

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bentley Doncaster

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 106770

Headteacher: Mr John McEnaney

Reporting inspector: Mr Chris Rhodes
16408

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th May 2000

Inspection number: 191760

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:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Finkle Street Bentley Doncaster South Yorkshire
Postcode:	DN5 0RP
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Derek Sullivan
Date of previous inspection:	10th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Chris Rhodes	Registered inspector	English Geography History Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Mr John Kerr	Lay inspector		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?
Mrs Debbie Kerr	Team inspector	Science Information technology Physical education Under fives	How well is the school led and managed?
Ms Christine Canniff	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Design and technology Music Special educational needs	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

Our Lady of Perpetual Help is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school of average size for boys and girls aged 3-11 years. It is situated in Bentley, just north of Doncaster, in an area of considerable social deprivation. There are 242 on roll including 33 children who attend the nursery part-time. Taken together, pupils' attainment on entry is below that found nationally. There have been no exclusions. The number of pupils with special educational needs is less than that found in most schools, and the percentage entitled to free school meals is broadly typical. Very few children come from minority ethnic backgrounds and all have English as their first language. Some pupils belong to traveller families.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Our Lady's is a good school. It is very effective because standards in English and mathematics are above average at the end of both key stages, pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very strong, the quality of teaching is good, the school is very well managed and led, and there has been considerable improvement since the previous inspection. The school continues to provide good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school's aims and values are reflected very strongly in all aspects of its work.
- The school is very well managed. The headteacher leads firmly and sensitively.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. It was very good in two out of every five lessons seen.
- Pupils gain new knowledge and skills quickly. They are enthusiastic, keen to learn and have very positive attitudes. Relationships are excellent and behaviour is very good.
- Younger children are given a very good start in the nursery and reception classes.
- Pupils aged 7 and 11 reach standards in English and mathematics that are higher than the national average. Standards are higher than the national expectations for science at the end of Year 2.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is of high quality.
- The curriculum is enriched through the links made with partner schools in Europe.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology are below the national expectation for pupils aged 11. Information technology is not used enough in the various subjects in most classes.
- Teachers do not always explain the learning objectives at the start of lessons in all subjects or use them as the basis for measuring how far pupils have progressed.
- Pupils do not always know how to improve. Some group tasks do not have clear enough targets for their completion.

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 November 1996. Good standards have been maintained and there has been considerable improvement in the areas identified for further development. The school has addressed all the key issues highlighted in the previous report very successfully, although more work is needed on the use of assessment as the basis for setting targets for individual pupils and groups, and to extend pupils' experience of the art, music and literature from a range of non-European cultures. Standards in English are now higher at the end of both key stages, and have improved by the end of Year 6 in mathematics and in science at the end of Year 2. The percentage of very good teaching has doubled. The school has maintained the previous high quality of leadership and management, and has improved the way in which it plans future development.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E*	B	B	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
mathematics	E*	C	C	A	
science	E*	C	C	B	

The table shows that 11 year old pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science improved considerably in 1998 after very low results in 1997, and were maintained in 1999. They were above average in English, and average in mathematics and science, when compared with all schools. They were well above average in English and mathematics, and above in science, when compared to schools with a similar intake, because above average numbers of pupils reached the higher level 5. The school's systems for analysing these and the results of other standardised tests have been improved. Teachers had considerably under-estimated how well the pupils would do in the 1999 English and mathematics' tests. A more rigorous use of previous test result data and improved use of teachers' own knowledge of pupils' capabilities has resulted in higher and more challenging targets for the current Year 6. Pupils aged seven achieved above average standards in writing and mathematics in 1999, but results were below average for reading.

Pupils are currently achieving above average standards in English and mathematics in their lessons by the time they are seven and 11, the ends of the two key stages. This is an improvement, especially in reading. Standards are above the national expectation for science at age seven and are close to the average at 11. Standards in information technology [IT] are in line with the national expectation at seven but are below at 11. This is because IT skills have not been taught systematically in the past and not enough time has been given to the subject. Pupils make steady and sometimes good progress in art, design and technology, history, geography and physical education. There was not enough inspection information to make a judgement about progress in music. Pupils with special educational needs and those from traveller families reach appropriate standards and make good progress as a result of their own hard work and skilled additional support.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school, and are keenly interested and involved in its activities. They are eager to learn and question.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are generally very well behaved. There is a complete absence of oppressive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The quality of relationships between pupils and with staff is excellent.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

The high quality of personal development in the nursery and reception classes is particularly noticeable. Pupils in all classes have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. The amount of unsatisfactory behaviour is extremely limited. The School Council gives pupils genuine opportunities for debate with adults and a good initial understanding of citizenship.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall: 36	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 overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching was very good in thirty-eight per cent of the lessons observed and good in an additional forty-three per cent. It was satisfactory in sixteen per cent and unsatisfactory in only one lesson, three per cent of the total seen. The quality of teaching in English is good in all parts of the school. Mathematics teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The skills of literacy and numeracy are generally well taught and are used effectively in all areas of the curriculum. Particular strengths in teaching include the practical and imaginative activities for children under five that lead to good progress and the successful achievement of nationally expected levels of understanding. Very good teaching occurs throughout the school when teachers explain the lesson's purpose clearly and use questions effectively to encourage pupils to give deeper, more reflective answers. Support staff are deployed very efficiently. They have been trained to support their groups and, as a result, pupils make greater progress because they receive skilled assistance. Teachers expect all the children to do well, and plan carefully to ensure high quality learning and greater progress. Positive relationships make pupils confident learners.

Teaching is satisfactory but could be strengthened in the lessons that do not have a clear objective that is explained to the children before they start work. Day-to-day assessment of how well pupils are doing is not used enough to set tightly focused tasks for the next day, and some books do not contain written comments that show pupils how they can improve. IT is not used enough in many lessons in most classes. Teaching is unsatisfactory on the rare occasions when behaviour is not well managed and pupils do not make enough progress. The school works hard to make sure that all pupils learn effectively, but has made a special and successful effort to raise the standards reached by higher attaining pupils and those with a variety of particular need, including higher attaining older boys who

find it difficult to put their thoughts into writing. Pupils learn very effectively because they are encouraged to work and concentrate hard. They gain new skills and knowledge quickly. Learning is only less effective when they do not know how to improve, are unclear why they have been set a particular task, or their targets are not clearly defined. The teacher job share in Year 2 works extremely well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils have a good range of learning opportunities. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The additional support provided both in classes and in small groups is appropriate and helps to raise standards.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall. Provision is especially strong for pupils' spiritual, moral and social education. Provision for cultural development is good, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to experience the art, music or literature from non-European countries.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes considerable care of the academic and social progress made by children and has good procedures for monitoring their development.

Although the requirements of the National Curriculum are met, they are not covered to sufficient depth in aspects of information technology and music. Very good use is made of the opportunities arising from the school's links with partner schools in Europe. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs do not always include precise measurable targets for the pupils to achieve. Links with parents are very effective and make a considerable impact on the quality of their children's learning. The quality of information given to parents is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads strongly and wisely. The school has a very clear sense of educational direction.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body carries out all its responsibilities very conscientiously. They form a close and effective partnership with the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors its own performance very carefully and is taking positive action to improve. There is a commitment to raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Resources, including grants, are used wisely and to the best effect.

The quality of leadership and management, shown particularly by the headteacher, is very good. The school's aims and values are reflected powerfully in every aspect of its work. The school is a very orderly and efficient organisation. Co-ordinators have a clear vision for continued development of their subjects but do not have an agreed programme for the regular scrutiny of standards in pupils' work. There are sufficient qualified teachers for all subjects except music. Particularly good use is made of the high quality support and administrative staff. All areas of the building are used productively, and are very clean and well maintained. Attractive displays of pupils' work strengthen the school's very positive ethos. Resources are generally good, but some gymnastic equipment is too big for the youngest children to use creatively and resources for music are very limited. The school applies the principles of best value appropriately.

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 like coming to school • They feel able to approach the school with questions or a problem • The quality of teaching is good • The school expects pupils to work hard and do their best • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for homework in some classes • More opportunities to learn about the curriculum at evening meetings

The inspection team agrees with all the parents' positive views of the school. Very few concerns were raised either through the questionnaires or at the parents' meeting. Arrangements for homework are appropriate and are good in the classes for older pupils. Parents of younger pupils hear their children read on a regular basis but do not get enough information in the reading diaries to show them how to support the school's work with any areas of difficulty. The school was ready to arrange evening curriculum information meetings but insufficient parents indicated an interest. Some parents at the meeting were concerned about the difficulty of the reading texts used by older pupils. Inspectors did not find any that were inappropriate. Texts were challenging but within the pupils' understanding.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils achieved above average standards in writing in the 1999 national tests for seven year olds, but were below average in reading. The results were not as high as in previous years. The school looked at this carefully and the children, who are now in Year 3, have made good progress in their reading and are now achieving at expected levels. Standards in mathematics were very high as every pupil reached the national target of level 2. The results in the writing, reading and mathematics tests were well above average when compared with schools with a similar intake because an above average percentage of pupils reached level 3. This also indicated that teachers had set challenging work for pupils capable of higher attainment. Pupils aged 11 achieved levels that were close to the national average for English and mathematics. They were well below average in science, although an above average percentage reached the higher level 5. Standards have risen steadily since a very disappointing year in 1997. The results compared very well with similar schools in English and mathematics, and well in science, because of the percentage of pupils reaching level 5.
2. Teachers had under-estimated how well the seven year old pupils would achieve in writing, and the 11 year olds in English and mathematics. There was also an under-estimation of how many of the older pupils would reach the higher level 5. The school examined the mismatch very carefully, and has set challenging targets for the current Year 6 that are more firmly based on an analysis of the outcomes of earlier standardised tests and teachers' own knowledge of pupils' potential. This is encouraging as it has started to develop the identification of individual pupil targets, and has already helped to raise standards through the establishment of particular groups that need extra support. Good examples include the group of higher attaining pupils who work separately in science, and the higher attaining boys who receive additional support in literacy lessons because they have difficulty in expressing their thoughts orally and in writing.
3. Children enter the nursery with overall standards that are below the national expectation. They make good progress and most have achieved the nationally recommended desirable outcomes for learning by the end of the term in which they have their fifth birthdays. They are well prepared to begin work on the National Curriculum in their reception year.
4. Standards in English and mathematics observed during the inspection are above the national average for pupils at the end of both key stages. They are above the national expectation for science at the end of Year 2 and in line with national averages in Year 6. Standards in information technology are close to national expectations in Year 2 but are below average in Year 6 as pupils have not had opportunities to work in sufficient depth within the different aspects. The school is very aware that this is an area for urgent improvement, and is planning effectively to raise standards.
5. Standards of speaking and listening are secure but several pupils lack confidence when speaking in formal situations, especially some of the boys in Years 5 and 6. This has an impact on the quality of their writing because they do not have the vocabulary they need to express themselves as clearly as they would like. Most pupils talk with increasing confidence in a wide range of contexts, and listen attentively to teachers and each other, asking questions to gain understanding and develop their own ideas. Listening is often intense, as when younger children follow a new story or the whole school sits enthralled in the daily assembly.

