

INSPECTION REPORT

ST RICHARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

DOVER

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118771

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Grant

Reporting inspector: Peter Sudworth - 2700

Dates of inspection: 11th-14th June, 2001

Inspection number: 191949

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	RC Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Castle Ave., Dover
Postcode:	CT16 1EZ
Telephone number:	01304 201118
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E. N. Middleton
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2700	Peter Sudworth	Registered inspector	Science; Information and communication technology; Geography; Physical education.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
A01311	Barry Wood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
2749	Gay Wilkinson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; English; Art and design.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18524	Ann Shaw	Team inspector	Mathematics; Design and technology; History; Music.	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Richard's Catholic Primary School is situated near to the centre of Dover. It educates pupils aged 4-11 years and caters for pupils in Dover but a few pupils travel in from other areas. About 70 per cent of the pupils admitted are of the Catholic faith, mainly from the two Catholic parishes it serves. It has 224 pupils on roll, eight fewer than at the time of the last inspection. Nevertheless, the school is over subscribed. Five pupils joined the school in the last year and 13 left. The school serves families across the social spectrum and of varying socio-economic circumstance. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, (22.3 per cent), is broadly in line with the national average, as is the percentage of pupils who have statements of special need. Almost all pupils are of white United Kingdom or European heritage. Three pupils have English as an additional language and another is at an early stage of language acquisition. Attainment on entry is about average. The school's aims include a nurture of the love of learning and working in partnership with parents, the parish and the wider community and valuing prayer, worship and faith development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. Most pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. Standards in all subjects are overall in line with national expectations. The quality of teaching is sound overall and the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school's practical approach to inclusion and the fulfillment of its aims help the learning atmosphere;
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and develops the pupils' respect for one another;
- Pupils' attitudes to, and enthusiasm for, school are very good and contribute to a consistently good learning environment in most classes;
- The care and the general welfare arrangements for pupils ensure that many of the school's Christian aims are reflected in its work;
- The keenness and enthusiasm of the part-time special educational needs co-ordinator and her knowledge of all pupils on the special educational needs register increase the self-esteem and confidence of pupils with particular learning difficulties;
- The links teachers make between subjects support work across the curriculum and benefit particularly pupils' progress in literacy.

What could be improved

- The attention given to investigation in science, application of mathematical knowledge and the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage;
- A clearer definition of the headteacher's role, combined with an audit of the school's policies and ensuring they are carried out;
- Greater rigour and systematic planning in the school's monitoring procedures for teaching and learning;
- Consistency in approaches to keeping records of pupils' progress;
- Better systems for school development planning, including the use of finance;
- More efficient use of additional teaching staff and teaching assistants;
- The tidiness of the school, the use of accommodation and furnishing arrangements.

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

The school's strengths are finely balanced against the need to make improvements in some significant areas of the school's work.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March, 1997. It has made satisfactory progress in tackling the issues raised at that time and in improving standards. Standards in design and technology, information and communication technology and geography have improved as a result of improved teaching and curriculum arrangements in these subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage are not attaining as well as at the last inspection but their progress is nevertheless satisfactory. There is significantly less unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2 but the quality of teaching in music and in physical education is not as high as previously reported but it is better in English and mathematics. There are not as many extra-curricular activities. There is an imbalance in the physical education curriculum and too much time is devoted to swimming. Assessment procedures are still not sufficiently consistent and purposeful across the school and not as good as they were in the Foundation Stage. Marking is still not sufficiently developmental. The role of subject co-ordinators is better defined but arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning are not sufficiently streamlined. There has been some improvement in the work of the governing body. The systems in place and the all round current provision, including personnel, indicate that the school has a sound capacity to make further improvements.

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

The children in the Foundation Stage make sound progress and most attain the expected standards for the end of the Reception year. The school met its Local Education Authority targets for pupils aged 11 in mathematics and English at the end of the last academic year. The trend in the school's Key Stage 2 results has been broadly in line with the national trend. However, boys at the end of Year 2 have been doing less well in statutory tests than boys nationally in reading, writing and mathematics, whereas Key Stage 1 girls have been out-performing the national average for girls of their age. Key Stage 2 boys and girls have been doing better than their respective counterparts nationally in end of Year 6 national tests in English in recent years. Currently most pupils are attaining expected levels in all subjects at the end of both key stages and making sound progress, although the pupils are not having enough opportunities to investigate in science and to apply their mathematics to real life situations. In these aspects of their work, their attainment is below expectations. Pupils who have special educational needs make sound progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school and most pupils are enthusiastic about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good overall in and around the school. Pupils play well together and have respect for one another and their teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. The range of opportunities for pupils to develop responsibility increases as the pupils go through the school. Some pupils take the initiative and research their studies further on the Internet on a regular basis. The oldest pupils have specific responsibilities of care for the youngest.
Attendance	Satisfactory. About the national average. Most pupils are punctual for school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory. During the inspection, 57 lessons were observed. Of these, 97 per cent were satisfactory or better. Four per cent of lessons were excellent, 14 per cent very good, 30 per cent good and 49 per cent satisfactory. Three per cent (two lessons) were unsatisfactory. In general, there is no significant difference in the overall quality of teaching between the key stages or between different subjects, except in music which teachers find challenging since the music specialist left. The teaching in the Foundation Stage was also satisfactory. Both the numeracy and literacy strategies have been implemented well. Teachers generally manage their classes well, have a good rapport with their pupils, build up their self-esteem and give them confidence. This is reflected in the equally good relationships amongst pupils as they work. Pupils have a happiness and enjoyment in learning. Teachers allow pupils' natural enthusiasm for learning to blossom. They take a personal interest in both the pupils' academic progress and personal circumstances. They provide good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively to which pupils respond well. Good links are made between subjects. Lesson objectives are usually shared with the pupils. The balance between discussion, activity and explanation in lessons is usually good. The teaching of special needs pupils is usually sound and it is good when the special educational needs co-ordinator engages with groups or individuals. The individual education plans are precise and they often support and guide the activities in classrooms. On occasions, however, there is not enough application of the individual education plans to lesson content. Higher attaining pupils are usually challenged appropriately in literacy and numeracy through ability group arrangements, but in science and information and communication technology similar expectations are usually made of all pupils and they often do the same work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The Foundation Stage curriculum is generally soundly organised but needs to be updated to meet new requirements. Teachers make good links between subjects. There is an over-provision for swimming. The range of extra-curricular activities is very limited.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The part-time special educational needs co-ordinator works hard and administrative arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are good. The individual education plans are well written but some teachers do not pay enough attention to them when planning literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils with emotional and learning difficulties make sound progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The Local Education Authority gives good quality periodic teaching support and advice. The pupils make sound progress and relate well to other pupils and acquire some of their growing competence in the English language from them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and it is sound for their cultural development. Pupils deal well with one another and have a genuine concern for one another. Overall provision for pupils' personal development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for pupils' welfare are good and arrangements for child protection sound. Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory. Procedures are inconsistent and record keeping systems are in need of refinement.

The amount of time devoted to swimming reduces the amount of time available for other subjects.

The school's links with its parents are satisfactory. Parents' involvement in the life of the school is very variable. Some parents feel that the parents' informal support group is too insular and does not encourage other parents to help. The school provides a satisfactory range of information for its parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound. Whilst leadership is mostly sound, there are significant strengths in the tone and atmosphere the headteacher sets for the school. Some of the management systems need to be more rigorous. Some important policies have either not been written or are not up-to-date. Management of subject responsibilities is sound overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The work of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school and are beginning to become more incisive in knowing about the school's strengths and the areas for development. There is room for improvement in school development.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound. The school has begun to analyse the results in national tests more thoroughly and to set long term targets for pupils to aim at. Some teachers are setting short term individual targets for pupils and reviewing these. The school development plan is not reviewed regularly enough to assess progress towards the priorities in it.
The strategic use of resources	Unsatisfactory. Financial planning is reasonably detailed in the short term but longer term planning is unsatisfactory. Strategic spending on learning resources and books is unsatisfactory. Some members of the part-time staff and learning support assistants are not used to capacity.

The school is well staffed and has a good number of teaching assistants and qualified part-time teachers. Despite this, the school has recruitment problems for full-time positions when they occur. Accommodation is satisfactory overall yet there are several problems with it. There is little storage space and outdoor provision is limited. Classrooms vary in size from reasonably spacious to cramped. A significant part of the large hall is taken up to store tables, chairs and physical education equipment. Learning resources are adequate in the main, good in design and technology but unsatisfactory in music. The school has satisfactory systems to obtain best value for its spending on premises and equipment. Overall, the school provides sound value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school; • Behaviour is good and the school is helping their children become mature and responsible; • The teaching is good; • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with any queries or concerns; • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best; • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons; • Their children do not get the right amount of homework; • The school does not work closely with parents.

The inspection team agrees with many of the supportive views of parents. The teaching ranges in quality. A significant amount of teaching is good but overall it is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The inspection team agrees that there are limited opportunities for extra-curricular activities. There is no homework policy and arrangements for homework are confused and inconsistent. The school's links with parents are satisfactory but several parents think that the parent support group is too insular and others would like to help.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of the majority of children on entry is average overall. By the end of the Reception year, most children attain the national expectations for young children's learning, known as the 'Early Learning Goals'. A few children exceed them. Standards are not as high as those previously reported, when children exceeded the expectations for children by age five. Standards in physical development are similar. The children's achievements are satisfactory.

2. On entry, children settle well to daily routines. They sit quietly, listen well to stories, instructions and explanations and are well behaved. They can recall events in stories they hear. In language work they develop a satisfactory understanding of phonics. Many can identify the sounds at the beginning of words. They regularly take home books to read with their parents. Most children can write their first names. They show consideration for others when they work.

3. In mathematics they count forwards and backwards to ten and recognise numbers to ten. The most able can draw or identify the correct number of objects to match numbers up to ten and can write simple number addition sentences. They develop an appropriate knowledge about the world. They can talk about themselves, their families and past and present events in their lives. They study the behaviour of snails by watching their movements and eating habits, using a magnifying lens for finer detail, and observe the conditions they need to stay alive. They use construction materials to build homes that they think would be suitable for snails. Children enjoy opportunities for physical activity in the hall and work well in these lessons. They are beginning to understand how their bodies work. They use space well and show appropriate awareness of others around them. They are beginning to use movement to convey emotions, including movement to music. In their creative work they use tools such as pencils, brushes and scissors with satisfactory control. They enjoy joining in with simple rhymes and singing and sing tunefully.

4. At the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, boys have been doing less well than boys nationally, whereas the girls have been outperforming girls' national averages. Overall, results have been broadly average. Key Stage 2 boys have been doing much better than boys nationally over the past three years in English, as well as them in mathematics and slightly better in science. Similarly girls have been doing better in English and mathematics than girls nationally, but not as well as girls nationally in science. The trend in the school's results for all subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend.

5. Attainment in English meets expectations overall at the end of both key stages and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Most pupils in both key stages are in line to attain the national expectations and a minority will exceed them. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall in relation to their prior attainment. It is often good when the special educational needs co-ordinator teaches individuals or small groups. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. The school has maintained the standards in English reported at the previous inspection.

6. In the 2000 national tests, the percentage of Key Stage 1 pupils reaching the expected level or above in reading was above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools. It was well above in writing in both respects. The trend of results over the last three years is broadly in line with the national trend.

