ICT. Their knowledge of number bonds to ten, one hundred and to one thousand is good. Skilful teaching also means these pupils apply a variety of mathematical strategies successfully, including the ability to round up numbers to make complicated additions easier. These pupils also transfer their firm understanding of place value into calculations using money; for example, they undertake such calculations as one hundred and eighty pence added to forty pence and one pound ninety-nine added to two pounds and ninety-nine pence, quickly and correctly, explaining how they have arrived at the correct answer.
86. Eight-year-olds attain high standards and make good progress when estimating and measuring accurately right angles and angles close to right angles. Their responses to the effective use of questions by their teacher are celebrated and this greatly increases their confidence in the subject. The technique of asking pupils to explain what they think they are learning is used most effectively and helps them to understand the progress they are making.
87. Nine-year-olds also make good progress; for example, their knowledge of the six times table is well established and they apply the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division quickly and correctly. This is typified by their response to using the numbers two, five and seven in any combination and series of operations to create the numbers from one to twenty-five. This very good challenge exemplifies the good subject knowledge of the teachers.
88. Ten-year-olds are making rapid progress in data handling. They use terms such as mode and range to describe sets of data and apply their knowledge well. Higher attaining pupils use the mean effectively to separate data. Their knowledge and application of number is also well developed for their age.
89. The oldest pupils of all abilities make good progress. These pupils receive very good support from their teacher who is quick to recognise and respond to the challenges they face. Teachers have high expectations of the capabilities of these pupils and the pupils respond well to this. They are enthusiastic and committed learners and often debate the best strategy to apply when doing calculations and solving mathematical problems. When they do this they are usually able to justify their decisions clearly and ask searching questions of their teacher to clarify if they are correct in their assertions. Pupils apply these and other strategies effectively when calculating equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages; for example, they are eager to know if thirty-three and one third percent is an acceptable way of expressing one third as a

percentage. This brought about considerable debate amongst the pupils, revealing the depth of their mathematical understanding.

90. Assessment procedures in this subject are well established and used most effectively by teachers to help them decide what to teach next and to identify any pupil's difficulties. Teachers respond effectively to the issues they identify under the helpful guidance of the their subject leader and as a result of the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching.

SCIENCE

91. Overall in science, pupils' achievements are good. The results of national tests for eleven-year-olds for the year 2000 indicates the percentage of pupils who took the test to be above the national average. Following an analysis of these results the school has set challenging targets, for a large proportion of more able pupils to gain level 5 and to improve the quality of investigative work. Inspection evidence shows attainment throughout the school to be above average as a result of high quality teaching which includes an emphasis on subject vocabulary and very good question and answer skills.
92. By age seven, pupils learn to know that a plant needs water, sunlight and soil to grow and stay alive. Pupils form ideas of their own about what a plant needs to stay alive and grow into a form that can be tested. In small ability groups, pupils share ideas and learn to construct a basic fair test. Pupils also suggest ideas about how the results can be recorded. Pupils know, understand use appropriate subject vocabulary and can name the main parts of a flowering plant.
93. By age eleven, pupils know that light travels in straight lines from its source. Pupils know about opaque materials and that shadows are caused by the blocking of light. Pupils know about the effect prisms have on a light beam when it is passed through it. Pupils in small groups investigate further, the effect of light and shadows and how the shadows change size depending on the position of the source of the light. Pupils use a torch and position it at four different angles to mirror the changing position of the sun, draw the size of the shadow accordingly and make hypotheses about what might happen next.
94. Teaching is good in the lessons observed across the school. A very good characteristic of teaching was the effective questioning of the teachers to challenge pupils and check their learning. Good opportunities exist for practical and investigative work and the effective use of appropriate subject vocabulary. Good subject knowledge and enthusiasm lead to improved pupils' interest and attention to task. In small group work pupils with special educational needs use materials well matched to their learning ability.
95. Leadership and management of the subject are very good Staff have benefited from a good range of training and monitoring of teaching and learning which includes areas for development. The co-ordinator has taken part in high quality science training. Very good procedures exist for the analysis of S.A.T.s and as a result of this, the school's focus on increasing the number of pupils gaining level 5 in national tests at Year 6 has doubled over the last two years from 13% to 25% and this year the school is on target to get 34%. All pupils with special educational needs are predicted to get a level 4. The school has also focused on developing pupils' subject vocabulary and broadening the range and quality of investigative work The school has very successful links with the local business community including a focus on the work of women scientists. Teacher assessment takes place regularly and, at the end of each topic, plans are evaluated to promote further learning. Resources are good. The school has made good progress since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