6. Standards of reading are above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils are fluent and confident at levels higher than those expected for their ages. Year 2 pupils know that punctuation is important when reading aloud, and try hard to be expressive especially when reading dialogue. They know the basic letter sounds and use them effectively to work out unfamiliar words, although some are occasionally careless and will offer nonsense words without considering whether the reading makes sense. Year 6 pupils are secure readers, and higher attaining pupils are reading appropriately demanding text.
7. Standards in writing are also above average at the end of both key stages, and reflect the effective skills teaching found in the literacy hour, the systematic approach to spelling and handwriting, and the emphasis given to imaginative writing. Pupils in Year 2 have made good progress in their learning since September and are writing increasingly complex sentences, use a wider vocabulary and include correct punctuation.. Pupils in Year 6 also make good progress and are becoming more accurate in the use of grammatical structures in their writing. Longer pieces of writing are divided into paragraphs correctly, and imaginative writing is revised carefully to ensure that the final draft is of good quality. Spelling is generally accurate in both key stages, and handwriting is fluent, joined and legible.
8. Pupils have a sound grasp of number concepts in mathematics by the age of seven. They become increasingly familiar with mathematics vocabulary and are able to explain their working methods clearly. They can count and order numbers to one hundred and understand the place value of each digit. Their understanding of addition and subtraction is secure and they apply these operations successfully in various contexts. Regular practice enables pupils to develop different strategies for solving problems mentally. They sort data and record and interpret the information on block graphs. Pupils use both standard and non-standard metric units of measure in the context of length, weight and capacity and are able to read simple measuring scales. They are developing a satisfactory knowledge of time and recognise and name common two- and three-dimensional shapes.
9. By the end of Year 6 pupils are able to use a number of strategies for solving number problems mentally. Their understanding of the four operations of number is good and they apply these successfully. Pupils understand percentages and recognise their fractional and decimal equivalents. They understand perimeter and area, and use the formula when finding the area of compound shapes that can be split into rectangles. They develop a good understanding of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils recognise acute and obtuse angles and use a protractor to measure and draw angles to the nearest degree. All pupils collect and record data represented on a range of charts and graphs, for instance, gathering information about eye colour. They use their knowledge and understanding of time to solve problems by interpreting information presented in timetables. Pupils also find the range, mode, mean and median of a set of data correctly.
10. Current standards in science are above the national expectation at the end of Year 2 and in line with national averages in Year 6. Year 2 pupils have studied living and non-living things, can sort animals into groups accurately and give clear reasons for the groupings. They can distinguish between living and non-living things and describe the main characteristics of each. They explain clearly what happens to different materials when they are heated and compare results. Standards are starting to rise in Key Stage 2 since the introduction of a new structured scheme of work. Pupils in Year 6 identify food chains in a pond accurately. Their practical and investigative skills have developed appropriately and pupils can construct a fair test, for example to investigate the speed of travel of a cotton reel. They make precise observations of their experiment and record their findings clearly.

11. Standards in information technology [IT] are in line with the national expectation for the end of Key Stage 1 but are below at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils use computers successfully in Year 2 to assemble text, save and retrieve information, select the right options, control the mouse and use the printer. They are also able to plan and control devices, including a floor turtle. Standards in Year 6 are below those expected nationally because IT skills have not been taught systematically in the past and not enough time has been given to the subject. Some aspects, such as communicating information through word processing, have been covered adequately. Older pupils use computers effectively to produce fair copies of their work and a school newspaper. They change font and font size, change colour, incorporate two forms of information, copy and paste, use the cursor, control the mouse, and use CD-ROMs for research. In most other aspects standards are below the levels expected for their age. Pupils know that the computer can be used to handle data efficiently. They have built up a class database but there have been few opportunities for data handling in the past and the standards being achieved in Year 5 are not significantly higher than those in Year 2. In Year 6, pupils have used an art program to design Grecian vases but their skills are not developed to the levels expected for pupils of their age. Pupils have had no opportunities to use IT to develop some aspects of the curriculum, using IT to measure temperature for example.
12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach appropriate levels, as they are very well supported by trained support staff. Some of the targets in individual education plans are too general and progress against them is difficult to measure. This makes it harder for pupils to know how well they are doing. Specialist staff give children from traveller families very good support in lessons or groups. This makes them more confident and helps them to learn more quickly.
13. Literacy and numeracy are generally well taught and used effectively in all areas of the curriculum. Older pupils have written to their pen pals in their partner schools in Europe, and Year 6 produce a regular and informative local newspaper. Younger pupils have written accurate captions for photographs and sketches on wall displays, and Year 4, for example, wrote detailed accounts to explain how they had designed a battery powered light. History and geography books contain well-written accounts showing that pupils have transferred the skills they learn in literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum. Numeracy skills are used effectively in most subjects. Year 6 work on fictional brochures for a seaside resort included tables in which high and low season prices had been calculated correctly. Pupils measure accurately in science and design and technology, for example, when measuring wood in Year 3 to make the cross bar for marionette puppets and when weighing out ingredients in cooking. Pupils in Year 2 use their knowledge of right angles to calculate the degree of turn for a screen turtle.
14. Pupils of all abilities, in both key stages, make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in the development of their artistic skills. Their work shows an increasing control over the media in which they are working and a greater attention to detail. They make sound progress in the development of knowledge and understanding and the work of well-known artists. Analysis of pupils' work and planning, and discussions with them and the co-ordinator, indicate that all pupils are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress in design and technology. Pupils in all classes are acquiring a good factual knowledge and a sound understanding of geographical skills. Achievement is considerably strengthened by the links to European schools. An examination of pupils' books, wall displays and discussions with the children indicates that they are taught appropriate historical skills and achieve at expected levels. Insufficient evidence of pupils' musical development was available during the

inspection upon which to make a secure judgement about their progress. The school is committed to providing its pupils with an appropriate range of musical experiences. Pupils sing and play accompaniments on classroom percussion instruments and invent their own rhythmic and pitch patterns. The school has maintained the good levels of achievement in physical education noted in the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes to their work and the school are very good in all years, and are a particular strength evident in all classes and aspects of school life. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to tackle difficult tasks. There is a high take-up of the additional school activities. Pupils ask sensible questions to increase their learning and are very prepared to discuss their work with their parents and teachers. Concentration and interest only falter on the rare occasions when pupils are given tasks that lack challenge. Relationships within the school are excellent and pupils have a well-developed respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They enjoy coming to school and have an obvious enthusiasm for all that the school offers. Behaviour is generally very good. Pupils understand clearly how their actions affect others and take great care to be considerate and polite.
16. Behaviour in class and around the school is very good. The incidence of unsatisfactory behaviour is very limited, as it is confined to some boys in Year 3. There have been no exclusions for some time. There is a complete absence of oppressive behaviour and all ages mix freely. Bullying is not tolerated. If there are differences of opinion, pupils are encouraged to talk about them. They make up their differences quickly and apologise if necessary.
17. Relationships between pupils, teachers and adults are excellent. Teachers can trust their pupils and they respect that trust. They have a sense of reverence in assemblies, taking an active part and opening their minds to the spirituality of the occasion. A group of Year 6 pupils were very natural and patient on a visit to an old people's home. They listened very carefully to what the older generation had to say and respected their opinions. On this and other occasions, pupils exhibit calm and thoughtful manners. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are learning to consider the different ways of life of their European counterparts effectively through the European Partnership.
18. Pupils show initiative and take responsibility when encouraged. Their deliberations in the school council are realistic and staff take careful note of what is proposed. Several key changes have been implemented in direct response to pupils' suggestions. Prefects take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils are ready to listen to alternative ideas in class discussions. Debates are well developed following a school initiative taken two years ago to improve debating skills. Opportunities to make choices and to learn from errors are limited in a few lessons, in art for example, because activities are over-directed.
19. Attendance, although generally satisfactory, is below the national average because of a small minority of poor attenders. Efforts over the last few years to improve the situation have not been altogether successful. Information provided by the traveller support group indicates that the attendance of the group of travellers has an overall detrimental effect of one per cent on the school's attendance percentage. Pupils are punctual for lessons and at the start of the day.
20. Pupils' attitude to their work, their overall behaviour in and out of class and their relationships with each other and with staff remain at the same high standards reported during the previous inspection. Attendance has not improved over the same period.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching was very good in thirty-eight per cent of the lessons observed and good in an additional forty-three per cent. It was satisfactory in sixteen per cent and unsatisfactory in only one lesson. The quality of teaching in English is good in both key stages. Mathematics teaching is very good in Key Stage 1, and good overall in Key Stage 2 where the single unsatisfactory lesson was seen. The skills of literacy and numeracy are generally well taught, and are used effectively in all areas of the curriculum as was seen when representative pupils from Key Stage 2 took notes in the school council and Year 2 pupils used their knowledge of 'angles of turn' to control a screen robot in IT. Standards of teaching have risen since the previous inspection. The percentage of very good teaching has doubled.
22. The quality of teaching of children under five is very good because teachers plan very thoroughly, giving children practical activities that are designed to achieve the desirable learning outcomes for their age. The quality of relationships is very good, and children feel secure and are ready to learn. The nursery nurses are skilfully deployed and play an active part in providing good opportunities in which children can learn and make progress. There is an appropriately high emphasis on social and speaking skills as well as introducing other aspects of the early years curriculum. Staff keep very detailed records, and plan exactly what aspects of the lesson they will watch particularly carefully in order to judge how well the children are doing.
23. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. Thirteen of the fourteen lessons observed were very good or good. Teaching is very good when teachers explain the lesson's purpose clearly because pupils know what they have to achieve, as was seen when Year 2 read the learning objective aloud with their teacher. Questions are asked very effectively to encourage pupils to give deeper and more reflective answers. In the best literacy and numeracy lessons in Year 1 and 2, group tasks are planned so that each 'table' has challenging work at the correct level of difficulty and knows what it has to do. Materials are well prepared and ready so that no time is wasted. Good lessons contain a wide variety of appropriate activities that keep pupils attentive and busy, and result in high quality learning and greater progress, as when Year 2 learned that subtraction was the inverse of addition. Standards of learning are not high enough on the few occasions when uncritical use is made of worksheets and children are set work that is repetitive or wastes time.
24. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 also good, particularly in the classes for older pupils. Thirteen of the nineteen lessons observed were good or very good. As in younger classes, pupils learn very effectively when they have been told what they will be able to do or will know at the end of the lesson. This enables them to focus on a target and measure their own progress towards its achievement. Where there is no such target or time scale, progress is reduced and learning is less effective. Positive relationships make pupils confident learners, as was seen in the group of Year 6 who have used their literacy and IT skills to put together a series of newspapers to send to their partner schools abroad. The later editions were much better than the earlier ones because pupils had been taught to evaluate them carefully, were keen to improve and took a genuine pride in their achievement. Good quality, systematic skills teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons puts pace and rigour into the learning and motivates the pupils to higher standards. It has a positive effect on the quality of writing and use of mathematics in other subjects including design and technology, information technology, geography and science. Teaching is sound but could be stronger in the literacy lessons where group activities rotate round the room during the week. They do not always