7. Reading standards are satisfactory overall. Most able pupils read fluently for their age and use a range of strategies, including phonics, to decode unfamiliar words. By age eleven, most pupils read a variety of texts fluently with evident enjoyment and pupils' sound progress is maintained. The most able readers read aloud with good expression, taking account of punctuation and features of print and borrow books regularly from local libraries to sustain their interest and widen their range of reading. Parents contribute to their children's progress in reading. They develop satisfactory study skills. Most understand the purpose of contents and index pages in non-fiction books. They can scan texts for information accurately and select information appropriately in order to make judgements.

8. The percentage of Key Stage 2 pupils reaching the expected level in English in 2000 was close to the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools but above average for the percentage reaching the higher level against similar schools. The trend of results over the last three years has been broadly in line with that nationally.

9. Standards in speaking and listening are good by the end of both key stages. Pupils eagerly take part in class and group discussion, expressing themselves clearly and confidently and listening to the comments of other pupils. They use appropriate language to talk about events and characters in stories and to express opinions.

10. Standards in writing are satisfactory overall by the ages of seven and eleven and pupils make sound progress. In both key stages, pupils write for a variety of purposes and audiences including imaginative fiction, personal writing, poetry and play scripts. Most have a good understanding of basic punctuation and spelling. By age eleven, most pupils plan their writing and can write at length using complex sentences, paragraphs and well-selected vocabulary in an appropriate style. They use a range of punctuation accurately and overall spell correctly. Standards of handwriting and presentation are satisfactory overall. In both key stages there are good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills, as in history.

11. In the 2000 Key Stage 1 statutory assessment tests in mathematics, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level and the higher level was well above the national average for all and similar schools. It was in the top five percent of schools in both respects for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level. There has been a steady increase in performance since 1998 with a noted increase in 2000. Overall, current standards are average. About four-fifths of the current Year 2 pupils are in line to attain the expected level and about one-quarter the higher level. The performance of boys over the last three years has fallen below the national average, whilst that of the girls is above.

12. The percentage of Key Stage 2 pupils attaining the expected level in mathematics in 2000 was below the national average and the proportion attaining the higher level was close to the national average. The school's performance against similar schools was below average. The trend over the last three years has been erratic. Overall, current standards are in line with expectations. About seven-tenths of the current Year 6 pupils are expected to attain the standard for 11 year olds and one-fifth of the cohort the higher level. In both key stages pupils with special needs make sound progress. There are limited opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of mathematics across the curriculum.

13. Pupils' attainment in 2000 in science in the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national average, as was the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level. Key Stage 2 results were average compared to all schools nationally and similar schools. Over the past three years, the school's results have been consistently around the national average. Most Year 2 pupils are in line to reach the expected level. Similarly, most Year 6 pupils are expected to obtain the expected levels in national tests and a few pupils in each key stage the higher levels. However, pupils' skills in investigative science, which are not assessed by tests, are unsatisfactory.

14. Attainment in art and design, music, design and technology, geography, history are in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. The establishment of the information and communication technology suite, combined with increased staff confidence and expertise, have helped to improve the pupils' standards of attainment. These are now in line with expectations at the end of both key stages and most pupils make sound progress and some good progress. A small number of Year 6 pupils are working above expectations. Year 6 pupils are beginning to arrange presentations, using moving images and including multi-media elements, such as music.

15. No observations were made of gymnastics or of dance during the inspection, as the major focus was on games skills and swimming. Pupils' games skills are at the expected level at the end of both key stages. Some pupils attain well in swimming and the school was represented in the national championships last year. However, the proportion of pupils who are able to swim the expected distance by the age 11 is satisfactory overall but disappointing in view of the amount of time devoted to the swimming curriculum. Pupils' achievements in the subject are satisfactory overall.

16. Standards at the end of both key stages in most respects are similar to those reported previously. However, they have improved in art and design, geography, design and technology and much improvement has taken place in information and communication technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The previous report stated that all aspects of pupils' attitudes, behaviour, and personal development were good. They had very good relationships with each other and the staff. Pupils aged under five were developing in confidence and independence, and were well behaved. Generally all pupils made a good contribution to the life and atmosphere of the school. In line with its mission statement, the school has improved further the pupils' attitudes, which are now at a very good level, whilst behaviour and personal development are good overall. Relationships amongst pupils are good. Parents are very satisfied with the school's efforts to promote a culture of responsibility and self-discipline.

18. Many children have some pre-school provision prior to entering the Reception class. Most children settle quickly to school and make the transition easily. They behave well. Pupils' social skills develop well. They quickly gain confidence and an awareness of the range of activities that surround them, adapting well to the classroom routines. They persevere with tasks and concentrate and work happily together. Pupils listen well to their teacher and improve quickly in listening to each other and in communicating ideas. Most can co-operate, work together well, and learn to care and share.

19. At the start of the day, pupils come to school in a happy and expectant mood. They state that they enjoy school. They are keen and enthusiastic and like to demonstrate aspects of learning to their peers. As pupils progress through the school, they gain in maturity and confidence and want to succeed in their learning. They understand that hard work will produce good results. Pupils increasingly concentrate on tasks, listen well, and are responsive to their teachers. They require little prompting to answer questions or put forward well-reasoned ideas. By Year 6, they articulate sensitively and with feeling when discussing teamwork. They work together to produce successful outcomes. Most pupils engage profitably in their learning, which allows most classrooms and the school to function smoothly. Some pupils, however, in Years 1 and 4 display unsatisfactory attitudes.

20. The behaviour of most pupils in all classes is good. Pupils accept the school's expectations and clear boundaries for responsibility and self-discipline. Behaviour around the school is good. The 'Buddy System' works effectively and older pupils take care of the younger ones, providing pastoral care and organising activities for them. Noise levels can rise at lunchtime or when pupils move round the corridors. Neither bullying nor bad language were observed during the inspection. The school has only used exclusions once in the last three years and there were none last year.

21. The quality of relationships, at all levels, is good and in some classes very good. Staff present very good role models. Pupils totally trust their teachers and support staff, and often regard them as friends. All parts of the school family are well bonded together in a Christian ethos. The mutual respect and harmonious relationships help to promote an effective teaching and learning environment. The quality of relationships is reinforced through assemblies, which explore Christian and moral themes, and in the celebration of Mass, with all parts of the school family present. In the classroom, pupils listen to each other with respect and value each other's opinions and qualities, and protect the interests of their weaker colleagues. Pupils collaborate well in achieving a good outcome to their work, in either pairs or groups, but respect individual's needs when undertaking independent work. Boys and girls mix together well in all aspects of school life. Pupils are courteous, polite, and show a real care and concern for the welfare of visitors to the school. The good relationships throughout the school have enabled the effective integration of refugee pupils, and traveller children.

22. Pupils' personal development is good overall. Pupils feel that their efforts in the classroom are appreciated and this leads to enhanced self-esteem. They have an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves, through charity work. The personal, health and social education curriculum allows pupils, by the end of Year 6, to think and speak sensitively about themselves, and the world in which they live. Pupils' targets are well displayed in all classrooms. There is a range of school and class routines for pupils to take initiative, though these are limited in Key Stage 1. Year 6 pupils are made to feel special and have some ownership of the school. All pupils display a well-developed sense of moral and social awareness, with good opportunities in lessons to explore moral problems. Generally, pupils are well equipped for their next stage of education. Pupils maintain the environment of the site well. There is no litter, graffiti, or vandalism and cloakrooms are tidy. The school is competitive in inter-school competition and tournaments, and historically, has had considerable success in swimming at national levels.

23. The previous report concluded that attendance at the school was good. During the last four years the school has maintained an overall satisfactory attendance level. However, during the present school year, the attendance rate has fallen below the national average, and only two out of the eight classes have exceeded national average attendance rates. The Reception and Year 1 classes have unsatisfactory attendance levels.

24. The rate of unauthorised absence is average. The school has made good efforts to keep the incidence of in-term holidays to a minimum. There are no indications of any truancy. Only a few pupils find it difficult to arrive at school on time in the morning.

25. Teachers politely and efficiently call the registers at the beginning of each session and pupils sit quietly and respond politely. Registers are computerised, and the school makes effective use of the summary reports that the system produces. The school receives good support from the educational welfare officer.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26. The overall quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory and represents a significant improvement in quality since the last inspection. During the inspection, 57 lessons were observed. Of these, 97 per cent were satisfactory or better. Four per cent of lessons were excellent, 14 per cent very good, 30 per cent good and 49 per cent satisfactory. Three per cent (two lessons) were judged to be unsatisfactory. In general, there is no significant difference in the overall quality of teaching between the key stages. The teaching in the Foundation Stage was also satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection in Key Stage 2. There is no significant difference in quality between the teaching of most subjects, although some teachers are finding it challenging to teach music since the departure of the music specialist. Both the numeracy and literacy strategies have been implemented well by staff, despite the inadequacy of curriculum leadership in English.

27. Most lessons begin promptly, although a few began late. Lessons are usually well prepared. Learning support and teaching assistants usually know their role in the lesson beforehand but they are not all involved at the planning stage. In some lessons the teaching assistants had not been fully briefed and some errors occurred as a result. In a Year 2 lesson the teaching assistant was helping the pupils to sort books by categories into fiction and non-fiction. However, she had a misunderstanding of the terminology and was getting pupils to put books into the wrong piles. The teacher quietly intervened and changed over the cards but the total experience was confusing for the pupils. In a Year 3 lesson, the teaching assistant was encouraging the pupils to test various materials with a torch for transparency or opaqueness but she was doing this before the pupils had predicted the result and this was one of the lesson's aims.

28. Resources are often well prepared and enable lessons to begin briskly. In a good Year 1 design and technology lesson, the teacher had brought in a large prototype car model and a miniature folding chair, photographs and design drawings. She used these to emphasise the importance of testing out designs for set criteria. The pupils enthusiastically designed models of playground equipment using a range of materials, including plasticene and construction equipment and also basing their ideas on a recent visit to a local play park.

29. Teachers generally manage their classes well, have a good rapport with their pupils, build up their self-esteem and give them confidence. This is reflected in the equally good relationships amongst pupils as they work. Pupils have a happiness and enjoyment in learning. Teachers allow pupils' natural enthusiasm for learning to blossom. They take a personal interest in both the pupils' academic progress and personal circumstances. They provide good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively to which pupils respond well. In Year 6, for example, pupils collaborated effectively to build three-dimensional paper structures as part of a personal, social and health education lesson on 'working as a team'. In the Year 1 design and technology lesson pupils discussed ideas as they worked with the construction materials designing their playground equipment. In a Year 2 science lesson about natural and man-made materials, pupils worked effectively together in groups to feel, speculate, discuss materials to determine whether they were made or natural. However, in some lessons, pupils work noisily when engaged in group tasks, as in a Key Stage 1 music lesson and in a Year 4 science lesson and made unsatisfactory progress as a result because not enough ground was covered. Some Year 4 boys find it difficult to keep on task and can affect other pupils' concentration.

30. Teachers usually have a sympathetic manner with pupils which often gives the pupils confidence and encourages them to try hard with their work. Many pupils listen well to each other whilst others are speaking. Those who are articulating sometimes use sophisticated language and use language sensitively as in the Year 6 personal, social and health education lesson. Teachers are often good at using questions which get pupils to reason, to be precise in their answers, to explain their

answers fully and really getting to the issues. A Year 2 teacher had very good skills in ensuring all pupils were concentrating during the opening plenary of a literacy lesson. As a pupil was chosen to spell a word on the flip chart, she commented in a pleasant tone, which immediately drew all pupils attention to the board 'Now we're all going to watch to make sure (name) has remembered how to spell the word correctly.'

31. Lesson planning for the inspection week was satisfactory. A new lesson format was used, which included lesson objectives and assessment and evaluation but the criteria for assessment on the sheet were not usually completed and at least one teacher was unsure what the section of the form meant. Evidence of other lesson and medium-term planning in teachers' files indicates considerable variety of practice and quality. In at least one case, the teacher was not planning all subjects on the agreed medium-term planning format.