96. Judgements are made on limited evidence as only three lessons were observed. However, a scrutiny of teachers' planning, pupils' previous work - particularly that on display, discussion with staff, pupils and other members of the inspection team show that standards of pupils' attainment in art and design are above national expectations for pupils aged 7 and well above those expected nationally for pupils aged 11. This reflects an improvement since the last inspection, particularly for pupils aged 5 to 7.
97. The majority of pupils aged 5 to 7 experiment with a range of media including pencil, chalk, crayon and paint. Evidence of previous work produced by older pupils suggest they have a good understanding of colour, line, tone and the work of famous artists including Monet. Younger pupils have been involved in collage-making activities based on Rousseau's ideas. Their developing techniques relating to colour, pattern and texture, were observed in a lesson inspired by their observation of the school environment. Many older pupils demonstrate a good awareness of artists such as Picasso and Lowrie. Their drawing and painting techniques relating to portrait and landscape pictures are well developed, as was observed in a lesson focused on the use of colours to depict moods and feelings. Higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of the skills required in observational drawing. They pay attention to detail, showing a good understanding of texture, tone and shade. Effective use of a variety of art forms and materials is evident in examples of previous work including different seasons in collage, light and shade pictures and portraits of Tudor Monarchs and three-dimensional modelling relating to ancient Greeks.
98. The quality of teaching observed was good. Teachers' careful planning and explanation ensure pupils understand tasks. The use of a wide variety of resources enhances pupils' motivation and interest, while giving them a sense of pride in their work. All of this reflects teachers' good subject knowledge, personal interest in the subject, high expectations of pupils and the use of very effective strategies such as promoting pupils' skills and enjoyment of art and design through a cross-curricular approach. This reinforces pupils' knowledge and understanding in other subjects, as in history.
99. The quality of learning reflects the impact of teaching and shows some improvement since the last inspection. The majority of pupils observed concentrated well and were motivated and interested. They collaborated well, selecting and using materials sensibly. Many can explain why they have chosen a particular design or colour for their work. Most pupils having special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, display the same enthusiasm for activities as their peers and make good progress.
100. The art and design curriculum is based on a published scheme of work. Art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral, social and cultural development, and they gain greatly from their visit to the National Art Gallery. The display of art and design work has a positive impact on the school environment, and on pupils' attainment and progress, and the pride they take in their work. Improvements since the last inspection include a wider range of activities for pupils aged 5 to 7, enhanced teacher skills through training and the introduction of an art and design portfolio. Assessment is a current priority, reflecting good co-ordination and management. The school has already identified the need for the co-ordinator to be allowed time to monitor art and design on a more formal basis.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Judgements are based on limited evidence as only two lessons were observed. However, the evidence base used includes an analysis of pupils' previous work on display and in photographs, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils and staff. This confirms that the school has maintained the good standards in the subject as they were at the time of the last inspection.

102. Standards of attainment sometimes exceed what is expected for the age group for all pupils. Most pupils develop their design and making skills well, sometimes using diagrams to illustrate their ideas. Evidence suggests that younger pupils plan, cut to size and join materials together fairly confidently. They make purses using fabric. Younger pupils evaluated fruit drinks by diluting and tasting different juices. Older pupils develop good basic skills through practical tasks such as making high quality masks involving a multi-media approach. Some pupils in Years 4 to 5 develop an understanding of the difference between pneumatic and hydraulic devices in making a simple lifting device. Most pupils learn to choose tools, materials and techniques purposefully. Photographs of work with moving parts, such as axles and levers, confirm pupils' ability to manipulate a range of tools and materials to solve problems in developing, completing and evaluating models. Some work on display shows well developed skills and effective use of imagination
103. Teaching is good often characterised by good subject knowledge and expertise, and design and technology skills are reinforced in other subjects. Skilful questioning and imaginative use of resources encourage pupils to think about their work, though this does not always lead to modifications through evaluation. Teachers pay particular attention to the issue of safety in the use of tools and equipment. All of this impacts on pupils' learning which is good, overall. The majority of pupils demonstrate high levels of motivation and enthusiasm about designing and making models. They co-operate and share resources readily, demonstrating good standards of behaviour. Most pupils including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well in the subject. There is no significant difference in the learning of boys and girls.
104. The curriculum includes all the required areas. There are strong links with subjects such as art and design, literacy, mathematics and history. Design and technology is well managed, and the co-ordinator has been influential in raising the profile of the subject. She is aware of the need for resources to be upgraded and the current timetabling arrangements limit the time available for design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