have precise and appropriate targets that challenge the pupils in the different groups at their correct level of difficulty. One numeracy lesson was unsatisfactory because there was a general lack of attention and some behaviour was not well managed. The pupils did not make enough progress.

25. Teachers deploy support staff and parent helpers very effectively in all parts of the school. They have been well trained at the efficiently run and imaginative literacy and numeracy workshops that take place three times a week. They are briefed carefully before the lesson starts and help to raise standards. Their work with small groups keeps the pupils focussed on the task in hand, and the strength of relationships within the school ensures that the children trust them and work as hard for them as they do for their class teachers. Effective support is given to pupils with special educational needs, as was seen when a support assistant sat with a pupil in Year 2 for a whole class lesson, quietly checking whether the pupil had understood the question and encouraging him to put up his hand with an answer. They both felt pleased when the pupil was successful and worked hard together to learn from mistakes. A specialist learning support assistant helps pupils from traveller families to make greater progress. Support is sensitive and well directed because it gives the pupils confidence and encourages them to try hard. Teachers take great care to ensure that all pupils are fully integrated into all the school's activities.
26. Teachers in both key stages expect the children to do well, and plan carefully to ensure high quality learning and greater progress. Although teachers plan very thoroughly, not enough evaluations are made of the outcomes from lessons so that later work can be focused even more sharply on pupils' needs. This concern was also noted at the time of the previous inspection. Several books do not contain enough comments that show pupils how they can improve. IT is not used enough in many lessons in most classes. The school works hard to make sure that all pupils learn effectively, but has made a special and successful effort to raise the standards reached by higher attaining pupils and those with a variety of particular need, including higher attaining older boys who find it difficult to put their thoughts into writing. Pupils in all classes learn very effectively because they are encouraged to work and concentrate hard. They gain new skills and knowledge quickly. Learning is only less effective when they do not know how to improve, are unclear why they have been set a particular task or their targets are not well defined. Homework is appropriate and reinforces the work covered in lessons, especially in Years 5 and 6. There is, however, no dialogue between parents and teachers through the pupils' reading diaries used by younger classes.
27. The arrangements for job sharing in Year 2 work extremely well. The teachers work and plan very closely together and pupils benefit from their combined strengths and expertise.

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

28. The quality and range of opportunities provided by the school for all pupils are good. The curriculum is broadly based and relevant to the needs of the pupils and closely reflects the aims of the school. All National Curriculum subjects are included and the school meets statutory curricular requirements. The curriculum for children under five is based on the Desirable Outcomes for Learning and is rich and relevant. The school has successfully managed the implementation of both the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. This is reflected in the good teaching. A particular strength of the school is the planned use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Well written accounts or

descriptions are used in the majority of subjects, as was seen when Year 5 wrote good factually based first person accounts as Victorian children and mill workers. There are many opportunities, in design and technology for example, for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in order to measure length and weight accurately.

29. The quality of the curriculum is enriched by the European links developed by the school. The project provides good opportunities for pupils to learn at first hand about Italy, Portugal, Tenerife and Ireland. Pupils at Our Lady's are able to communicate with their friends in partner schools by letter, fax and, more recently, through the Internet. They have the opportunity to learn about Italy and its culture from the Italian student teacher who is working at the school. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are learning basic Italian. All pupils have opportunities to experience art and food technology with an Italian emphasis and learn traditional Italian dances in Year 2. A further strength of the overall curriculum is the comprehensive swimming programme, which is well planned and ensures systematic progression for each group.
30. Aspects of the curriculum that are less well developed include the use of information technology in Key Stage 2. IT skills have not been taught systematically in the past and not enough time has been given to the subject. The school provision for pupils' development in the arts, whilst satisfactory overall, does not provide enough opportunities for them to develop their own creative and imaginative ideas in art and music. The lack of drama in the English curriculum means that opportunities to develop urgently required speaking skills are lost. The school has implemented schemes of work for most subjects since the last inspection, but the present system of planning for music does not take sufficient account of pupils' previous learning to ensure systematic development of their musical skills. The new national guidance for science and the foundation subjects, with the exception of art, has been adopted throughout the school. In many cases, teachers draw directly from these schemes for the content of lessons at the expense of medium-term planning. As a result there is no indication of how longer term objectives translate into manageable targets or when they are to be met.
31. The school is strongly committed to equal opportunities and works hard to meet the needs of all its pupils. All, including those with special educational needs or who come from traveller families, have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. They receive additional specific guidance from support teachers and assistants through a combination of well-organised in-class support and withdrawal in small groups or as individuals.
32. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Pupils are taught about health issues and how to care for the environment through aspects of science and geography. Appropriate arrangements are made for sex education. Pupils are made aware of the possibilities of drug misuse in science lessons in Year 5 that are supported by a member of the local police force. The school council provides a useful and relevant forum for discussing issues related to the school community. The quality of links with the local community is very good. For many years the school had strong links with 'Home Covert' and Year 6 was regularly involved in joint activities. They now visit the elderly at Dawood House.
33. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Good use is made of the local environment in science, as when the reception class searched the school grounds for mini-beasts, and in geography when Year 1 looked at shops near the school. Day visits, to the elderly for example, provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. The visiting textile artist made a considerable impact and helped pupils to produce the very impressive millennium frieze that

reflects the school's mission statement. The range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, although limited mainly to sport, is adequate overall. These extend the curriculum effectively and enable a significant number of pupils to attain higher personal standards in their chosen activities.

34. There are good professional links with local schools and other Catholic schools in the area. A good example was seen during the inspection week when pupils from the secondary school worked happily and effectively in Year 1 as part of a work experience scheme.
35. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is of very high quality. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The Christian ethos of the school permeates and underpins all its work. The headteacher creates an atmosphere of awe and wonder in his assemblies that touches the emotions and brings a rich spiritual dimension to pupils' lives. Achievement assemblies demonstrate the school as a caring and sharing Christian community. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and gives strong emphasis to moral values. All pupils are clearly taught the difference between right and wrong and the school has high expectations of their behaviour. They are encouraged to make responsible choices and to take responsibility for themselves, each other and the school. Many opportunities to consider moral issues are presented in assembly. A good example of spiritual, moral, and social development, integrated with the teaching of religious education and the provision for collective worship, was seen in the whole school assembly led by the reception class who told the story of Zacchaeus.
36. The headteacher and his caring staff provide excellent role models for courteous and considerate behaviour. The pupils' response to this ensures that that the school is an orderly and well-behaved community and that the very good ethos for learning is maintained. Teachers are successful in encouraging pupils to relate positively to each other. They work and play together happily. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively with a partner or in a group and to share equipment and resources. The school council provides pupils in Key Stage 2 with the opportunity to play a more significant role in the school community and enables them to develop a better understanding of the nature of responsibility.
37. The school's overall provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are given particular cultural and academic enrichment through the European project. Their experience of art, music and poetry contribute to an understanding of their own culture. Multicultural awareness is less strongly developed, as was reported at the last inspection. The school is now taking steps to address this issue by displaying posters and artefacts depicting other cultures. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to experience the art, music and literature from a full range of non-European cultures as part of their preparation for life in modern society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school takes considerable care for the academic and social progress of its pupils and has good procedures for monitoring their development. Targets are not yet set for all pupils as individuals, although the school is almost ready to implement a full programme. The school makes every effort to identify pupils who may have special educational needs at an early stage. However, there are no specific assessment procedures to aid identification. Progress on individual education plans is reviewed regularly but most targets are too general for parents or pupils to know when they have been reached. The school has good access to specialist services with which the school has very good relationships. The use of outside agencies is clearly documented.