32. Lesson objectives are usually shared with the pupils but rarely reviewed at the end to see whether the learning intentions had been achieved or in the middle of the lesson to establish whether the pupils were on target to achieve the objectives. In an excellent Year 5 mathematics lesson, the objectives were already prepared on the board. The teacher expected the pupils to have read these before beginning the work. The lesson proceeded at a very good pace beginning with a brisk mental session. Pupils were constantly praised and encouraged and given time to talk aloud about the strategies they had for working things out. The pupils undertook a range of practical work to get a feel for the weight of objects and were required to balance objects, predicting whether they were of equal weight before checking on the balancing scales. The pupils co-operated well with each other, worked sensibly, choosing objects from the classroom for their investigations. After the practical activities, their learning was extended through reference to grams and kilograms and equivalence calculations. Pupils were constantly encouraged and with a sense of humour 'You're working like a little calculator today'.

33. The balance between discussion, activity and explanation in lessons is usually good. On occasion, however, pupils are seated on the floor for too long. In a Year 3 session, which included two separate lessons on literacy and information and communication technology, the pupils were sitting on the carpet for a total of 75 out of 90 minutes. The teaching assistant and part-time teacher in the class were seated for similar lengths of time as onlookers.

34. Teachers usually make good use of subject specific terminology and their subject knowledge and research of the content are often good. In information and communication technology, for example, pupils are introduced to such terminology as hyperlinks, field, and record.

35. Good awareness is given to health and safety issues in lessons and pupils are suitably reminded about taking care with equipment, for example in physical education, a subject in which pupils are often used successfully as demonstrators of good skill technique.

36. The teaching of special needs pupils is usually sound and it is good when the special educational needs co-ordinator engages with groups or individuals. The individual education plans are precise and they often support and guide the activities in classrooms in numeracy and literacy. On occasions, however, there is not enough application of the individual education plan targets in lessons. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils were working with large commercially produced domino cards containing pictures and writing. The work did not conform to the targets and some pupils in the group of special educational needs pupils, working with the teaching assistant, were having great difficulty reading the text on the dominoes. There was no clear objective for the work. The teaching assistant had not been prepared for the work or for the style of delivery. These pupils did not make many gains in learning as a result. Higher attaining pupils are usually challenged appropriately in literacy and numeracy through ability group arrangements, but in science and information and communication technology similar expectations are usually made of all pupils and they often do the same work.

37. Teachers often make good links with previous learning and also links with other subjects. In a Year 2 science lesson about different types of materials, for example, there were good links to art and design in collage and structural patterns and to mathematics in symmetry and mathematical relationships. There are good links to literacy and art and design in history, as pupils write with empathy about the period, and as they use felts, tissue and other collage materials in the theme of talking textiles to reflect a period of time. Work on the ancient Greeks had been linked to the creation of pots and mosaics. Work on geography in Year 5 had been carefully planned to widen pupils' knowledge of other cultures. The skill of appraising music had been imaginatively pursued through a tactile, musical impression using stones, sticks, seeds and crunched up paper to give a visual impression of the sound in Year 1.

38. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The teacher knows the children well. The medium- and short-term planning do not ensure a balance of activities, however, and there are few learning objectives related to play. The teacher does not always take opportunities to intervene in the children's play to promote their learning.

39. Teachers' assessment techniques vary in quality and style. In general, however, assessment and record keeping do not sufficiently inform future work and are unsatisfactory. Much of the recording is coverage of work undertaken, marks obtained in tests or assessments made at the end of the year to pass on to the next teacher. There is too little diagnostic marking to inform future teaching.

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

40. The quality and range of the curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. Provision is based on national guidelines called Early Learning Goals and the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. An appropriate emphasis is placed upon personal, social and emotional development, literacy and numeracy. Daily Reception class activities are appropriately planned and these provide support for children's learning in aspects of the Foundation curriculum. However, the lack of learning objectives for, and adult involvement in, directed play lessens the effectiveness of these activities. The varied approaches to long-term planning make it difficult for the teacher to ensure that all aspects of the foundation curriculum are appropriately covered. The policy is out of date.

41. The curriculum for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 is suitably broad. The attention given to the different subjects is balanced overall, although a larger percentage of time is devoted to religious education than is usual, due to a determination from the diocese. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, representing an improvement since the previous inspection. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate in science and to apply their mathematics. The policies for music and art are out of date. The National Literacy Strategy is incorporated well into curriculum planning and is reflected in the structure of literacy lessons. It is increasing pupils' confidence and interest in reading and writing activities. Pupils' literacy skills are successfully developed in other subjects throughout the school, for example reading for information and writing for a range of purposes in design and technology, history and art. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented and has increased pupils' competence in numeracy. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy as part of the school's initiative to raise standards. Information and communication technology skills are used satisfactorily across the curriculum. The curriculum is planned effectively to provide pupils with a range of interesting and relevant opportunities and the overall time allocated to subjects is generally appropriate in both key stages, although the time allocated to swimming and religious education is very generous. Swimming is taught in blocks from the Foundation year onwards. Key Stage 2 classes have a weekly swimming lesson for approximately half the year.

42. Teachers make good links between subjects, as for example the use of literacy and art across the curriculum, and these are effective in developing pupils' understanding. Homework is given throughout the school including reading and spelling but practice is inconsistent across year groups. There is no whole school policy for homework that could provide clear guidance for teachers and inform parents of the school's expectations.

43. The curriculum includes good provision for personal, social and health education, although there is no overall policy. There is no policy for sex education, which is a statutory requirement. The school nurse teaches sex education in mixed gender groups in Key Stage 2 and teachers across the school respond to pupils' questions and comments as opportunities arise. Drugs awareness and health education are currently addressed through the science curriculum, assemblies, class discussions and in such activities as circle time. The statement in the school prospectus about sex education and current teaching practice do not match.

44. The curriculum is socially inclusive and provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to learn and make good progress. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs; they are very well supported by classroom assistants and make sound progress as a result. Good provision is also made for pupils who are learning English as a second language, including asylum seekers, and they make good progress. All of these pupils have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and the arrangements made for them support and maintain their interest in their work and the life of the school.

45. There is a limited range of out of school activities, although these are only available to Key Stage 2 pupils, and these both enrich the curriculum and support pupils' social development. There is an emphasis upon sports and these activities make a sound contribution to the development of team spirit, as well as standards in physical education. Positive use is made of mixed-age and mixed-gender groupings in these activities to which parents make a good contribution. The school is also used for Beavers and Brownies, organised by members of the community, and these activities are open to Key Stage 1 pupils.

46. The school makes good use of a range of visitors who share their experiences with pupils. To support work in the curriculum, pupils make visits to museums, art galleries and other places of interest, such as Dover Castle and Connaught Park. They also make visits in the local community and further afield. Year 6 pupils also undertake a residential visit to the Isle of Wight. These activities broaden the pupils' experience and promote their personal development.

47. The school has developed good links with the community and other schools and is closely involved in the events of the parish in which the school is situated. Members of the community visit the school to support pupils' reading. The pupils visit local residents at Christmas to sing carols and harvest produce is collected and distributed by pupils within the community. The school is active in supporting a range of charities, both local and overseas. There are good links with local primary and secondary schools and in particular with the Catholic Secondary School, to which many of the pupils transfer. The school participates in a number of local events, including sporting events.

48. Provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils' spiritual development is good and fully reflects the school's aims. The daily act of collective worship, which complies with statutory requirements, provides positive opportunities for spiritual development. Assemblies include recognition and celebration of individual pupil's achievements both in and outside school and opportunities for personal reflection and prayer. The altar in the hall provides a focal point in assemblies and the prayer tables and regular use of prayer within each classroom contribute to and support the spiritual ethos of the school. Teachers make good use of contemporary and Bible stories and these activities provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives, attitudes and feelings and faiths. Visits, such as that made by Year 1 pupils to a local park where they looked at art in nature, help them to experience a sense of joy and mystery about the world. Priests from the two parishes the school serves visit the school regularly and give valuable support to pupils' spiritual development.

49. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school's behaviour policy places an emphasis on positive rewards and praise and this, together with individual classroom rules, makes a significant contribution to promoting pupils' moral development. Teachers show pupils the difference between right and wrong and place a high value on truth and honesty. As a result, pupils' understanding of right and wrong is good. This is well reinforced by staff, who provide positive role models by demonstrating respect and care for pupils, colleagues and visitors and commitment to their work. The school is a calm, welcoming and orderly community with a good work ethic and all pupils work well, even when not directly supervised. Stories and themes covering moral issues are regularly used in collective worship and literacy lessons.

50. Provision for the social development of pupils is good. Teachers and support staff set a good example to the pupils through their work as a mutually supportive team. In all classes pupils are provided with some opportunities to take responsibility that they accept willingly, although this aspect is less well developed in Key Stage 1. They work well together in collaborative tasks, including competitive games, and they are actively encouraged to work together in mixed gender groups. They

play well together on the playground at break-times. The 'buddy system' in which each Year 6 pupil is paired with a Reception class child positively develops the maturity and responsibility of the older pupils while helping the youngest children to grow in confidence as members of the school community. Circle time is used well to further develop pupils' social skills, as for example, in Year 6 where pupils were set a task that would help them reflect on the importance of co-operation. The school participates in both local and national events that encourage the pupils to think about their place in the community, as well as the wider world.

51. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils make visits to places of interest, including museums, historical sites and other places of interest and there are visits to the school by a range of visitors, including artists and performers. In art they study the work of both western and non-western artists and craftsmen. Year 6 pupils learn French. In some classes, where there are pupils with English as a second language, teachers display posters that use a pupil's home language. These arrangements make a good contribution to pupils' awareness of both their own and other cultures. This awareness is promoted further by activities in religious education, history and geography. Insufficient use is made of the opportunities in assemblies to promote different musical moods and styles from around the world

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. The previous inspection report judged that pupils were given good support and guidance, through a caring staff in a secure environment. Procedures for promoting behaviour and attendance were effective and enhanced pupils' standards. Child protection and health and safety procedures were satisfactory, but contained weaknesses. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the overall support, guidance and welfare agenda at a good level. It has eliminated many of the previously specified weaknesses, but there is some lack of policies to define the school's procedures. The present very good quality of the school's pastoral care and welfare, within a strong catholic ethos, receives a consistently very good endorsement by parents, and they realise that it positively contributes to the progress and development of all pupils, and their personal happiness.

53. The headteacher and staff have a very thorough knowledge of the pupils. Teachers display a diligence and sureness that communicates well to parents and pupils alike. Pupils feel constantly supported by this caring and secure Catholic community. In turn they promote the caring culture and ethos of the school.

54. The school has an insufficient range of support, guidance and welfare policies, to guide and underpin its actions. In many cases policies have not been updated, and are better in their common-sense application than in their design. Policies receive a consistent implementation, but new and temporary staff would benefit from their presentation in a staff handbook. The school is very welcoming to outside agencies, to support the pupils on a routine basis, or if there are specific problems. The school has a good special educational needs provision, promoted by well written individual educational plans, which allow pupils to make good progress in individual sessions with the special educational needs co-ordinator against attainable targets. Parents are consistently involved. The school has shown that it is capable in supporting pupils with more complex needs, such as asylum seekers and traveller children, but the school is not suitable for disabled pupils, due to its different floor levels and many steps. The school does not have a sex education policy. It indicates in the prospectus that this is the privilege and responsibility of parents. However, the school's practice in this regard is in advance of its policies. The school nurse teaches pupils about sex education in Year 6 in mixed gender classes. The educational welfare officer has a good and effective relationship with the school. The school is vigilant regarding child protection issues, and procedures are sound. However, the present written policy is inadequate. The local education authority advisor previously trained all staff, including learning support assistants, but the headteacher awaits training in new national procedures. The school does not display the Childline number in the school.