105. Only three geography lessons were observed. However, the evidence on which judgements are based includes a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, particularly that on display, and discussion with staff and pupils.
106. By the age of seven standards of attainment are in line with national expectations and above expectations for pupils aged 11. This represents an improvement in the older pupils' attainment since the last inspection. The majority of pupils observed make good progress in developing their geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. Evidence suggests that pupils aged 7 have developed basic map reading skills. This was reflected in a contrasting study of their locality and the Isle of Struay. Younger pupils were observed making a weather map using symbols. Older pupils demonstrate a good understanding of varying weather conditions in mountain environments and its impact on life. Higher attainers know geographical facts such as those related to heat and pressure associated with phenomenon like volcanoes. They know that evaporation of water in the context of the water cycle contributes to weather conditions in mountain environment. Pupils in other year groups use maps and photographs to identify physical and human features of places such as India and St. Lucia. A minority of higher attainers have been involved in some research activities involving the use of computers. Pupils use computers to develop skills such as following a route, or preparing a multi-media presentation on the effect of environmental changes on people.
107. The quality of teaching observed was good with some very good features. Strategies employed by most teachers enhance pupils' motivation whilst clarifying learning objectives. Teacher intervention ensures a purposeful interaction whilst extending and consolidating their use of geographic vocabulary. Teaching was characterised by good subject knowledge, high expectations and effective management of pupils. This had a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Most pupils concentrate well and show high levels of participation. They are

co-operative and very well behaved. There is no significant gender difference in pupils' learning.

108. The geography curriculum includes all required areas of study and is based on a published scheme. The subject is well resourced and has strong cross-curricular links. The use of computers is well promoted through the subject. Improvements since the last inspection includes a better balance of local and world studies, and enhanced resources. The strong management of the subject has a direct impact on pupils' attainment and progress.

HISTORY

109. Pupils achievements and standards at Key Stage 1 are satisfactory overall and good at Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, analysis of teachers' planning and records; displays and talking to pupils.
110. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls and pupils with English as an additional language and those with special needs make good progress in relation to their prior learning.
111. By the age of seven, the pupils are developing a sound understanding of the past by learning about the differences and similarities of life and work in Norman and Saxon castles. They understand the passage of time by relating it to their own lives, and are beginning to acquire key historical skills such as why people acted in the past as they did. There is no marked difference between the standards of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with support and those who learn English as an additional language also achieve well with additional support. Strengths at Key Stage1 include the pupils' increasing sense of chronology, understanding of the passage of time and the difference between past and present. During one excellent lesson history came alive when some Year 4 pupils had the opportunity to experience life in a Victorian classroom when the teacher took on this role in full costume to great effect that the pupils were speechless.
112. In Key Stage 2, evidence of their work in a lesson in Year 5 indicates that pupils are more confident in devising appropriate questions for their enquiry about schools in Ancient Greece and then researching answers from a variety of secondary sources, including different types of books, pictures, posters and the Internet. They know that boys started school at the age of seven and finished at the ages of 13 to15 depending on rules in different states in Ancient Greece. They can compare their own modern school life with that of pupils in Ancient Greece. They know that girls or poor boys did not have such opportunity. They are developing information gathering and analysing skills and their best work gives a sound interpretation of events and explains causes and effects in a structured way. In their study of Ancient Egypt, pupils make use of historical and archaeological evidence and express feelings of excitement and discovery in an empathetic manner Other pupils show their developing understanding of the Viking invasion; their homes and settlements in their written work.
113. Pupils generally display sound factual understanding of events and are beginning to acquire the skills to use relevant historical terms in describing and sequencing events. Their research skills are improving particularly at the top end of Key Stage 2.
114. History makes a sound contribution to pupils' literacy skills by extending the range of writing the pupils tackle when they cover areas such as fact, opinion and empathy, but occasionally less developed writing skills in English reduces pupils' effectiveness in expressing them better. The subject also makes a sound contribution to numeracy, art and design and technology.
115. Pupils are interested in history. They concentrate well and are mostly keen to express themselves in different ways, orally, in writing, drawing, painting and model making.
116. The quality of teaching in the few lessons observed is good at both key stages and occasionally excellent for younger pupils at key stage 2. Most teaching is done through the use of a variety of teaching methods and the appropriate deployment of resources to assist

learning – books, posters, pictures, artefacts and visits. Lessons are varied and sometimes challenging. There are good displays around the school. The breadth of the study of history is enhanced through visits to places of historical interest.

117. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Resources such as artefacts, posters, books, videos and maps are adequate. Progress since the last inspection is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. Pupils' standards and achievements are good overall and inspection evidence indicates that the trend is one of further improvement.
119. By the age of seven pupils can use a graphics program to draw pictures, select tools and add text, and they can save their work, with support, to the appropriate "drive" for their class. They use the mouse and keyboard with confidence. They use ICT appropriately to illustrate their science work. By the age of eleven pupils are confident in using text and combining text and graphics to achieve a particular effect. They are aware of the potential uses of ICT in everyday life. Pupils know how to use the computer to find information, either from programs on disk or CD-ROM, or through the Internet. They can also discuss the relative merits of books and computers, and are aware of the need to make well-defined queries on the Internet to avoid wasting time.
120. Based on the small number of lessons seen, an analysis of pupils' work and observation of the use of ICT in other lessons, the quality teaching is good. Teachers' knowledge of ICT is sound and is developing well and improving with ongoing training. Some teachers have good knowledge of the subject and use it well across the curriculum. The recording of pupils' work now that there are networked computers is good, as pupils are able to save work to their class's file and print it out when necessary. In some classes there is good practice in assessment and in the use of assessment to plan future lessons.
121. In the most successful lessons there is good structure to the lessons, good pace and challenging levels of work; there is good emphasis on developing pupils' ability to work independently and to explore the possibilities of the hardware and software. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop collaborative working skills and to share expertise, often promoting good speaking and listening. Many teachers use ICT well to support other areas of the curriculum; for example, Year 2 pupils researched their history topic on castles, Years 5 and 6 used ICT skills in their literacy and science lessons.
122. Pupils' attitudes to ICT are positive; where teaching is at its best, attitudes are good and sometimes very good. All pupils appreciate the quality of the ICT suite and equipment provision and treat it with respect.
123. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The school is aware of the need to develop some areas of ICT and has included this in its development plan for imminent action. The planning of the ICT suite has been well done and resources are now very good. Staff training is ongoing and when completed will enable all staff to take full advantage of the new resources to raise standards further. The ongoing specialist support by a governor is very effective. Progress since the last inspection is good.

MUSIC

124. Pupils achieve high standards and make very good progress, including those with special educational needs. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and at times it is excellent. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.
125. Pupils aged 7 to 11 benefit greatly from the good lesson planning of their teacher. During one lesson, taught in the woodland area belonging to the school, pupils in Years 3 worked effectively in small groups to produce compositions based on the story of Noah's Ark. Each group appointed a narrator to tell their version of the story and played instruments to reflect the nature of each animal in their story. These compositions reached a high standard with pupils keeping time and maintaining appropriate rhythms. Their teacher also created an ambience that stimulated the pupils and helped them to respond to the high standards expected of them.
126. Nine-year-olds attain very high standards. They compose and perform music based on the romance and tragedy of the story told on Chinese willow pattern plates which capture the strong emotions evoked by the story. This high quality work is based on the excellent subject knowledge and inspirational guidance provided by their teacher. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development as well as to their musical education.
127. The quality of singing in assemblies is good with all groups of pupils able to keep tempo and sing loudly or softly as required. They benefit from good accompaniment on the piano and sometimes support their own singing effectively by playing untuned instruments.
128. A visiting instrumental teacher works effectively with small groups of pupils each week. These pupils are making good progress playing electronic keyboards. They work hard, sustain their interest and most can read musical notation. Throughout the school pupils are developing good knowledge and understanding about the styles of famous composers. They are often challenged to find out about them by undertaking research. They do this with great enthusiasm and are eager to share their findings.
129. There is a recently appointed subject leader for music and her enthusiasm is having a significant impact on standards for the subject. A national scheme for teaching the subject has been adopted throughout the school and arrangements to assess the attainment and progress of pupils are developing well. Plans are also in place for ICT to make an appropriate contribution to pupils' learning in the subject. Progress since the last inspection is good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. These showed attainment to be close to that expected for pupils' ages but in dance many pupils achieve high standards. Their achievement is satisfactory and those with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
131. The provision made for this subject has improved since the previous inspection of the school and pupils in Years 5 and 6 experience outdoor and adventurous activities as part of a residential visit. However, the statutory requirement to teach swimming is not met.
132. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and in dance it is good. Pupils aged 7 to 11 produce very good, sustained sequences, responding very well to the enthusiasm of their teacher and to the challenging and stimulating music chosen to help them compose their dances. Many pupils are sufficiently confident to dance as part of assemblies, school productions and other celebrations.
133. Older pupils make satisfactory progress in athletics. When undertaking standing long jumps, standing triple jumps and vertical high jumps the distances and heights they are able to achieve increase. Helped by the sound advice of their teacher they are able to evaluate their own performance and make comments that help each other to improve. Their work in these

lessons reinforces their mathematical abilities when they estimate and measure distance and heights accurately.

134. The abilities of the oldest pupils in gymnastics are close to those expected for their age. However, their work when they use apparatus is far better than when they are working on the floor. When using apparatus their sequences with a partner are sustained and linked together imaginatively. However, they are given insufficient opportunity to refine what they are performance.
135. The school provides a programme of extra-curricular sporting activities that includes football and netball and there is close liaison with the local football club and with the county cricket club who provide visiting coaches. Pupils also benefit greatly from the policy of the school to provide them with sports equipment for use during the lunch hour and this does much to help improve their games skills.