39. The procedures for child protection are clear and follow the locally agreed practice. Although the headteacher gives firm leadership on these matters, having due regard for confidentiality, training for all staff is not up to date. Since the last report, the school continues to be very conscious of the health and safety of its pupils. A governor gives specialist advice and the local authority carries out risk assessment checks, passing on information to the school managers. Qualified first aiders are available throughout the school. The school nurse makes regular visits and assists with health education lessons. The personal and social education programme is carefully focused according to the different age groups. The community police officers and the school nurse make very valuable contributions to the overall programme.
40. The school continues to be very successful in promoting self-discipline. Teachers know that older pupils are mature enough to handle themselves well in different or sensitive situations. Examples of this can be seen in the work they do with the old and infirm in the community. The staff work well together to promote good behaviour. A member of the senior management team is responsible for maintaining the school's high standards of behaviour. She does this effectively and sensitively, and is much respected by pupils. The headteacher is only involved when high expectations are not met. The educational welfare officer helps with poor attendance and punctuality. The travellers' support group track the attendance of travellers and keep the school informed of their movements where possible. Not enough use is made of the computer based attendance records to identify weaknesses in attendance, or to recognise those whose attendance has improved or has been one hundred per cent. Assemblies to recognise the achievements of pupils are well conducted and pupils take an obvious delight in their friends' successes.
41. Parents are very satisfied with the behaviour and pupils say that there is no oppressive behaviour in the school. Bullies are not tolerated and any case of bullying would be quickly dealt with under the existing behaviour management strategies. Playtime and lunchtime are well managed and pupils relate equally well to assistants and the volunteers in school.
42. The school's assessment procedures for pupils under five are comprehensive and thorough. They ensure that teachers monitor children's development closely and enable them to plan for individual needs. Periodic assessment of attainment is made in the core subjects in both key stages and forms the basis of teachers' annual reports to parents. The information gained is used effectively to group pupils by ability in their numeracy and literacy lessons, and to identify groups who will benefit from additional teaching support. Whilst the school uses the information gained from assessment effectively to target areas for improving teaching, it does not do enough to ensure that pupils themselves have a clear understanding of what they need to learn next or how to improve, or to set targets for groups to achieve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents have positive views about the school. They are very satisfied with the way the school is led, the positive work ethic and the way in which the school produces mature and responsible children. Their main concern, expressed by a minority of parents, is the lack of interesting activities outside lessons. There are sporting and other opportunities and a full programme of visits. The range of residential visits is to be extended. Pupils also take part in parish events.
44. The school works very closely with parents and is well thought of in the community. Parents appreciate the good teaching. They find it easy to approach the teachers if they have a problem and to discuss their concerns about their children's progress. The school derives real benefit from the parents who volunteer their help. Ten parents have completed an accredited 'Helping

in schools' course. Five parents were observed making a valuable contribution to the group work in a mathematics workshop for Year 2. This was not only stimulating for the children but also greatly rewarding to the volunteers, and strengthened the bond between the parents and the teacher. There are regular procedures for taking parents' views into account, which have led, for example, to changes in the arrangements for parents' interview evenings.

45. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The prospectus is a very organised document with clear messages about faith in the school and its pride in what it achieves. There is, however limited information about the curriculum. There is no mention about information technology. Letters to parents are generally friendly and factual. The annual reports to parents on their children's progress are clear but they do not give suggestions on how parents can help or encourage continued improvement. This also applies to the reading diaries used by a majority of parents in the younger classes. These lack diagnostic comments or information about how parents can help their children raise their standards of reading. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently involved in the review of their individual education plans.
46. There are very good relationships with parents of nursery children at the start of their school life, with a good induction programme for early years. Children read regularly with their parents and are pleased to discuss their work with them. The quality of homework in Years 5 and 6 is a strength and many parents become involved with project work. Parents attend achievement assemblies and give their full support at school events. The partnership with parents in the education and guidance of their children remains very effective, and the high standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The headteacher is committed to raising standards within a strong Catholic ethos. He provides strong and effective leadership with the support and guidance of the governing body. The key to his success is the respect that he generates and the excellent working relationships he has established in the school. This results in a shared commitment to providing the highest quality school environment and to raising standards of teaching and learning. Much care and thought was given to formulating the school's aims and values. They acknowledge the school's Christian foundation and its place in the local community, and are fully reflected in all its work. This is seen most clearly in the high standards of behaviour and personal development that the pupils display. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively through regular meetings and monitoring visits. The chair of governors and the headteacher work in close partnership to ensure very good communication and involvement at all levels. This enables the governing body to monitor the school's performance and its progress towards agreed targets closely.
48. All staff share the headteacher's vision for the school and teachers meet regularly with subject co-ordinators to plan for curriculum development and training. Time and resources are allocated appropriately to subjects that are a priority in the school development plan. Monitoring of teaching and learning then takes place in these subjects. For example, the mathematics co-ordinator has been able to observe the numeracy hour being taught in other classes. However, the subject co-ordinators' role in monitoring pupils' work and standards in their subjects is not rigorous or systematic. There is no agreed regular programme for assessing standards for looking at pupils' books across the school. As a result, some inconsistencies in standards of work, and in teachers' marking and planning are not identified early enough. Although there is no formal appraisal system in place, the headteacher carries out his

- classroom monitoring role effectively and the information gained is used to help teachers plan the next stage of their professional development.
49. The headteacher and governing body manage the school's finances very effectively. Financial planning is very good and tightly linked to the much improved school development plan. It is every effective in ensuring that expenditure is directed towards agreed priorities. The governing body, guided by the headteacher, is fully involved in decision making and has a high level of confidence in the spending plans of the senior management team. The school development plan is detailed and sets clear targets for improvement. It is carefully costed and links well to the school's financial and other resources. It is used effectively to guide spending and enables targets to be met, and staffing and resources to be maintained at a good level. The governing body budgets carefully for major improvements such as the new junior toilet block and library area. All additional funding received by the school is very clearly directed towards the appropriate purpose. The money for special educational needs is allocated effectively. Expenditure is regularly monitored against the budget. The school continues to provide good value for money.
 50. The school secretary carries out financial control and day-to-day administration to a very high standard. Information technology is used very well to support financial planning and management. The computerised system gives easy access to clear and accessible statements of accounts, enabling the headteacher and governors to monitor spending closely. The most recent auditor's report found the systems used by the school to be very good and there were no outstanding points to be addressed. The governors are aware that their decisions must be as cost effective as possible and the school applies best value principles by gathering information before spending decisions are taken. Projects are scrutinised and their effectiveness monitored.
 51. The management and organisation of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school's policy and routines meet the full requirements of the Code of Practice. The co-ordination and administration of procedures is thorough. All individual education plans are up to date. The named governor for special educational needs has a good overview of the provision.
 52. There is a good match of teachers' qualifications and experience to meet the needs of the curriculum, apart from music. This shows itself in the quality of teaching, geography in Year 2 being a good example. Staff are deployed appropriately and match of teachers to co-ordinating roles maximises their experience and expertise. Classroom support assistants are well trained and demonstrate a good level of skill in the exercise of their responsibilities. They work effectively with the teacher in managing the provision of special help for pupils. Newly appointed staff receive a good level of support. Staff development is closely linked to the school development and is effective in improving both teaching and learning. Training for the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies has been successful in providing a structured and effective programme of learning which has a positive impact on both the quality of teaching and learning.
 53. The school is well resourced overall. Although resources for physical education are good, there is not enough appropriately sized in-door apparatus for the youngest children and they are not able to develop their skills to the full. There are insufficient resources for mental mathematics to ensure that all pupils are fully involved. Resources for music are inadequate, as the range of percussion instruments is limited and there are very few audio resources and not enough materials, apart from songbooks, to support teaching. Teachers use resources effectively to support both teaching and learning. Good use is made of the local authority loan system for historical artefacts because pupils can touch them and get a genuine feel for the past. The local area, including the links with local business and industry, is used to good effect to enrich the curriculum. The accommodation is satisfactory in spite of the problems caused by subsidence,

and is kept very clean by the school caretaker and his staff. The school has a large grassed area for games, but the outside environment is uninviting as there are no flowerbeds or landscaping.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve standards still further, the headteacher, staff and governors should continue to work together to:

1. raise standards in information technology paragraphs (4, 11, 26, 30, 80, 86, 104-108), as already indicated in the school development plan, by:

- increasing the level of staff confidence in the skills teaching and use of IT across the curriculum
- developing appropriate records of pupil attainment and targets in all classes
- increasing the level of skills teaching to ensure a deeper cover of all aspects of the National Curriculum
- including IT activities in all subject schemes of work
- including appropriate use of IT in short term planning

2. raise the standard of day-to-day assessment to the level of the best by:

- making learning objectives clear to pupils at the start of the lesson and using them as the basis for assessing individual progress
paragraphs (24, 26, 42, 69, 70, 85)
- writing more comments in books that show pupils how they can improve
paragraphs (26, 69, 79, 85)
- broadening the range of strategies used to differentiate group work and including precise targets where appropriate
paragraphs (18, 23, 24, 42, 69)

The governing body should also consider the following when drawing up their action plan:

- subject co-ordinators do not have an agreed regular programme for assessing standards by looking at pupils' work across the school
paragraphs (48, 71, 100, 103)
- reading diaries do not contain comments on pupils' progress that let parents know how they can help to raise standards
paragraphs (26, 45, 66)
- individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs do not always include precise measurable targets for the children to achieve
paragraphs (12, 38, 64)
- pupils' experience of the art, music and literature from a range of non-European cultures is limited
paragraphs (37, 91)
- there is no qualified teacher responsible for music
paragraphs (52, 109-113)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	38	43	16	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16	209
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	26

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.0
National comparative data	5.4

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
	1999	20	13	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	20
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	27	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82	94	100
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	20
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	33	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	10	17	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	7
	Girls	14	13	11
	Total	20	19	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74	70	67
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	8
	Girls	9	9	11
	Total	15	15	19

Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56	56	70
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	172
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	29.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	20

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15

Number of pupils per FTE adult	16
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	407461
Total expenditure	395664
Expenditure per pupil	1642
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	11797

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	242
Number of questionnaires returned	47

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	32	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	32	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	30	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	47	11	0	4
The teaching is good.	79	19	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	34	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	11	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	23	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	60	36	0	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	79	21	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	32	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	32	17	2	9

Other issues raised by parents

No letters were received from parents. Arrangements for homework are appropriate and are good in the classes for older pupils. Parents of younger pupils hear their children read on a regular basis but do not get enough information in the reading diaries to show them how to support the school's work with any areas of difficulty. The school would arrange evening curriculum meetings but insufficient parents have indicated an interest. Some parents at the meeting were concerned about the difficulty of the reading texts used by older pupils. Inspectors did not find any that were inappropriate. Texts were challenging but within the pupils' understanding.