55. In line with its mission statement, the school has high expectations of the behaviour of all its pupils, and these are well realised in practice. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good, but owe more to an all-pervasive and long established culture of self-discipline and responsibility within the school, than a precisely written definition of the fundamentals. Well-established staff, who have a good understanding of the spirit and mechanics of the procedures through use, effectively implement the procedures. Members of staff provide good role models. Their very good relationships with the pupils, based on mutual respect within a strong Catholic ethos, support pupils' behaviour well. Pupils have participated in developing classroom rules, but these are few in number, and not widely displayed. The school uses a house system to good effect to achieve its behaviour goals, backed by the awarding of stars and certificates. The pupils have a very good awareness of rewards through a praiseworthy 'class of the week award'. Pupils are enabled to feel good about themselves, through sharing their successes and efforts with the school in 'special assemblies', displays of work on the 'Star Work' board, and by teachers regularly informing parents of their children's good behaviour and effort.

56. A range of sanctions is in place, and includes the loss of ‘golden time’ at the end of the week. This strategy has been ineffective in countering unsatisfactory behaviour in Year 4. Where systematic behaviour problems are identified, individual pupils receive a tailored programme of behaviour management, which involves the educational psychologist, special needs co-ordinator and the parent. The headteacher has engaged teachers and staff together in behaviour management discussions, so that staff have a thorough knowledge of any short-term problems between pupils. Parents have confidence in the headteacher’s good handling of any oppressive behaviour problems in the school.

57. Attendance procedures and systems are sound, and have produced an overall satisfactory level of attendance over the last four years. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been corrected. Parents are made aware of their statutory obligations through the prospectus. The school follows up parents who fail to communicate reasons for their children’s absence, so that unauthorised absence has been controlled at levels close to the national average. The incidence of parents requiring in-term holidays is low, due to the school’s determined efforts. However, attendance has fallen markedly during the present year, and is below national norms.

58. The school represents a safe environment for all pupils and staff, despite being a difficult site with a large number of steps. There is a low accident rate, testifying to the orderly nature of the school community and the respect pupils have for each other. The safety of all pupils is given high priority, and teachers take a good account of health and safety measures in all lessons and activities. Procedures for health and safety have strengthened since the last inspection and are rigorous. A governor undertakes a health and safety audit of the site every three months, and there are good records of all site checks of equipment. The inspection has identified some minor problems, which have been fed back to the school for action. The school has a sufficient complement of certificated first-aiders. All pupil-based information systems are updated by the school secretary, and are sufficiently focused and specific to support any emergency.

59. There is a good liaison and relationship between the school and the local secondary schools, so that parents receive good support at transfer, and parent and pupil anxieties are minimised. Induction procedures for parents are effective, and guarantee that pupils make a confident start to their school lives.

60. Pupils are assessed on entry into the Reception class and targets set. The targets are revised at the end of the Reception year, based on the children’s progress and used to predict the progress made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics during Years 1 and 2. There is some good practice in tracking pupils’ progress at the end of the academic year. In Key Stage 2 the school makes good use of optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 to track pupils’ progress across the key stage and analyses the results to inform practice. The school also analyses well the results of Years 2 and 6 national tests to identify weaknesses in teaching provision. This information is used effectively to inform future planning. In Key Stage 1 pupils’ individual personal and social development is recorded and helps to identify any pupils who may be showing abnormal behaviour characteristics.

61. Formal assessment tasks are set every half term in both key stages in English, mathematics and science and help in the review of key learning objectives and the set targets. Other tests in Years 4, 5 and 6 also help to assess progress in writing and spelling.

62. However, on-going assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. The present systems are too informal and do not track the acquisition of key skills in all subject areas for each pupil. The existing procedures are not consistently nor purposefully applied over the whole school, they are not precise and often only provide a record of the work covered. Assessment is not used sufficiently during the course of a year to plan individual pupil targets and there is a lack of reference material to guide staff in assessing attainment. Consequently teachers do not have a full and concise picture of boys’ and girls’ academic and social progress, nor an analytical record of pupils with special needs or those for whom English is an additional language. The assessment policy is in need of review.

63. Marking is occasionally used for developmental, constructive and analytical purposes but it is not a consistent practice across the school. Where it does take place, it raises the standards of accuracy and presentation, for example in Year 5.

64. The teachers make satisfactory use of individual education plans to plan work for pupils with special needs, but not always consistently. For those pupils with English as an additional language, there is close co-operation with the county advisory teacher and the class teacher to plan work that matches the needs and abilities of each pupil.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

65. The last inspection report indicated that the school worked hard to develop a good partnership with parents, who in turn gave good support to the school. The quality of information for parents was good, but the quality of annual reports to parents was variable, and the lack of a homework policy caused a confusion of expectations between teachers and parents. Many of the strengths and weaknesses regarding the partnership with parents are still evident, with only minor developments. Most parents endorse the school for its values and attitudes, work standards, and good behaviour and realise that their children positively like school. Parents indicate through their response to the questionnaire and in discussion with them that their overall levels of satisfaction with the school have reduced slightly, but they remain generally satisfied with the provision offered. However, approximately one in ten parents are dissatisfied with some aspect of the school and this proportion has increased markedly. Two significant areas of dissatisfaction are the lack of an interesting range of activities outside lessons and insufficient homework.

66. Parents' perceptions of activities outside lessons are substantiated to some degree. There is a limited range of extra-curricular provision which support the learning of the pupils and these are mainly sporting activities and largely involve older pupils. Parents' views regarding homework are substantiated. The continued lack of a homework policy, and a homework diary, in which a dialogue, between the teacher and parent, can take place, still causes a confusion of expectations amongst parents. Homework arrangements are inconsistent between classes in frequency and amounts, and not consistently marked across the school. The disparity between the school's provision and parents' perceptions of the need for preparation for the secondary school causes them anxiety, particularly parents of Year 6 pupils.

67. The school's mission statement indicates that it wants to harmonise pupils, parents, staff and the parish together with a strong Catholic ethos. However, the lack of a school vision for involving more parents in the life of the school and getting that message across to them means that the links with parents remain at a satisfactory rather than good level. Nevertheless, many parents bring their children to school, and parents have good access to the school staff through its 'open-door policy'. They are welcomed if they have a problem or wish to give regular help.

68. Approximately one in three parents consistently support the school. The overall impact of parents on the school's life is satisfactory. A few parents provide help by supporting learning in the classroom, escorting pupils on school trips, to the swimming pool, and leading after school activities. One parent governor was elected, but other parent governor positions have been unopposed. The 'Friends of St Richards' is sincere in its approach. It involves some parents in substantial fund-raising through a variety of events. However, some parents are opposed to its informality and exclusiveness and state that others would also like to help. A satisfactory number of parents and friends attended the Corpus Christi Mass, held in the school during the inspection week.

69. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. Both the prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are adequate and indicate that the school values its parents, but do not communicate the essential ethos of the school. The prospectus now contains all the points of statutory information except for information on the Foundation Stage, but the annual governors' report to parents does not meet statutory requirements in certain key areas. Parents could benefit from a greater access to, and knowledge of the availability of the school's policies and procedures. Other written communications are generally good, sufficient and respectful of the parents' roles, and give them sufficiently advance notice. The school's newsletters, especially appreciated by parents, are of good quality. Informal communications are good, so that problems are resolved quickly, though parents

would benefit from improved information through notice boards of the work of governors and the 'Friends of the School'. The school's annual report to parents on their children's progress is satisfactory. Subject statements are detailed and individual to give satisfactory quality feedback regarding pupils' capabilities. However, the report does not specify areas for improvement or future targets sufficiently well. Parents are encouraged to add their own comments, but pupils are not given the opportunity to add their own self-appraisal.

70. The contribution of parents to pupils' learning through an education partnership at home and in the school is satisfactory. Most parents value education and have made a positive statement in selecting the school for their child. Nevertheless, too few parents have signed the home-school agreement. Parents discharge their statutory duties well in relation to punctuality issues, but less well in regard to attendance issues. Parents are invited into school at the start of the school year to be briefed by the teacher on relevant information, including topics and homework and they find this briefing useful. They review their children's work twice a year and these evenings are well attended. If parents do not turn up for these reviews, the school makes determined efforts to telephone them for an appointment. The school has run occasional parent evenings to provide information about the National Curriculum, including literacy, numeracy, and national tests. The majority of parents are satisfied by the school's attitude to homework, but a large minority is dissatisfied. There is a close collaboration with the parents of special educational needs pupils, so that meaningful individual educational plans, with targets, are set and reviewed termly. Parents receive good advice from the school at the time of transfer to secondary school, so that they can make informed decisions regarding their choices.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

71. Overall, the leadership and management of the school is sound. The headteacher gives similarly good leadership as at the time of the last inspection in setting the school's tone and atmosphere, the friendly and respectful relationships within the school and the good links with the wider school community. He has a good working partnership with the governing body. He monitors the quality of teaching and learning with some regularity and gives both verbal and written feedback to staff about their work. He is aware of areas which need to be developed further, such as assessment arrangements and the monitoring of teaching and learning. However, some aspects of leadership are in need of further development, such as providing a clearer sense of direction and prioritising developments. Overall, the headteacher's leadership is sound.

72. Some aspects of the school's management systems are also in need of development. Whilst some subject co-ordinators have monitored the teaching and learning in their subject responsibilities, there is not a rigorous and scheduled plan nor a whole school approach to this work. Subject co-ordinators monitor standards across the school by sampling work, as does the headteacher, but there is not enough rigour and accountability in this work, nor sufficient recording of issues and following them through. Members of staff who have release time are not accountable for the way they spend the time and some staff have advantages in this regard which are not afforded to others.

73. Not enough attention is given to detail in the school's systems and much is out of date or not in place. Not all members of staff have job descriptions, including the headteacher. The deputy headteacher does not have a signed and agreed copy of her role. Whilst staff and governors have a portfolio of policies, the portfolio does not contain a list of contents nor dates when they were written and when they are due for review. There are no policies for such key aspects as sex education, attendance, homework and drugs awareness. Whilst there is some useful advice for supply staff who work temporarily in the school, there is not a staff handbook.

74. Appropriate structures are in place to resolve issues, which arise on a day-to-day basis and to keep staff informed. Staff and senior management team meetings are regular and staff meetings in particular provide a focus for curriculum development. Key decisions at meetings are logged and records are kept of these. The working partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher is satisfactory.

75. The school improvement plan is of satisfactory quality and the priorities within it are appropriate for the school's stage of development. It contains success criteria for the initiatives and lists the members of staff who are responsible for seeing priorities through. It does not contain a review of the previous plan, consider the longer term or detail the methods to be used to measure whether the priorities have been completed successfully. There has been some slippage in tackling some priorities on the school improvement plan, mainly, but not in all cases, due to staffing problems. The work scheduled to be completed in literacy is, for example, behind the time-scale, as is the target setting for performance management. The headteacher still awaits training to update himself on procedures for making referrals on child protection issues.

76. The work of the governing body is satisfactory overall and the school meets all its aims. The chair of the governing body takes a very keen interest in the school and is a regular visitor. The committee structure works effectively and there are appropriate terms of reference. It has satisfactory systems to keep itself informed about the school's strengths and the areas which need to be developed but it has not ensured that there is a job description for the headteacher nor ensured that policies have been kept up to date. It fulfils most of its statutory responsibilities but it does not have a formally stated sex education policy and the description in the prospectus does not match school practice. Some statutory items are not included in the annual report to parents, such as the progress on the action plan since the last inspection. The health and safety governor carries out regular inspections of the accommodation to good effect and the rate of accidents is low.