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

54. The school makes very good quality provision for its youngest children. There is a broad, relevant and practical curriculum that promotes high quality learning in both the nursery and the reception class. As a result, the youngest children make a confident and secure start to school and are well on course to achieve the standards expected for pupils beginning compulsory schooling in all areas of learning.
55. Children's personal and social development flourishes in the nursery and reception class. Teaching is very good because staff are skilled in promoting personal and social development. Children feel confident and secure in the classroom and understand what is expected of them. They work and play well both in groups and independently. They take responsibility for moving around the activities, finding their own labelled milk when they are ready for it, clearing away equipment and sweeping up the sand. Children playing with the sand and water in the reception class co-operate quietly together. They move sensibly around the classroom and school, take turns with toys and books and show respect for the adults working with them. A notable strength in their development is the way in which they work together with a minimum of supervision whilst their teacher is engaged with another group. Behaviour is consistently very good and no incidents of inappropriate conduct were observed during the inspection.
56. A significant proportion of children start in the nursery with speaking and listening skills that are below average. Teachers are aware of this and the teaching of the key skills of language is consistently very good. Tasks are well matched to children's needs and careful records are kept on their progress. By the time they are five, the majority are well on the way to achieving the standards expected for children of their age although for a small minority, language skills remain below average. With these few exceptions, children listen attentively and handle books sensibly. Most are beginning to talk confidently. Some can talk about the books they like or re-tell a story from a picture book and some can already read simple stories. During the inspection, a group of higher attaining children in the reception class used word cards to build their own sentences and could punctuate them correctly with capital letters and full stops. Another group of the youngest children used simple reference books to help them make their own booklets about mini-beasts. They are developing their writing and can copy letter shapes correctly.
57. Children are taught early mathematical skills very effectively in the nursery through well planned play activities often linked to the class theme. For example, one group observed working with the nursery teacher played a dice game in which they constructed a realistic beef burger. This practical activity linked with their cafe play corner and reinforced their learning of numbers to six very successfully. By the time they are five, most children can recognise, count and sequence numbers up to ten. They can identify shapes, recognise patterns and sort and sequence different objects. They record their work effectively in a variety of ways and play number and shape games together to reinforce their learning. The quality of teaching is very good. Detailed records of progress ensure that tasks are well matched to children's understanding and extension work is provided for children who need it.

58. Children are developing their knowledge and understanding of the world appropriately through topic work and science. During the inspection, both classes were studying mini-beasts found in the school grounds. The quality of teaching was very good because the activities were very well prepared and enabled the children to learn through excited investigation. Children searched carefully and showed respect and care for the creatures they found. They worked sensibly together sharing collecting equipment and showing each other their finds. They know that insects have six legs and that a spider cannot be an insect as it has eight. Their drawings showed very careful attention to this important detail! Children observed playing with water knew that some objects sink and others float, and could attempt sensible explanations for this. Children making model mini-beasts out of cardboard tubes and pipe cleaners were able to use simple equipment such as sticky tape dispensers and could explain clearly what they were making. The children feel secure with information technology and make good progress on the computer. The youngest nursery children use the mouse confidently to drag and drop on screen and reception pupils can print out their finished work.
59. Children under five make sound progress in the development of their physical skills. The quality of teaching is very good because the curriculum is planned very successfully to ensure that each activity contributes to the development of children's physical abilities. These include large movements, such as running, jumping and climbing in the hall or outside, and small actions including accurate pencil control and hand-eye co-ordination. Teachers plan well-structured physical education lessons and give clear demonstrations of what is expected. There are high expectations of response and behaviour. Reception children were observed listening carefully to instructions, used the space sensibly and moved confidently on and off the apparatus. Progress for the youngest children in these lessons is limited because some of the indoor apparatus is too large for them to use safely and imaginatively. Physical development is also extended through good play opportunities in the classroom, and in the outside fenced area with wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. Well-planned computer activities support children's progress in developing hand control and keyboard skills, and the children's use of tools and equipment such as scissors, paste spreaders and construction toys shows they are making good progress.
60. The teachers and nursery nurses use the class topic to plan an appropriate range of creative experiences in art, craft, music and dance. The quality of teaching is very good and the children respond positively. The themed play corner in the classroom provides good opportunities for imaginative role-play. Work displayed around the classrooms indicates that children use paint and craft materials appropriately although no children were observed painting during the inspection. Sand and water activities also provide opportunities for creative and imaginative play. Children's singing is lively and confident.
61. The school has worked hard to put a stimulating Early Years curriculum in place. Teachers show a very good understanding of how young children learn. The nursery nurses and classroom assistants support and complement the work of the class teachers very effectively. Teachers regularly plan imaginative, practical activities that are chosen to develop basic skills across the early years curriculum. High standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Criticisms relating to assessment have been addressed very thoroughly. The children are well organised and approach their work with confidence. They co-operate with each other in shared activities and are enthusiastic about their work. There is a calm, settled and purposeful learning atmosphere in both classrooms, which ensures the children have a secure and productive start to school life.

ENGLISH

62. Pupils achieved above average standards in the 1999 national tests for seven year olds in writing but were below average in reading. The results were not as high as in previous years, but were well above average when compared with similar schools because an above average percentage of pupils reached level 3 in both reading and writing. Results for eleven year olds were close to the national average. Standards had risen steadily following a very disappointing year in 1997, and compared very well with similar schools because one in four pupils reached level 5.
63. Teachers had under-estimated how well the seven year old pupils would achieve in their writing tests and how the eleven year olds would achieve in English overall. The school examined the reasons for the discrepancies very thoroughly, and has set challenging targets for the current Year 6 that are more firmly based on an analysis of the outcomes of earlier standardised tests and teachers' own knowledge of pupils' potential. This is leading to the identification of individual pupil targets, and has already helped to raise standards through the establishment of particular groups that need extra support. Examples include the group of higher attaining boys in Year 6 who are taught together in literacy lessons because they have difficulty in expressing their thoughts in writing. The impact has been an increase in their own confidence in themselves and improved standards of work.
64. Standards observed in lessons and pupils' books during the inspection are above the national average for the end of both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach appropriate levels because they are very well supported by well trained support staff. Some of the targets in individual education plans are unspecific and progress against them is difficult to measure. This makes it harder for pupils to know how well they are doing. Specialist staff give children from traveller families very good support in lessons or groups. This makes them more confident and helps them to learn more quickly.
65. Standards of speaking and listening are secure but some pupils lack confidence when speaking in formal situations, especially some of the boys in Years 5 and 6. This has an impact on the quality of their writing because they do not have all the words they need to express themselves as clearly as they would like. Most pupils talk with increasing confidence in a wide range of contexts, and listen attentively to teachers and each other, asking questions to gain understanding and develop their own ideas. Listening is often intense, as when younger children follow a new story, older pupils give thoughtful answers to questions in lessons showing that they have been listening carefully, and the whole school sits enthralled in the daily assembly. Some classes do not have enough opportunities for drama and the co-ordinator is aware that this aspect of work requires further development in order to develop confident speaking skills.
66. Standards of reading are above average in all age groups. Pupils are fluent and confident at levels higher than those expected for their ages. Year 2 pupils know that punctuation is important when reading aloud, and try hard to be expressive especially when reading dialogue. They know the basic letter sounds and use them effectively to work out unfamiliar words, although some are occasionally careless and will offer nonsense words without considering whether the reading makes sense. Middle and higher attaining pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and can explain why books have a contents page and index, and that the index is sorted in alphabetical order. Pupils are secure readers by the end of Key Stage 2, and know how to use the Dewey classification system to find books in the library. Higher attaining pupils are reading demanding text, Jules Verne for example. Some parents at the meeting expressed concern that some books were inappropriate. Several texts are

demanding but are within the ability of the pupils, who know exactly what to do if they come across unfamiliar words, are enjoying the stories and are keen to continue. Reading records and diaries contain detailed lists of titles and dates when books were completed. They do not contain information about any aspects of reading where the pupil needs more practice or is having difficulty. This makes it much harder for parents, especially those with younger children, to know how they can help. It also limits the progress pupils can make.

67. Standards in writing are above average at the end of both key stages, and reflect the effective skills teaching found in the literacy hour, the systematic approach to spelling and handwriting, and the emphasis given to imaginative writing. Pupils in Year 2 have made good progress since September and are writing increasingly complex sentences, use a wider vocabulary and include correct punctuation. Pupils in Year 6 also make good progress and are becoming more accurate in the use of grammatical structures in their writing. Longer pieces of writing are divided into paragraphs correctly, and imaginative writing is revised carefully, often several times, to ensure that the final draft is of good quality. Spelling is generally accurate in both key stages, and handwriting is fluent, joined and legible.
68. Literacy is taught well and is used effectively in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have written to their pen pals in their partner schools in Europe, and a group of Year 6 produce a regular and informative local newspaper. Younger pupils write accurate captions for photographs and sketches on wall displays, and Year 4, for example, wrote detailed accounts to explain how they had designed a battery powered light. History and geography books contain well-written accounts showing that pupils have transferred the skills they learn in literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum. This positive judgement is supported by parents who have noticed improved standards in the writing children do at home. IT is used effectively by older children for redrafting work or producing fair copies.
69. The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. The best teaching and the greatest progress occur in the lessons that start with a clear explanation of what the children will be learning. Good teaching is also seen in the use of questioning that makes pupils think more deeply about their answers and in the well planned mix of interesting activities that move forward at a good pace. Learning is effective because pupils concentrate more and put greater effort into their work. A good example was seen in a Year 6 lesson on complex sentences. Support staff and parent helpers are used very effectively, especially in group work, because they have been well prepared on how to help the pupils, or when not to help too much, and keep the pupils concentrating on the task in hand. Teachers are very familiar with the national literacy strategy and use it effectively. However, some work planned for group activities is too open ended, especially for older pupils, and pupils are assessed on how far they have got rather than being set and told a particular target based on the teacher's understanding of their ability. By contrast, pupils in Years 2 and 6 are given very precise group targets and learn more quickly because they know exactly what they have to achieve. Teaching and learning is less effective when teachers' assessments of how well groups or individuals have completed the work are not used rigorously as the basis for the next stage of learning, or when books are marked but seldom contain comments that show pupils how they can improve.
70. Standards have risen in all aspects of the subject since the previous inspection. Pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds more successfully when reading unfamiliar text. Concerns about the lack of opportunity for higher attaining pupils to produce extended pieces of writing have been addressed successfully, and pupils write at length in letters, stories, book reviews, diaries, factual accounts in other subjects and newspaper articles. Redrafting is used more widely to raise standards, and higher attaining pupils are given work that is challenging and requires effort if it is to be completed successfully. The quality of teaching for younger pupils has

improved and good standards have been maintained for older classes. There are continuing concerns that many teachers do not have a systemised way in which to link their assessment of how well pupils have completed their work to their planning for later lessons. This is particularly evident in group work. Written homework is used far more effectively to develop work done in class, especially in Year 6.

71. The two experienced co-ordinators work hard to support their colleagues with advice and materials, and see all medium term plans and the half-termly reviews. The headteacher has monitored standards of teaching and learning in every class and has discussed the lessons with the teachers concerned. Teachers have observed each other in year group pairs. This has helped to raise standards and spread good practice. The co-ordinators do not currently have an opportunity to form an overview of standards as there are no formal arrangements for them to see all the books on a regular basis and they do not observe lessons beyond their "pair." They do not have formal opportunities to comment on or influence short term planning.

MATHEMATICS

72. Seven-year-old pupils reached very high standards in the 1999 national tests in comparison with other schools because they all achieved the expected level 2. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 3 was also above average. Standards over the past four years have been consistently high. The results of the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds showed that standards were close to the national average when compared with all schools, and compared very well with similar schools because of the percentage of pupils reaching level 5. Over the past two years standards have risen considerably and at a much faster rate than nationally. Assessment procedures in mathematics are good. The school makes good use of standardised tests to monitor pupils' achievement and progress, and to set appropriate end of key stage targets.
73. During the inspection Year 2 pupils were working at and above the expected levels for the end of Key Stage 1. Higher attaining pupils are achieving consistently at the expected level and often beyond in their understanding of number. There is a wide range of ability within the current year group but current standards are above average overall. These findings are similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress towards the standards expected of seven-year-olds. The practical mathematics workshops held three times a week consolidate pupils' mathematics skills and contribute to their progress.
74. Pupils have a sound grasp of number concepts by the age of seven. They have become increasingly familiar with mathematics vocabulary and are able to talk knowledgeably about their method of working. Pupils count and order numbers to one hundred correctly and understand the place value of each digit. Their understanding of addition and subtraction is secure and they apply these operations in various contexts successfully, for instance calculating mentally, solving algebraic problems and when working with money. Regular practice enables pupils to develop different strategies for solving problems mentally, including their understanding that subtraction is the inverse of addition. The regular attention given by teachers to counting on in twos, fives and tens helps pupils to become increasingly confident in their understanding and recalling multiplication facts. They apply their knowledge of doubling to help them find unknown multiplication facts. Pupils use their knowledge of multiplication tables to solve problems involving division. They sort data and

record and interpret the information on block graphs. Pupils use both standard and non-standard metric units of measure in the context of length, weight and capacity and are able to read simple measuring scales. They are developing a satisfactory knowledge of time and are able to read the time to the hour, half-hour and quarter hour on an analogue or digital clock. Pupils recognise and name common two- and three-dimensional shapes.

75. Eleven year old pupils are working confidently at the expected level for the end of Key Stage 2. Standards have risen since the last inspection and are now above average. Higher attaining pupils achieve consistently at and often beyond the expected level. The quality of pupils' learning seen in lessons and the rate of progress are variable, and improve during the later years of the key stage. Although the overall quality of teaching is good, it is stronger in the classes containing older pupils. The overall progress made by pupils is good. Pupils' learning was unsatisfactory in only one lesson and was directly related to the quality of teaching. Pupils' progress in understanding how to carry out calculations is greatly helped by frequent opportunities to explain how they arrive at their answers. They are often given work at different levels to meet the needs of different attainment groups within the class. This also helps pupils to make good progress when it is set at an appropriately challenging level for all groups, as was seen in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and traveller pupils also make good progress as a result of the very good provision that the school makes to meet their specific needs.
76. Eleven year old pupils are able to use a number of strategies for solving number problems mentally. They have sound knowledge of informal and standard written methods. Their understanding of the four operations of number is good and they apply these successfully in different contexts, for example, when calculating fractional proportions of an amount of money working with decimal fractions. Pupils understand percentages and recognise their fractional and decimal equivalents. They understand perimeter and area, and use the formula when finding the area of compound shapes that can be split into rectangles. They have a secure understanding of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils recognise acute and obtuse angles and use a protractor to measure and draw angles to the nearest degree. All pupils collect and record data represented on a range of charts and graphs, for instance, information about eye colour. They use their knowledge and understanding of time to solve problems by interpreting information presented in timetables. Pupils also find the range, mode, mean and median of a set of data.
77. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good. It is consistently high in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is more variable in Key Stage 2, although good overall. One lesson was unsatisfactory because behaviour was not managed correctly, and pupils wasted time and made little progress. The overall good quality of teaching in both key stages is consistent with the findings of the last inspection. The notable feature of very good teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1, is the teachers' understanding of individual needs and the high expectations of achievement they communicate to pupils. They respond positively to these expectations and this contributes significantly to the quality of their learning. Praise is used effectively to reward successes, effort and attentiveness. It increases pupils' confidence and encourages them to try hard. For example, Year 2 responded very well to the challenge of handling larger numbers when revisiting the lesson's learning objectives in the plenary session. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and have quickly adapted their teaching to the National Numeracy Strategy.
78. The quality of teachers' planning is sound. The weekly structure promotes meaningful learning experiences over a sequence of lessons. Lessons have a clear focus and teachers communicate clearly to pupils what they expect them to know by the end of the lesson. Pupils' understanding of the purpose of the work they are doing ensures significant progress. There is a wide spread

of ability within classes and teachers generally plan activities to meet the needs of the different groups. Work is set, for the most part, at an appropriately challenging level to extend the learning of pupils' of all abilities. Good examples are seen in Year 6 when finding the common denominator to solve problems involving fractions, and in Year 2 work on number sequences. Support staff are well briefed and provide very effective support and guidance for lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. This enables them to access the tasks and generally make good progress. The arrangements made for teaching of targeted groups to improve standards in identified areas of need helps pupils to work at an appropriate pace and have a positive effect on progress.

79. Teachers use an effective range of methods and resources to develop pupils' understanding. Good use of questioning, particularly when matched to the knowledge of individual pupils, helps to clarify their understanding of concepts and methods of working. Teachers give clear explanations and demonstrate new concepts and methods to move pupils' learning forward. Good monitoring of pupils' work enables teachers to intervene and give appropriate support or to provide additional tasks that further extend pupils' learning. In the best lessons teachers make good use of well-timed interventions to make effective teaching points to the whole class. Day-to-day assessment of pupils is satisfactory and sometimes good, particularly in Year 2 where pupils are regularly re-grouped on the basis of daily progress. Teachers use the plenary session effectively to clarify misunderstandings and consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding of the learning objectives. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously but does not always contain sufficient guidance to show pupils how they might improve their work. Insufficient use is made practical resources such as number fans in some classes to fully involve all pupils in solving mental mathematics problems.
80. Leadership and management of mathematics are good and characterised by a clear sense of purpose and direction. An appropriate range of strategies is in place to raise standards. For example, all teachers have been observed teaching and the headteacher monitors their weekly planning. Since the last inspection the subject action plan has been improved and now shows clearly how the agreed targets are to be met. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum, particularly in geography, design and technology and history, and as part of pupils' everyday activities. For example, Year 2 make imaginative use of number sequences when answering the attendance register. Although some use is made of information technology to support work in measurement and data handling, there is not sufficient emphasis on its use across the mathematics curriculum.

SCIENCE

81. In 1999 teachers assessed that standards in Year 2 were above the national expectation for pupils aged seven. The standards achieved by eleven year olds in national tests were well below average. Over a period of four years, results have been consistently below average. Even so, the 1999 results were better than those obtained by pupils in schools with a similar intake because an above average percentage of pupils reached the higher level 5. The inspection confirms that standards in the current Year 2 remain above national expectations. Pupils have studied living and non-living things, and sort animals into groups correctly, giving clear explanations for the choices and describing the main characteristics of each group. They know what happens to different materials when heated and compare results. Standards are in line with national averages in all aspects of the curriculum at the end of Year 6, and girls do as well as boys. They study living things carefully and can identify food chains in a pond. Their practical and investigative skills have developed appropriately and they are able to construct a fair test, investigating for example the speed of travel of a cotton reel. They make precise observations of their experiments and record their findings clearly.