77. Strategic financial planning is unsatisfactory overall and insufficiently linked to the school improvement plan. There is a rolling programme for updating the premises and replacing old furniture but little long-term financial planning. Some, but not enough, costings are written in to the school improvement plan and the school is planning to ensure that the current bulge in Year 2 is catered for adequately throughout the school. Day-to-day management of the budget is generally good but the school cannot quickly track spending on all subject areas. It has good systems to ensure that specific grants, such as those received from the standards fund, are spent for their intended purposes. Tendering is used effectively for larger items of expenditure. The process for spending on books and equipment is unsatisfactory and does not ensure that priorities are planned for, agreed in staff discussion or that subject co-ordinators account for and evaluate purchases.

78. The school is currently not obtaining best value from the large number of extra staff, comprising teaching assistants and part-time teachers. Several observations were made where these extra staff members were passive extras in lessons for long periods of time. In one Year 3 session of two lessons, the extra teacher was only active for thirty minutes out of almost two hours. The rest of the time she was a silent observer as pupils sat for very long periods of time on the carpet in discussion with the class teacher. There is not a rigorous enough system by which to evaluate the way in which extra staff are being used and value for money obtained.

79. The school has recently had a Local Education Authority financial audit and received a generally favourable report about its financial systems. Some recommendations were made, including the necessity for the whole governing body to be involved in any changes to the headteacher's salary and ratification of the budget and to maintain a register of business interests. These issues are to be attended to.

80. Staffing levels are good. There is good provision of learning support assistants and general assistants. Members of staff have suitable phase experience to teach primary aged children and most teachers are deployed effectively in the school. There are suitable induction arrangements and training opportunities. At the time of the inspection, one class was being taught by an unqualified teacher and a second class by a newly qualified teacher. All the teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subject areas to deliver the curriculum. Work in design and technology and geography is now satisfactory as the expertise and knowledge of the staff has developed. The teaching of information and communication technology is now enhanced with the introduction of the information and communication suite, training for staff and the appointment of a technical manager. In these subjects the increased confidence and expertise of teachers are raising the standards of attainment across the school. Only one teacher is co-ordinating a subject in which she has a specific specialism, however this does not prevent the effectiveness of teaching and co-ordination of the curriculum. Learning support assistants give added support to pupils with special needs and to those pupils with English as an additional language. Additional teachers are employed to provide non-contact time to senior staff, co-ordinators and class teachers. As yet there is no audit of the use of this time to ensure its efficiency nor to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.

81. The special educational needs co-ordinator, employed to work with the most serious learning and emotional problems, as well as administering the support generally for special educational needs pupils, provides good support for them. She offers good advice to staff in the form of information, expertise and knowledge of the pupils. She manages the administrative arrangements for special needs pupils with much thoroughness ensuring that reviews of the pupils' targets are regular and involve parents.

82. Job descriptions for staff are available but require review. The role of subject co-ordinators has improved since the last inspection but arrangements for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning are not sufficiently streamlined. In-service training is provided according to the identified needs of the school and the individual professional needs of staff.

83. The budget is managed effectively by the administrative staff and the governing body is kept fully informed of the financial details. The site manager provides a strong support to the school and maintains the building and grounds well.

84. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall and there is adequate administrative space. The school is built on difficult, rising terrain and it fronts onto a road. There is no car parking space. Classrooms vary in size. Most are adequate but some are cramped. The hall is large and has a good surface but its potential is limited because approximately one-quarter of its area is taken up to store tables and chairs and physical education equipment and these constitute a safety hazard. There are insufficient toilet facilities for the number of pupils on roll. In some wash areas there are open drains. The school has a medical room set aside for treatment and consultations. There is no enclosed play area for Foundation Stage pupils. The reference library is very small and unappealing. Cloakroom spaces are cramped and the height of the pegs often necessitates pupils standing on benches to hang up their coats. There is a general lack of storage space. The noise of chairs on the wooden floors upstairs can sometimes be a distraction to classes on the ground floor.

85. The school has limited exterior space. There is a small but attractive field area surrounded by trees and bushes on one side, which presents problems during physical education activities involving striking games. A hard-surfaced area, which is also limited in its area, necessitates split play times. The well designed adventure play area on two levels and joined by a slide provides some compensation but it is unusable after wet weather. A significant proportion of the chairs and tables in upper Key Stage 2 are ill matched and this is resulting in poor posture when pupils undertake tasks and does not make it easy for pupils to work with ease. Teachers do not open windows enough during lessons and on several occasions during the inspection, classrooms became hot and stuffy. There is much clutter in the school and worn out cupboards containing outdated and unused equipment. Much of this is on the large stage, which acts as a servery at lunch-times.

86. Resources are generally adequate but often badly stored and untidy in cupboards. The quality and range of resources are good in design and technology but unsatisfactory in music. There are good amounts of books for the literacy hour but the reference library is of poor quality and many of the books are outdated. It is not well indexed and pupils have difficulty in finding books for particular studies.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

87. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. It provides a sound education for its pupils. In seeking to improve the quality of provision, the headteacher, staff and governors should attend to the following:

- **improve the provision in practical science, the application of mathematics and the general quality of work in the Foundation Stage by**

- a) the pupils to use their mathematics in real life settings;
- b) writing a Foundation Stage policy and bringing the Foundation Stage curriculum more in line with the new arrangements for young children's learning.
(Paras 12, 13, 38, 40, 41, 84, 95, 96, 118, 120)

- **defining the headteacher's role more specifically and developing more rigour in the school's systems by**

- a) ensuring the headteacher and the deputy headteacher have signed and agreed job descriptions;
- b) ensuring there are policies in place for some key aspects of the school which currently lack them and bringing others up to date;
- c) ensuring that agreed policies are carried out in practice;
- d) setting more short term targets for improving management systems.
(Paras 41, 42, 43, 52, 54, 69, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78)

- **developing an agreed programme for monitoring teaching and learning, which includes subject co-ordinators and which is known to all staff and establishes the criteria and expectations for observing and reporting back;**
(Paras 82, 108, 145)

- **improve the systems for keeping records and tracking pupils' progress by:**

- a) developing an assessment, recording and reporting policy to determine whole school practice;
- b) ensuring that there are consistent whole-school record keeping systems;
- c) making better use of on-going assessment to match the work that pupils do to their capabilities.
(Paras 31, 39, 62, 63, 107, 117, 123, 139, 145, 158)

- **improving the quality of the school improvement plan so that:**

- a) finance is more securely tied to the plan;
- b) there is more long-term vision;
- c) the plan contains the means by which success criteria are to be measured.
(Paras 75, 77)

- **ensuring that better value is obtained from the extra members of the teaching staff and teaching assistants and making all staff accountable for the way in which they use any release time from class.**
(Paras 27, 33, 36, 78, 80)

- **audit the premises for outdated, unused and worn out furniture, equipment and books to create a more tidy environment and assess the respective heights of all chairs and desks so that pupils are seated more comfortably when they work.**
(Paras 77, 85)

In addition the governing body should consider the following for inclusion in its action plan:

- The governing body should write a clear sex education policy to comply with requirements and ensure that the sex education policy matches the school's practice. It should also ensure that what is agreed in this respect is reported in the school prospectus.
(Paras 43, 76)
- It should also report in its annual report to parents on progress made on the recommendations in the most recent inspection report.
(Para 76)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

57

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	14	30	49	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)		224
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special

educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		57

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	00[99]	14	24	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	13
	Girls	22	22	21
	Total	34	33	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 [75]	87 [78]	89 [94]
	National	83 [82]	84 [83]	90 [87]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	22	21	23
	Total	34	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 [78]	89 [86]	95 [86]
	National	84 [82]	88 [86]	88 [87]

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	00 [99]	22	9	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	20
	Girls	7	6	8
	Total	22	20	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 [73]	65 [77]	90 [87]
	National	75 [70]	72 [69]	85 [78]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	22
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	22	24	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 [90]	77 [83]	97 [90]
	National	70 [68]	72 [69]	79 [75]

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Year 6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	153

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	00/01
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	£
Total income	414,229
Total expenditure	402,907
Expenditure per pupil	1547
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	9275

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

223

Number of questionnaires returned

65

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	36	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	46	9	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	49	0	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	51	17	3	2
The teaching is good.	53	42	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	41	9	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	26	6	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	34	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	45	14	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	34	3	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	33	6	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	38	28	8	11

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents feel that the informal parent grouping is exclusive.

Some parents state there is some inconsistency in homework provision.

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

88. Children are admitted annually into the Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they become five. All children attend part-time during the first half of the autumn term and then attend full-time. During the first half-term after they enter, tests called baseline assessments are carried out to ascertain the children's capabilities, mainly in language, mathematics and in their personal and social development. The most recent assessments indicate that the attainment of the majority of children on entry is broadly average. By the end of the Reception year, the majority of children have attained the standards expected known as the Early Learning Goals and a few children have exceeded them. This represents a drop in standards from those previously reported, except for those in physical development.

Personal, social and emotional development

89. The Reception class gives appropriate attention to children's personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the Reception year they achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area and they make good progress in this aspect of their development. The teaching of this aspect is good. Children settle well and show a good understanding of daily routines, such as snack time and playtime. They sit quietly and are well behaved during assemblies, registration and class activities, sometimes for extended periods of time. They answer questions during class and group discussions and listen carefully without interruption to instructions and explanations. They are eager to talk about themselves, their families and the things that interest them with each other and with both known adults and visitors. They persist at teacher directed tasks and directed play activities showing good concentration and perseverance and tidy up sensibly when asked. They show consideration for others in their activities. For example when going to the hall for physical education, they line up and go to the hall quietly so that they do not disturb pupils in other classrooms. Before and after physical education, the majority of children take responsibility for undressing and dressing themselves and putting their clothes away so that they can find them easily when changing again. There are well-established rules for behaviour. These, together with the good role models provided by the adults, make a good contribution to the children's generally good behaviour of all the children.

Communication, language and literacy

90. By the end the Reception year, the majority of children achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area and some exceed them. The teaching of this aspect is sound and overall the children make sound progress. They enjoy sharing personal news to which the adults listen with interest and they exchange ideas and comments about what they are doing as they play together. An appropriate emphasis is given to the development of early reading skills through well planned activities based on the National Literacy Framework. Children develop a satisfactory understanding of phonics through learning the sounds of individual letters. Many can identify the sounds at the beginning of words and give other words that begin with the same sound. They listen to stories and rhymes and can recall events in stories they are studying. They join in with refrains and familiar rhymes with obvious pleasure and know most of the words. All the children take books home to read with their parents and are heard to read in school. Suitable records are kept of their progress. They also take home words from the reading scheme to learn to support their reading. From the beginning, they learn how to write cursively and are learning how to form letters correctly. When directed to write, the more

capable children can write a simple sentence without help, using their knowledge of known words and phonics to assist with unfamiliar words. Others can copy write a simple sentence accurately and some are beginning to write a few single words correctly. Most children can write their first names legibly and correctly. Many of the daily, directed play activities, such as role-play in the 'post-office', provide further opportunities for the development of the children's language and literacy skills. However the lack of clear learning objectives for these, combined with limited adult involvement, means that these opportunities are often not used as well as they might be.