82. Standards in science are improving steadily, especially in Key Stage 2, because the school has introduced a scheme of work that ensures that all aspects of the science curriculum are taught systematically. This has also improved standards in those aspects that were judged to be weaker at the last inspection, notably opportunities for practical work by younger pupils, and the study of materials and their properties in Key Stage 2.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages and pupils have very positive attitudes to science. Lessons are well organised. Teachers prepare resources carefully and ensure that everything they need is to hand, ensuring that pupils can set to work promptly and make the best use of the time available. Very good attention is given to safety issues to ensure pupils' welfare. For example, the teacher constantly reinforced the need for care when handling the samples in a Year 6 lesson on microbes in food mould, which had been carefully prepared in securely taped plastic packaging. Teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the subject they are teaching, leading to greater pupil confidence. Explanations are very clear and extend pupils' understanding. A notable example during the inspection was in a Year 5 lesson on healthy diets. The pupils were interested and asked many questions in order to deepen their understanding, because the teacher's explanations of the different food types was so clear and was presented in an interesting way,
84. Teachers have improved their teaching of scientific skills, particularly in the classes for older pupils. Year 3 pupils, although not observed in lessons, talked enthusiastically about how they had searched for different materials around the school, and carried out experiments with cress seeds and celery to observe growth and change. Skills are developed very well in Year 4 where almost all the science covered is approached through investigation and experimentation. These pupils are confident to work practically and take careful note of their results. Practical work in Year 6 is well structured by the teacher and pupils are beginning to take responsibility for planning their own work.
85. Teachers record pupils' progress systematically and know what standard they have reached. They use this information effectively to target groups for support or specialist teaching. Their use of day-to-day assessment as a tool for planning the content of the next lesson is less effective. Not all teachers record which pupils have achieved the lesson objectives, or who will need more support or challenge in the next lesson. As a result, the needs of some pupils in these classes, particularly those capable of higher attainment, are not fully met. Few teachers use marking to tell pupils how they can improve their work, or set them targets for the next stage of learning. Consequently few pupils have a clear understanding of their own progress.
86. The science co-ordinator is competent and enthusiastic. She has a good understanding of how to move the subject forward but her role in monitoring standards is currently underdeveloped. The new scheme of work ensures that pupils can make steady progress from year to year but as yet it has not been fine tuned by the school to ensure that science teaching links effectively with other areas of the curriculum. The use of IT to support work in science is currently unsatisfactory.

ART

87. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in art to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, discussions with pupils and teachers about their work, an examination of teachers' planning and pupils' art on display indicate that the subject is taught appropriately. Pupils of all abilities, in both key stages, make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in the development of their art skills. Their work shows an increasing control over the media in which they are working and greater attention to detail. They make sound progress in the development of knowledge and understanding about art and the work of well-known artists.
88. Younger pupils produce a satisfactory range of work that incorporates the use of various media including paint, pastels, pencil and textiles. Year 1 work effectively with paints, mixing to achieve particular colours and textures. In the lesson seen they explored printing with a variety of objects, such as cotton reels and pre-formed sponges. Pupils worked carefully until they were able to gauge more accurately the amount of paint needed to produce an effective print. Year 2 pupils learn the importance of observation when they make detailed drawings of flying machines influenced by the work of Leonardo da Vinci and when drawing from nature. Higher attaining pupils begin to experiment with techniques for representing light and shade. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are introduced to a range of famous artists and this is reflected in much of the work they produce. Year 2 pupils have made good use of an art-based computer programme to create pictures based on the spatial concepts and colours used by the Dutch artist Mondrian.
89. Older pupils extend their skills and techniques. Sketchbooks are used appropriately to explore ideas and techniques before attempting the main piece of artwork. Pupils learn to make good use of line to record distinctive outlines of shape, to take careful note of space and proportion when arranging objects and people in a composition, and to extend their use of shade and tone when working with different media. For example, the Year 6 paintings of Van Gogh's Sunflowers demonstrated that pupils had closely observed the wide range of shade and tone that are combined in each flower. Higher attaining pupils begin to represent the reflection of light in the vase. Year 5 use the collage techniques, learned from the artist in residence, to good effect in a scene reflecting their science work on the life cycle of plants.
90. Teachers plan for the systematic teaching of skills and, in the two lessons seen, pupils were given time to practise the skills and techniques they needed to use for the main project. This extends the quality of their learning, as can be seen in the examples of high quality work displayed throughout the school. For example, the copies of Van Gogh's Sunflowers by Year 1 show good use of texture and very good qualities of shape and colour. Planning is satisfactory and lessons have a clear focus. The development of pupils' knowledge is well integrated with practical art activities. Teachers respond directly and positively to pupils' work within the course of lessons. This successfully encourages pupils to work purposefully and carefully. Pupils enjoy art activities and concentrate on their tasks. They are proud of their finished products and discuss their work confidently. Resources are well prepared and classroom assistants and voluntary helpers are well briefed and provide appropriate support for all pupils.
91. Termly projects focus on the work of well-known artists such as Van Gogh, Mackie and Monet to provide effective starting points for the development of pupils' skills and understanding. However, many tasks are teacher-directed and focus on copying the paintings rather than providing sufficient scope for pupils to develop their own creative and imaginative ideas. Pupils' experience of the work of famous artists makes a satisfactory contribution to their broader spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn from the art of non-western cultures. The artist-in-residence brought in to lead the 'millennium wall' project has raised the profile of textiles in the art curriculum, and

gave staff and pupils an excellent opportunity to benefit from working with an artist. The completed mural provides an impressive pictorial record of the pupils and staff who worked in the school at the turn of the century, and strongly reflects the school's Christian background and close links with other countries. Artwork displayed around the school celebrates pupils' achievements and shows their learning and progress in the subject.

92. Since the last inspection a scheme of work identifying progression of skills has been developed. This provides appropriate guidance to support teachers' planning. The school has made progress in broadening the range of media used and plans to take this further. The new co-ordinator has a clear sense of purpose and direction for the development of the subject and has put in place guidance to support teacher assessment of pupils' work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. No design and technology lessons took place during the inspection. Analysis of pupils' work, planning and talking with pupils and the subject co-ordinator indicate that all pupils are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress in both key stages.
94. Pupils in both key stages develop making skills at an appropriate rate. Younger pupils learn how to cut, shape and join materials together, using different methods of fixing, including sewing. They work with an appropriate range of materials including fabric, wood and food. Pupils have good opportunities to evaluate manufactured products. For instance, Year 2 gave careful consideration to a range of puppets before creating their own design for hand puppets. They produced an interesting and imaginative range of designs for their own puppets. These showed careful and accurate cutting out and joining. The addition of interesting details gave each its own individual character. Pupils have many opportunities to apply their mathematics skills in design and technology, for example, when measuring wood to make the cross bar for marionette puppets and when weighing out ingredients in cooking.
95. Older pupils continue to progress in their general understanding of materials, construction and structures. Work in design and technology links well to other subjects of the curriculum, in particular literacy, numeracy and science. Pupils' written accounts describing how they plan to make their designs and evaluation of manufactured products contribute directly to the development of their literacy skills. Projects, such as the Year 4 purses, the Year 3 evaluation of different sandwiches and disassembling of packaging, provide good opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics skills of measuring and data handling. Pupils' understanding of the combination of interesting design and functional fitness for purpose was clearly revealed in the Year 4 work on torches. They produced an interesting range of designs, particularly the torch made from a large cardboard drinking cup in which the straw was utilised as a switch. Pupils showed a good awareness of the different components of torches incorporating a reflector to diffuse the beam of light. The project also consolidated pupils' knowledge and understanding of electrical circuits and switches. By Year 6 pupils incorporate greater detail into their design plans and explain clearly the processes involved in making. However, there is little written evaluation of their finished products or sketches to show the match between the original design and the finished article or model. This was also noted at the last inspection. Pupils' work shows a good awareness of the need for accuracy in cutting and shaping.

96. Since the last inspection the school has adopted the national scheme of work. However, this is not developed into a medium term plan to show how learning is to be sequenced and when the different objectives are to be addressed. The scheme provides a good balance of wide ranging projects throughout the year to capture pupils' interest. The progression and enjoyment of pupils is accelerated when they have an opportunity to take part in projects organised by external institutions such as Sheffield University. Year 6 pupils took part in a workshop that required pupils to design and build a flying machine using a specified construction kit. The project created a great deal of interest and Year 5 carried out the project in school. The subject is appropriately resourced. There is a well-resourced and organised area for food technology. It is supported effectively by the new co-ordinator who has a clear view about the development of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

97. Pupils in all classes are acquiring a good factual knowledge and a sound understanding of geographical skills. Pupils in Year 1 have drawn detailed maps of the local area and have made effective use of photographs to demonstrate their growing understanding that a map represents a real place. They made good use of their literacy skills when they wrote clearly about their walk round the area. Year 2 have learned how to use simple atlases and think about the location of seaside resorts on the east coast in relation to Doncaster. They know the points of the compass and the names of the countries within the United Kingdom, identifying their location correctly on a map of the British Isles. Pupils in Year 6 are able use world maps to identify the sources of major news stories and have a sound understanding of the physical geography of the British Isles. They have worked successfully to understand the water cycle and how rivers affect their environment. They have discussed environmental issues, including the impact of acid rain.
98. The standards of teaching and learning observed in the previous inspection have been maintained. There is a new scheme of work, and the school is well prepared to implement the curriculum changes proposed for the autumn. A major change has been the impact of the school's involvement in the European project. Very good use is made of the partnerships with schools in Ireland, Portugal, Tenerife and Italy because they enable teachers to put their geography teaching into a real context, rather than being abstract and distant from everyday life in Doncaster. Children know about their 'link' country because they know the children in the partner school as actual people rather than as characters in a geography textbook. They also know the Italian teacher who works alongside them and enjoy learning basic Italian. A very good example was seen when Year 4 pupils learned how to ask for and give directions in Italian, using a map of Rome. Learning was effective because the activity was real and extended their geographical understanding of maps, as well as their confidence in themselves as speakers. A further good example of the benefits arising from the link was seen in Year 6 when pupils planned how they would e-mail their friends to gather further detail for their study of how the same event affects people differently in various parts of the world.
99. The overall quality of teaching in both key stages is good because geographical skills are taught systematically. Learning objectives are clear, and the effective use of open questions encourages pupils to think intellectually and work things out for themselves, as was seen when pupils in Year 2 recognised that the seaside is a long way away because you have to use a train to get there. Geographical language is introduced at an early age so that pupils in Year 1 are familiar with terms such as 'key' when drawing maps. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively, as when Year 6 pupils decided to present their research conclusions as a series of bullet points rather than as text. Good use is made of homework. Year 6, for example, all brought in a considerable range of newspaper cuttings as the basis for their investigations.