Mathematical development

91. By the end of the Reception year, most children will achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area and some children will exceed them. Overall they make satisfactory progress. The teaching of this aspect is satisfactory. An appropriate priority is given to children's mathematical development. The planned numeracy activities based on the National Numeracy Framework have clear learning objectives. The use of mathematical language and appropriately challenging questions by all staff provide sound opportunities for mathematical development. They are learning to count forwards and backwards to ten through the use of number rhymes and games, to recognise numbers to ten, to write numerals to five and to make simple mathematical patterns. The most able can draw or identify the correct number of objects to match numbers up to ten and can write simple number addition sentences. A group of children playing in the 'post-office' correctly identified all the different coins. Some children were able to use different coins to make five and ten pence. They can sequence events such as planting seeds and order the days of the week. They make comparisons and identify things that are shorter, longer, heavier and lighter. They learn about simple plane shapes. They are developing an understanding of capacity and volume through play with sand and water.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

92. Knowledge and understanding of the world is taught through appropriately chosen topics. By the end of the Reception year, most children achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area and they make satisfactory progress overall. The teaching is sound. In conversation, they can talk about themselves, their families and past and present events in their lives. Through the study of mini-beasts they learn how snails move and behave, the conditions they need to stay alive and the food they eat. They use viewers competently to study snails and other objects and know that the viewer lens magnifies things so that they can observe details that they could not see otherwise see. They use construction materials to build homes that they think would be suitable for snails. They have explored the school grounds and are aware of some of their particular features. They have access to a computer in the classroom as well as using the computer suite and are learning the skills that will enable them to use these confidently and with enjoyment. For example, using a game program they have learnt how to click on an object with the mouse and drag it to another position. They use tools and equipment purposefully and safely. The emphasis upon adult-directed activities limits children's opportunities to explore and investigate aspects of their surroundings and find things out for themselves.

Physical development

93. The teaching of this aspect is satisfactory. By the time they leave the Reception class, the majority of children will achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area of development and they make sound progress. Children enjoy opportunities for physical activity in the hall and work well in these lessons. They are beginning to understand how their bodies work and the need for care through warm-up and cool-down activities. They respond quickly to instructions and are attentive to the teacher's suggestions. They use space well showing appropriate awareness of others around them. They run, jump and skip with confidence and are beginning to use movement to convey emotions. They respond enthusiastically to opportunities to move to music, for example as when they portrayed

the movements different toys might make. However opportunities to think about how they might improve these movements or to create their own imaginative movements are limited. They have regular opportunities to swim. The current blocking of the different forms of physical development over the academic year, combined with the lack of a secure outdoor area, means that children do not have continuous opportunities to experience and develop the full range of physical movements and skills. The school is planning to develop an outdoor area. The children handle a variety of tools including pencils, crayons, brushes, glue spreaders and scissors and are taught how to use these safely and with control.

Creative development

94. By the end of the Reception year the majority of children will achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area and they make sound progress. They use tools such as pencils, brushes and scissors with satisfactory control. They enjoy joining in with simple rhymes and singing and sing tunefully. They have opportunities to play untuned percussion instruments and are beginning to recognise the sound each instrument makes and select a sound to represent in imaginative form the movements of different insects. They handle and use playdough confidently to make two- and three-dimensional shapes and patterns. They cut and stick a variety of papers and fabrics to make cards and pictures. They use a given limited colour palette of ready-mixed paint and create pictures showing snail shell patterns that they have observed and discussed with the teacher. During the period of the inspection they were not observed to have opportunities to paint pictures from their own imagination and painting materials and equipment were not regularly available. Although they enjoy the daily opportunities for imaginative role-play and dressing up, the lack of adult involvement and participation, as well as the lack of clear learning objectives reduces the effectiveness of these activities. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in this aspect of work.

95. The curriculum is mainly provided through adult-directed activities, including directed play. These are based on the Early Learning Goals and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The Reception teacher is responsible for all the planning that is shared with the learning support assistant and other adults working in the classroom. A variety of different planning approaches is used in long-term planning and this makes it difficult to ensure that all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum receive sufficient weight. Both medium- and short-term planning identify a range of possible learning objectives related to different planned activities. However these lack a defined focus that could support and inform teaching. An action plan has been drawn up to resolve the present shortcomings. The quality of teaching in the Reception class is never less than satisfactory and the teacher knows all the children well. The management of children is good. The learning support assistant provides positive support that promotes children's achievements. Baseline assessment provides early identification of pupils with special educational needs and is also used to inform pupil grouping. There is some recorded, ongoing focused observation of children's behaviour but this is not undertaken systematically across the curriculum. Suitable, ongoing records are kept of children's progress in literacy, including phonic knowledge and the teacher keeps termly records of children's achievements in each of the six areas of learning.

96. The Reception teacher took over the Reception class two years ago. As yet there is no policy or scheme of work, based on government guidance for the Foundation Stage, to guide teacher planning. Resources are satisfactory overall. Parental involvement is encouraged through regular newsletters as well as the initial induction procedures, although the school brochure does not contain information about the Foundation Stage. The relationships between teaching and non-teaching staff and volunteer helpers are good and make a good contribution to the well-being of all the children. The school has developed satisfactory induction procedures to support children and their parents on children's entry to the Reception class. The teacher is developing sound links with local playgroups.

ENGLISH

97. Attainment in English is appropriate for pupils' ages overall at the end of both key stages and pupils make sound progress. On the evidence of lessons observed, a scrutiny of work and pupils heard to read, most pupils are likely to attain the national expectations and a minority to exceed them. This reflects the substantial number of pupils with special educational needs at the end of both key stages that adversely affects standards. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in English in relation to their prior achievement, and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. The school has maintained the standards reported at the previous inspection. The well-planned whole class and group activities that are a regular part of literacy and other lessons contribute significantly to the sound progress made by pupils throughout the school.

98. At the end of Key Stage 1, in the 2000 national tests, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level or above in reading was above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools and well above in writing. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level or above in writing was well above the national average and well above average in comparison with similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level or above in reading and writing was well above the national average. This reflects the substantial number of higher attaining pupils in the group taking the tests in that year. The trend of results over the last three years is broadly in line with the national trend. The performance of girls in both reading and writing exceeded the national average for girls during this period but the performance of boys during the same period fell below that for boys nationally.

99. At the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in 2000 was close to the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools but the proportion of pupils who reached the higher level was above average against similar schools. The trend of results over the last three years has been broadly in line with that nationally. The performance of boys and girls exceeded the national average.

100. Standards in speaking and listening are good at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively to teachers, other adults and to each other and make appropriate responses. They are eager to participate in whole-class and group discussion. They express themselves clearly and confidently and can maintain the general flow of the discussion. They make sound progress in their ability to ask relevant and sensible questions. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils worked on non-fiction texts and composed a series of questions that would help them to locate information in a book. In class and group discussions, they listen to the comments of other pupils. In their own responses, they take account of what they have heard. They use appropriate language to talk about events and characters in stories and express opinions. They comment on and discuss grammatical features, using technical language.

101. The most able readers read aloud with good expression taking account of punctuation and features of print. By the age of eleven, this sound progress is sustained, as pupils respond to the many opportunities provided in literacy and other lessons to speak and listen. For example in the Year 3 class, the strategy of 'hot seating' was used as part of a literacy lesson. This involved pupils taking on a role from the book they were studying and having to answer the questions put by the rest of the class in the character they had adopted. This activity made a positive contribution to their speaking and listening skills and also helped them to empathise with story characters, so supporting their reading skills. Pupils show an appropriate understanding of the need to adapt the language structures they use to take account of different contexts and audiences when talking. They express themselves confidently using a wider range of vocabulary and technical language. They listen carefully and respond well to the contributions made by other pupils. The majority of pupils read aloud from self-chosen books with good expression that shows sound comprehension.

102. In both key stages an appropriate emphasis is placed on reading and standards are satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 1 pupils listen to and read a variety of stories, poetry and non-fiction books and this helps them to develop an enjoyment of reading that is maintained throughout their school life. They respond well to questions about plot, events, characters and vocabulary and this reflects their interest in, and understanding of, the texts read. They are able to draw on their personal experiences to comment on the ideas expressed in stories. They develop sound study skills and most understand the purpose of contents and index pages in non-fiction books. Phonic skills are taught systematically. As a result, by the age of seven, the most able pupils read fluently for their age, using a range of strategies, including phonics, to decode unfamiliar words. By the age of eleven, most pupils read a variety of texts fluently and with evident enjoyment and pupils' good progress is maintained. They can recall books read previously, discuss favourite authors and are developing a personal taste. They use evidence from texts appropriately to support their views when discussing meaning and the most able make mature, personal responses. They use an appropriate range of linguistic terms with understanding when discussing texts and demonstrate a sound understanding of syntax and grammar. They can scan texts for information accurately and select information appropriately in order to make judgements, as a result of the good progress made in their study skills. They make appropriate use of dictionaries and thesauri to support their work. Parents contribute to their children's progress in reading. Pupils in both key stages take books home either to share with parents or read on their own and reading diaries provide an effective means of communication in some classes between parents and teachers. In Key Stage 1 pupils are heard to read regularly both individually and in group reading activities and in Key Stage 2, all pupils are heard to read in group reading activities and some pupils are also heard to read individually. The school holds a twice yearly book fair to encourage reading.

103. Standards in writing are satisfactory overall by the ages of seven and eleven and pupils make sound progress. In both key stages pupils write for a variety of purposes and audiences including imaginative fiction, personal writing, poetry, play scripts, reports, factual accounts, book reviews, instructions, letters, lists, note taking and labelling. By the age of seven pupils are learning how to plan their written work and are beginning to write at greater length. The more able pupils write imaginative stories and personal news where they are beginning to think about the purpose of their writing and words are more carefully chosen for effect. Most have a good understanding of basic punctuation and spelling of unfamiliar words makes effective and accurate use of phonic knowledge. By the age of eleven most pupils plan their writing and can write at length using complex sentences, paragraphs and well-selected vocabulary in an appropriate style. They use a range of punctuation accurately and overall spell correctly. They have opportunities to draft, revise and edit their work and are able to comment constructively upon their own and others' work. Pupils take spellings home to learn throughout the school and are regularly tested on these. Standards of handwriting and presentation are satisfactory overall. Pupils learn how to join their writing in the Reception class and continue to refine their skills through regular teaching in both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have mastered the cursive style successfully and pupils' work is consistently well written and presented.

104. In both key stages there are good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills. Pupils write for a range of purposes in subjects other than literacy. For example, Year 2 pupils write an eyewitness account of the Great Fire of London as part of their work in history. Year 6 pupils considered how and why persuasive writing was used in a range of brochures about the Isle of Wight that made good links with their forthcoming residential visit. Speaking and listening skills are appropriately developed in discussion activities related to all areas of the curriculum. Pupils use computers to word-process their written work in literacy and other subjects and to gather information in support of projects.

105. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are good in both key stages. The majority are well behaved in lessons and apply themselves with good concentration, purpose and interest to any tasks they are set, even when not directly supervised. In assigned collaborative activities they work well together. They also help each other informally during lessons as they discuss different aspects of their work. Their response in the English lessons observed was always positive and interested. They clearly enjoy their work.

106. The quality of teaching in English is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes good or very good in both key stages. Where teaching is good, teachers make effective links between previous work and new learning. This is a feature of the whole class work at the beginning of literacy lessons when teachers skilfully review what pupils have previously learned so that their work is purposeful and relevant. Teachers make the purpose of lessons very clear and this helps the pupils to understand what they are doing and why. During group activities, pupils complete tasks that are well matched to their individual needs and, as a result, they make good progress. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and of their behaviour and this means that lessons proceed smoothly and at a brisk pace. Teachers' relationships with pupils are good and these are significant in promoting and maintaining pupils' good attitudes to their work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this helps them to plan and teach with confidence.