Teaching is less successful when pupils are allowed to be too talkative and tasks are not completed.

100. The co-ordinator is very well qualified and enlivens her teaching, and pupils' learning, with her own enthusiasm. She has adapted the new curriculum guidance skilfully in order to meet the particular needs of the school. She looks at teachers' medium term planning to ensure that curriculum requirements are being met and has been released in the past to work with higher attaining pupils. She does not have a formal way to assess standards either through work trawls or from direct observation of lessons.

HISTORY

101. It was not possible to observe any history lessons during the inspection. However, an examination of pupils' books, wall displays and discussions with the children themselves indicates that they are taught appropriate historical skills and achieve at expected levels. Pupils in Year 1 have studied homes in the past. Year 2 learned about Florence Nightingale and have linked their geographical work about the seaside to history by reading a grandparent's account of his own journey from Doncaster to the coast in 1960. The work on World War Two fired pupils' imagination in Year 3. They are aware how family life was affected, and have a sense of the deprivation and fear experienced in most homes. Year 4 has studied the Vikings and Year 5 the Victorians. Year 6 have made a detailed study of the Ancient Greeks, and have been particularly interested in learning about classical art and pottery. They have made thoughtful comparisons between life 'then and now' by comparing modern and ancient views of the Olympic games.
102. No judgements about the quality of teaching are possible, but planning is appropriate and pupils' books show that literacy skills are used to good effect, as when Year 5 pupils recorded their first hand impressions as street children and mill workers in the nineteenth century. The school has maintained the standards of learning and achievement noted in the previous inspection report. Good use is made of artefacts in all classes, including a very good range borrowed from the local authority museum loan service. This has given pupils in Year 1, for example, a genuine sense of the past and an opportunity to handle tools and materials like a Victorian clothes iron in order to bring their learning to life.
103. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and keen to develop the subject in line with new national guidance. She is developing a helpful assessment system that measures pupils' progress against agreed 'benchmarks' and provides a factual basis for annual reports to parents. She does not have a formal way to assess standards either through work trawls or from direct observation of lessons.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY [IT]

104. The previous inspection reported that standards were in line with national expectations for pupils aged seven and 11. Current standards remain broadly in line with national expectations for the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils are able to assemble text, communicate ideas, save and retrieve information, select the right options, control the mouse and use the printer. They are also able to use information technology to plan and control devices.
105. Standards are below those expected nationally for the end of Key Stage 2, and not as high as those previously reported, because IT skills have not been taught systematically in the past and not enough time has been given to the subject. Some aspects, such as communicating information through word processing, have been covered adequately. Year 6 pupils can use the computer to produce publications such as a school newspaper. They change font and font size,

change colour, incorporate two forms of information, copy and paste, use the cursor, control the mouse, and use CD-ROMs for research. Standards are below the levels expected for their age in most other aspects. Pupils know that the computer is used to handle data efficiently. They have built a class database but there have been few opportunities for data handling in the past. The standards being achieved currently in Year 5 are not significantly higher than those in Year 2. IT is not used enough in many other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 have used an art program to design Grecian vases but their skills are not developed to the levels expected for pupils of their age. They have had no opportunities to use IT as a tool for measuring temperatures in science, for example, because the school does not have the necessary equipment.

106. No teaching was observed directly during the inspection, although pupils were seen using computers, both independently and with the support of classroom assistants. These pupils knew what they were doing and were enthusiastic about their work. For example, in a Year 2 class pairs of pupils working with a parent helper manipulated the screen turtle through 90 degree turns. They learned through experimentation how far to make the turtle travel and persevered at the task. The parent was confident with the program and offered constructive guidance. Evidence from teachers' planning and record keeping shows that opportunities for word processing, handling information, controlling and modelling using information technology are being offered throughout the school, but not frequently enough for work to be covered in sufficient depth. Teachers plan weekly for IT but the planning is superficial and few teachers allocate the necessary time to the subject that it requires. Information technology is used in some other subjects but is not planned effectively to ensure all pupils have sufficient opportunity to broaden their knowledge and skills.
107. When given opportunities for IT, pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes. They enjoy their work and put effort into their learning. When working in pairs or groups they help each other and take turns sensibly. They are very interested and concentrate on the task in hand, sometimes completing class projects at home. Pupils with special educational needs are given every opportunity to learn and some receive extra time on the computer to help them master basic skills.
108. The co-ordinator is new to the role. He is very enthusiastic and has already been instrumental in developing the subject since he took over. He has put in place a detailed plan for improvement that will provide well for staff training in areas of weakness. The school's resources are adequate but more are needed to enable the IT curriculum to be delivered fully. The school has made IT a priority in its current development plan. It has a good understanding of its strengths and has comprehensive plans in place to address the weaknesses. All teachers are committed to raising standards in this subject. The school has adopted a commercial scheme of work that makes good provision for the subject to be taught systematically. Work remains to be done on linking the planning to that in other subjects, and to implementing assessment procedures that can then be used guide teachers' weekly planning.

MUSIC

109. Insufficient evidence of pupils' musical development was available during the inspection upon which to make a secure judgement about their progress. The school is committed to providing its pupils with an appropriate range of musical experiences. In both key stages pupils sing and play accompaniments on classroom percussion instruments and invent their own rhythmic and pitch patterns. The children work with an unqualified teacher who is an able musician but it was not possible to make judgements on the quality of teaching as no full lessons could be observed.

110. Younger pupils sing a range of songs in different styles from memory. Their singing is rhythmical and tuneful as they match their voices accurately to the melodic shape of the music. They listen carefully and adapt their singing to reflect the mood and style of music. In hymn practice they participate fully and enjoy the repertoire selected by the teacher. All pupils in Year 1 and 2 learn to play the ocarina. These lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' musical and personal development. Other aspects of the music curriculum are addressed in a weekly lesson involving the whole of Key Stage 1. However, the size of the group and an unnecessary emphasis on notation impacts on the quality of the opportunities offered and the potential for good progress. Pupils have too few chances to play classroom percussion instruments and explore sounds to create their own musical ideas.
111. Older pupils learn a variety of songs including rounds. There is no school scheme of work that sets out a systematic progression for learning. The school has taken the decision to use the newly published national guidance as its scheme of work. However, there is indiscriminate use of the units of work with which teachers are not yet familiar. There is no intermediate planning that takes account of pupils' previous learning or allocates an appropriate proportion of time to the different learning objectives and activities to meet the specific needs of each year group. Pupils have virtually no opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding through practical music making activities.
112. Pupils have the opportunity to learn the recorder or guitar in lessons given by visiting teachers. The recorder players play a range of familiar melodies in unison, for example the theme from 'EastEnders'. Pupils listen carefully to each other and match their playing to the tempo set by the piano accompaniment. The school also has a choir that sings in the local community. The music support teacher involves himself enthusiastically in the musical life of the school and the piano accompaniments make a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' singing and playing.
113. The loss of the music co-ordinator at the end of last year has left a vacuum and no programme of training has yet been set in place to develop the skills of less confident teachers. As reported at the last inspection there is no action plan for the overall development of the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. The school has maintained the good levels of achievement noted in the last inspection. There was little opportunity to observe lessons for younger pupils, but children demonstrated good use of space in the Year 2 Italian dance lesson as they moved around the hall. They kept running steps light and kicked in time to the music. Year 6 pupils observed developing games skills could throw and catch a rounders ball competently. At the end of a lesson developing relay race skills, pupils could pass on the baton to the next runner skilfully and with minimal loss of pace.
115. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Good teaching occurs when lessons are carefully planned with appropriate attention given to pupils' warming up and cooling down movements at the beginning and end, and with a structured sequence of activities that enables them to develop and consolidate their skills. Teachers give clear explanations and manage pupils effectively, with the result that they are actively involved throughout the lesson and work productively. This was a particular strength of games lessons for older pupils. Pupils practising throwing and catching found partners sensibly, took up their positions on the field and practised their throws in a businesslike manner. Little time is wasted. The teacher moves around the group coaching individuals and steadily increasing the level of challenge within the lesson. Teachers pay very good attention to health and safety issues and reinforce safe practice

in all lessons. Pupils' positive attitudes towards their activities in this subject, including enjoyment, confidence and the capacity to work well with others, make a strong contribution to the extent of their learning.

116. The school provides a broad curriculum of dance, games and gymnastic activities and makes good use of specialist teaching. The swimming programme is comprehensive and lessons are very well structured to ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress. Occasional opportunities are provided at Key Stage 2 for outdoor adventurous activities. The school provides an appropriate range of extra curricular games activities for older pupils and is justifiably proud of its successes in local sports events.