107. There is no agreed whole-school system in place for the assessment and recording of pupils' ongoing progress in reading, phonics, spelling and writing. National tests, optional tests and commercial tests are used throughout the school to measure pupils' progress in literacy and to inform teachers' planning and pupil grouping arrangements. Pupils' work is marked regularly and some teachers annotate pupils' work with comments that help them to understand what they need to do to improve, although this is not consistent practice across the school. All pupils have literacy targets and these contribute to their sound progress. The work of classroom assistants in liaising with teachers to provide additional support during the literacy hour often makes a valuable contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. Helpful spelling and reading homework is set regularly in both key stages and in Key Stage 2, pupils also receive writing tasks

108. The co-ordinator, who has held responsibility for the subject for three years, has good subject knowledge but much of her co-ordinating work for English has been unsuccessful. Non-contact time has been provided for the purpose of monitoring literacy teaching and learning but for a variety of reasons, little monitoring has taken place. As a result, the co-ordinator has insufficient awareness of the issues that need to be addressed to raise standards. Medium- and short-term planning is monitored to ensure conformity with the Literacy Framework. An action plan is in place and has recently been revised because a number of the agreed targets have not been met. The lack of a portfolio of work samples does not assist teachers with the moderation of standards or aspirations for higher standards. There is a satisfactory whole-school policy for English and the school has adopted the National Literacy Framework as its scheme of work. Training in issues related to literacy form part of the school's in-service programme. Literacy resources are good. All classes have their own literacy hour materials, as well as a good range of general reading material, both fiction and non-fiction. Additional literacy resources are centrally stored in the school library. These good quality literacy resources are used well and make a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' learning and the status of literacy throughout the school. However, the lack of a catalogue of literacy materials, detailing their range and location, does not support most effective use.

109. The school library has recently been relocated to a room that is too small to be used by even a few pupils for study-skills activities. Its location on the first floor restricts its use by individual Key Stage 1 pupils. Following its relocation, all fiction books were taken out of the library and placed in classrooms so the library only contains non-fiction material. These are Dewey referenced but there is no central index that would support pupils in locating information. Many books are out-dated and contain inaccurate information and some are in poor condition.

MATHEMATICS

110. In the 2000 statutory assessment tests the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level of attainment at the end of the Key Stage 1 tests was well above the national average for all and similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was well above the national average and in the top five percent of schools nationally and also against similar schools. There has been a steady increase in performance since 1998 with a noted increase in 2000. The current cohort of Year 2 pupils is not as able but their attainment overall is average. About four-fifths of the pupils are in line to attain the expected level and about one-quarter the higher level. The performance of boys over the last three years has fallen below the national average while that of the girls is above. Current standards in Key Stage 1 in mathematics are similar to those reported previously.

111. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 2 was below the national average, whilst the proportion attaining the higher level was close to the national average. The school's performance against similar schools was below average. The trend over the last three years has been erratic with results dipping below average in 1998, rising above in 1999 and overall in line in 2000. The cohort of pupils in 2000 had a high proportion of pupils with special needs. Overall, the attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is in line with expectations and similar to those reported previously. About seven-tenths of the current Year 6 pupils are in line to attain the expected standard and one-fifth of the cohort the higher level. In both key stages pupils with special needs make sound progress. The performance of boys over the last three years has been in line with the national average whilst the performance of girls exceeded it.

112. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can count to 100 and order numbers to 1000. They can add and subtract to 1000 using number lines and cards to assist them visually. They can find the difference between three figure numbers, for example what is 300 less than 500. Pupils have a good understanding of place value. They use mathematical vocabulary well and with understanding. They appreciate the terminology which means addition, such as plus, the sum of, what is the total of? Year 2 pupils can identify patterns in a hundred square using their knowledge of counting in twos, threes and tens to create patterns. They learn to use money and give change.

113. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of mathematical language and use it with confidence. Year 3 pupils reinforce their understanding of division and the link between multiplication and division. Year 4 pupils can measure and record angles, describing the direction of movement. One pupil with special needs clearly explained the process to the class identifying the number of right angles turned and the degrees of turn. In one excellent lesson, Year 5 pupils furthered their understanding of weight, estimating the mass of objects before weighing them accurately. Year 6 pupils make good use of a mathematical display showing equivalents involving fractions, decimals and percentages. They understand and use the terms: numerator and denominator.

114. The attitudes of pupils throughout the school are very good. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 enjoy mathematics and many pupils state that it is their favourite subject. They ask the teachers and classroom assistants for help when needed and feel very confident that staff respect their questions. The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are interested and involved in activities and listen very attentively. They respect and value the contributions made by their peers. Pupils are keen to succeed and make progress.

115. Teaching in both key stages is good. All the lessons observed were satisfactory or better. The excellence of the Year 5 lesson was due to clear planning, very good use of resources, stimulating pace, enthusiasm engendered by the teacher and her constant encouragement, mixed with humour and praise. In a few classes, the slower pace of teaching, low expectations of presentation and inadequate assessment arrangements are features requiring attention. Planning is good overall with clear learning outcomes. Good use is made of resources to aid understanding. This enables pupils, including those

with special educational needs to make satisfactory progress. Teachers understand the abilities of their pupils and the work is well matched to their needs. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the learning support assistants and the higher attaining pupils are challenged appropriately. Homework observed in Year 6 aids learning in the classroom. Most teachers use marking satisfactorily both as a means of teaching and also to support their pupils. All teachers make good use of praise and pupils respond to their encouragement. Satisfactory use is made of mathematics across the curriculum.

116. The thorough planning of the National Numeracy Strategy across the school contributes to effective teaching. The co-ordinator analyses the end-of-year results and identifies areas of weakness. She ensures that the Numeracy Strategy is taught in a consistent and effective manner from the Reception class to Year 6. Resources are satisfactory. They are placed in each classroom and centrally allowing easy access for teachers and pupils.

117. The co-ordinator works hard to develop mathematics across the school but she does not have a job description. Monitoring takes place on a weekly basis and informal feedback is given to staff and formal recording of her evaluation of teaching and learning is kept. The policy and scheme of work have been drawn up and implemented by the co-ordinator with support from the county advisors and are assisting in the gradual build up of skills in sequence. Assessment takes place each half term, at the end of the key stages and at the end of Years 3 4 and 5 and these tests help to track pupils' progress. However, the half-termly assessment is neither rigorous nor structured sufficiently to provide a detailed picture of individual pupil progress across the key mathematical skills. This was noted during the last inspection. The co-ordinator models good practice and provides guidance and advice to staff where and when it is required.

SCIENCE

118. In the most recent published national test results in 2000, pupils' attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national average, as was the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level. At the end of Key Stage 2, the school's results were average compared to all schools nationally and similar schools. Over the past three years, the school's results have been consistently around the national average. Currently, standards in science in both key stages are similar to the pattern, which has been maintained over recent years. Most pupils in both key stages are in line to obtain the expected levels and a few pupils the higher levels. Pupils' skills in investigative science, not tested by the national tests, are unsatisfactory for their age. Standards are similar in most respects to those reported at the last inspection.

119. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand a simple electric circuit and can name objects which depend on electricity to work and they are aware of the main safety rules concerning electricity. They also know some methods by which electricity can be saved, such as switching off lights. They can name the main parts of a plant and know the difference between plants and animals. They appreciate that animals prefer different habitats, such as the difference between the habitat of a millipede and that of a ladybird. They know about the concept of pull and push and understand these through their practical work in the school's adventure playground. They understand the difference between man made and natural objects. They are not yet sufficiently familiar with the concept of a fair test. In their communication of their work they are largely descriptive. Whilst they predict, they do not explain their predictions and they do not draw out sufficiently well reasoned conclusions, for example, in the pupils' experiment when they altered the gradient of a ramp. Pupils do not use scientific vocabulary sufficiently well in their verbal and written communication.

120. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know the ways in which seeds can be dispersed and the process of pollination and fertilisation. They know that some things can be changed into a different state and they can discuss the reversibility and irreversibility of state. They know about natural and artificial forms of light, have a good understanding of the earth's rotational pattern and the phases of the moon. They have some understanding of a fair test, as they make parachutes of different size and predict that the smaller one would fall at a faster rate. However, attention to fair testing and scientific investigation is not widespread throughout Key Stage 2. For example, Year 3 pupils did not test properties such as transparency and opaqueness of materials in the same way during their investigation of materials. They have appropriate knowledge for their age about gravity and its effects. As in Key Stage 1, pupils' understanding of fair testing and investigative techniques is not as strong as their scientific knowledge and is below expectations.

121. Pupils in both key stages enjoy their science lessons and work with interest and perseverance. They pursue their activities to a conclusion concentrating well on their set task. They work co-operatively in activity sessions and discuss their work sensibly when required. Their work is usually neatly presented and diagrams are well labelled, although graphs do not often contain titles. In most lessons pupils behave well but in one Key Stage 2 lesson, the behaviour of a few pupils spoiled the activities for the others.

122. The quality of teaching ranges from occasionally very good to unsatisfactory but it is satisfactory overall in both key stages. Resources are usually prepared well. Pupils are encouraged to handle materials and good discussion often ensues. A few pupils in each key stage are unable to curb their enthusiasm in such discussions and their ebullience can affect the flow of the lesson and deny others an opportunity to contribute to discussion. Often appropriate science vocabulary is used, for example when discussing the food chain in Year 4 with such terms as predator and consumer. Work is not often challenging the higher-attaining pupils at a higher level but most teachers give more simple tasks to the pupils with special educational needs in follow-up activities. Good links were made in a Year 2 lesson to link with the literacy strategy to use a big book to find out key facts about their study using the index and contents. In some lessons good use is made of reference to the real world. In a Year 2 class, the teacher questioned the pupils about the comparative properties of wood and plastic for window frames during their discussion of materials. Teachers make satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs by ensuring they receive extra help but in the main similar expectations are made of all pupils in most classes.

123. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and good awareness of some of the current strengths and weaknesses in the science provision through scrutiny of work samples. She has not had an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning directly. Her co-ordinating work is sound, which is an improvement on comments made previously on the co-ordination of the subject. Resources are satisfactory but they are badly stored and are not easy to find. The recording system adopted to record pupils' progress does not enable the teachers to use the information regularly to progress pupils' learning because teachers are only using the record system to pass records on to the next teacher as a summative document. Judgements are similar in many ways to those made in the previous report but no action has been taken to create a portfolio of work or to introduce records. Standards of attainment are similar.

ART AND DESIGN

124. Because of organisational and time-tabling arrangements during the period of the inspection, it was only possible to observe two art lessons, one in each Key Stage. Judgements are based on the lessons observed, a scrutiny of work in sketchbooks and on display, teachers' planning and discussions with the headteacher, teachers and pupils. On the basis of these, attainment in art is in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. The school has maintained the standards reported at the previous inspection and the curriculum now meets statutory requirements.

125. In Key Stage 1, pupils engage with a range of techniques and materials. In Year 1 they use paint and other media to recreate their own ideas or to illustrate aspects of their work in other subject areas. They have used paint to illustrate 'old fashioned' transport as part of their work in history. They use paint, crayon and a variety of materials to create patterns, including those of non-western cultures, such as the Indian paisley pattern. They begin to learn how to look carefully at such things as faces and make pencil drawings of their observations. In Year 2 they continue to develop their skills of observational drawing by sketching buildings. They develop their understanding of pattern by making rubbings of textures found in the environment and use these to design and print textural patterns. They create two- and three-dimensional sculptures using natural and man-made materials. They study the work of past and contemporary artists such as Van Gogh and Andy Goldsworth and use the experiences to inform their own work.

126. In Key Stage 2, they continue to develop their understanding of a variety of techniques and to apply these to different aspects of their work. For example, in Year 3 they mix colours as part of their work on colour and tone. Year 6 pupils make observational drawings of aspects of local landscapes and they are able to undertake critical analysis of both their own work and that of artists they are studying.

127. In the lessons observed pupils showed a lively interest in, and enjoyment of, the artwork they were involved in. They work well, applying themselves with good concentration, and taking pride in producing work to a good standard. Year 6 pupils collaborate well when studying landscapes painted by a range of artists and their discussions and perceptive observations help them to understand why and how artists use colour and particular techniques in their work. The work pupils undertake makes a positive contribution to their spiritual and cultural development.

128. The quality of teaching in the two lessons observed was good. Teachers plan and organise their work well and use a variety of appropriate activities and resources to enthuse the pupils. Skills and techniques are taught systematically with clear instructions and good exemplification. Good use is made of visits to support pupils' learning as, for example, a Year 1 visit to a park to look at sculptural forms in nature or Year 5's visit to see the Bayeux Tapestry. They use art well to illuminate aspects of other subjects being studied, as in pupils' use of textiles in Year 5 to illustrate one of the Greek myths. The standard of display is satisfactory overall.

129. The co-ordinator left the school at Easter and the school has not yet been able to appoint a replacement. There is no up-to-date policy in place. The school has adopted national guidance as its scheme of work. There is a satisfactory range of centrally stored and readily accessible materials and in addition each class has a range of tools and materials for their own use.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

130. Due to time-tabling restrictions, only two lessons were observed during the course of the inspection. However, a large sample of pupils' work from Year 1 to Year 6 was scrutinised together with displays around the school which indicates that pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with the national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below expectations.

131. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can cut, stick, glue, paste, fold, assemble structures, use scissors appropriately and safely, measure and fix wood and card. Pupils of all ages learn to plan their ideas, design the product, select the materials and tools and evaluate their completed designs. For example, Year 1 pupils learn the process of design from discussion and observation of prototypes of a car design and a folding chair and very good quality photographs brought in by the teacher. They use

these experiences and also direct observation of playground equipment to make their own designs for playground equipment from plasticene and other construction equipment and to describe how the equipment can be used. Year 2 pupils use felt to make puppets and design and make a winding mechanism for a spider to move up and down a cardboard spout.

132. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils learn to investigate the properties of materials, to evaluate and modify their designs. Year 5 pupils learn to measure, mark and drill an off-centre hole to be used in a variety of cams. They understand the properties of MDF knowing that it is necessary to wear protective goggles and masks. The pupils work very well in pairs, sharing the tools sensibly and succeed in drilling the holes successfully, much to their own satisfaction and pleasure. Pupils use a range of materials to make a variety of products. These include wall display in the hall of Pentecost made with materials to create a collage effect. Year 5 pupils have made a tactile musical score using pebbles, twigs, tissue paper and seeds to give a visual impression of sound. Year 6 pupils have designed and made their own slippers and used wood and other materials, including plastic, to make shelter designs.

133. All pupils learn to sketch their designs carefully in their design and technology books. They learn to identify and select the tools required, to calculate the cost of production and to evaluate the product. For example, a pupil in Year 6 who designed and made a pair of slippers for the Queen commented in his evaluation 'The slippers were made for a comfortable and expensive look!' Boys and girls, including those of high ability and pupils with special needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the key skills of the subject.

134. The quality of teaching is good. The displays and the scrutiny of work show that all teachers have a good understanding and knowledge of design and technology. They link other subjects to design and technology, for example English, art, information and communication technology and mathematics. Teachers plan well and ask effective questions that encourage pupils to think independently; arranging tasks that will involve pupils working in pairs and in groups. They organise resources appropriate to the task and sometimes use marking to aid learning.

135. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and manages the subject satisfactorily. A policy and scheme of work are now in place. Teachers use nationally recommended evaluation sheets and the pupils' design and technology books to assess progress.

GEOGRAPHY

136. It was only possible to observe two geography lessons during the course of the inspection and other evidence was drawn from a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning, discussion with pupils and the geography co-ordinator. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of both key stages and are improved on those reported at the last inspection. National Curriculum requirements are fulfilled.

137. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand the concept of an island by studying the location of the British Isles on maps and discuss life on an imaginary island. They appreciate the difference between island and mainland. They begin to understand the variety of places and countries by following the adventures of a bear as he travels with pupils on their holidays. Details are logged on a world map with pictures and writings. They begin to acquire the concept of a key to interpret maps and make up their own symbols for their own imaginary maps. They appreciate that certain buildings are more likely to be associated with seaside towns. They can draw their route from home to school.

138. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can take up the positions of different sections of society. They take up roles as developers wishing to build in environmentally sensitive areas and as defenders of the status quo in the interests of preservation of the landscape arguing the likely damage which could be caused by development. They have some understanding of the zones on high mountains, such as the tree zone and the snow line and know why these zones occur. They can identify with the features of rural and urban life and the differences and similarities between them. Year 6 pupils make a detailed study of rivers and have learned much about the forms of transport and the damming of the Nile and the reasons for this.

139. In the two lessons observed, one in each key stage, the quality of teaching was good overall. In a very good Year 2 lesson, good questioning encouraged the Key Stage 1 pupils to find towns in Scotland and discussion enabled the pupils to develop a better understanding of the terms island and mainland. In the Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils developed a good understanding of mountain zones partly as a result of video clips seen in the previous lesson. In both lessons pupils showed much interest in the subject and behaved well. They listened carefully and contributed well to discussion. Good use is made of video clips in lessons. The work of the co-ordinator is sound. She has good first-hand knowledge to draw on to enliven the work in geography and she samples work and takes in teachers' planning documents. Resources are satisfactory but there is not enough evidence of globes and maps around the school for pupils to gain information informally. Pupils research well in the subject using the Internet. There is no assurance currently that teachers are tracking pupils' key skills during the course of a year because there is not an established skills check list.

HISTORY

140. Few lessons were observed during the inspection but scrutiny of work samples and discussion with pupils indicates that by the end of the key stages, levels of attainment are in line with national expectations and similar to those at the last inspection. Pupils of all ages and abilities have suitable knowledge and understanding of the past and present, both in their own lives and the lives of families and acquaintances. This was especially noticeable in the Year 6 study of the Second World War.

141. Pupils learn about the lives and life styles of famous people, for example Florence Nightingale and appreciate how much life has changed. They develop their chronological awareness further recognising the differences in the times of the Anglo-Saxons, the Vikings, the Egyptians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Tudors and Great Britain after 1930.

142. Year 2 pupils study the 'The Great Fire of London', drawing and sketching in great detail the sequence of events and recording in bullet points the major parts of the story. Some of the more able pupils are able to explain the meaning of chronological order and in the discussion of the century in which the fire happened can recall the name of the King and how to write it in Roman numerals. Throughout the lesson good learning took place with pupils' vocabulary extended by the good teaching. They work with enormous concentration, applying themselves to their work and making satisfactory progress.

143. Year 6 pupils observe at first hand a variety of clothes dating from 1948, modelled by pupils and teachers. They learn to recognise features of fashion of several decades. Pupils enjoy history, record their findings and interpreting events in a variety of ways, involving art, creative writing, information- technology and news-sheets. They work co-operatively in pairs and groups, sharing ideas, researching information and using their skills of decoding to sequence significant events.

144. The teaching of history in the lessons seen is good. Teachers question pupils effectively, challenge their thinking and provide opportunities for them to discuss reasons and interpret certain actions. Good relationships between teachers and pupils encourage them to discuss, question and understand historical events. Planning of lessons is detailed and well structured with work matched to the pupils' needs and capabilities. Good use is made of resources, for example topic boxes, books and

videos. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this has a positive impact upon learning. Teachers are aware of the differing needs of pupils, especially those with special needs and English as an additional language and these pupils make sound progress over time. One Year 2 pupil received additional and valuable help from the learning support teacher and, as a result, made good progress. Good links are made across subjects, for example: the creative writing of a Year 6 pupil, describing his life as an evacuee in a letter to his mother and the displays of the Great Fire of London and the Blitz. Marking aids learning. The Year 6 teacher for instance writes effective questions to interest and motivate further research, for example 'What did the land army do?'

145. The co-ordinator has worked hard to make positive improvements since the last inspection. The scheme of work now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the policy document gives staff details of teaching and suggestions for organisation, methods and resources. Consistent monitoring of pupils' performance and evaluation of history does not yet take place and there is no way of assessing key historical skills. Workbooks and teachers' planning are monitored by the co-ordinator.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

146. Much improvement has taken place in information and communication technology since the last inspection. The establishment of the information and communication technology suite, combined with increased staff confidence and expertise, has helped to improve the pupils' standards of attainment. These are now in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. A small number of Year 6 pupils are working above expectations.

147. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can program a moving toy when challenged to reach 'treasure' within a certain number of moves on a grid square. They know they have to clear the memory before re-programming the toy. They can create pictures, word process brief letters, compose a shopping list and combine text and graphics. They can use the scroll bar to examine long documents. They use the Internet to research information as in work, which some pupils have been doing on the whale. They know how to search for information by writing in a key word. Pupils can decrease and enlarge the size of a picture on screen, type in a sentence to add to it and print out their own work.

148. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can create their own page using different colours, font sizes and styles, create more sophisticated combinations of text and graphics. They use the Internet a great deal both at school and at home to research their studies. They can use e-mail, scan in drawings and photographs and the written word. Year 5 pupils can use a program to draw shapes, using the external angle measurement and repeat commands. They appreciate the differences in speed in this work between two methods to achieve the same ends. Year 6 pupils are beginning to arrange presentations, using moving images and incorporating multi-media inclusions, such as music. Year 6 pupils go on a residential visit on which they learn control technology. They are not yet used to operating sensing materials and undertaking monitoring procedures. They can design their own web site pages. Some Year 6 pupils have become members of a television channel's information and communication technology club and took part in filming for the programme during the inspection week. The pupils concerned expressed much enthusiasm for the activities they engage in through that club which is helping them to widen their skills.

149. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and most are confident to share their work with others by talking about it in front of the class but they do not always speak up enough so the others can hear. They work well in pairs and take turns on the computer.

150. The quality of teaching in information and communication technology is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and ranges from good to satisfactory at Key Stage 2 but it is mainly sound. Overall it is sound. The recently appointed information and communication technology technician offers good support in lessons and the teaching assistants are increasing their skills. Teachers use the correct terminology, such as hyperlinks for operational controls and records and fields when teaching about data bases. They usually manage their classes well but on occasion some pupils do not listen well in preliminary class sessions and are disrespectful. They are better behaved when they have the visual images in front of them when it is combined with explanation. When pupils are active, teachers use their time well prompting, suggesting and questioning. Some good links are made with other work, such as the work on shape in Year 5 and the link with playparks and design and technology in Year 1 when pupils had to find an appropriate picture from a particular program and enlarge it.

151. The co-ordinator has sound skills and is developing them further through attendance at consortia briefings with co-ordinators from other schools. She has not been enabled to monitor the work in information and communication technology but staff request advice from her. Currently there is not a skills development list, which would enable teachers to plan for different needs and capabilities.

MUSIC

152. From the few lessons which could be observed, attainment in music is in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Key Stage 1 pupils learn to sing in tune and in time, rocking to slow and fast rhythms, observing the movements of their bodies. They learn to clap in time and play together using tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments correctly. Pupils listen to high and low sounds and decide where to place symbols on a chart that represents high and low. They co-operate together satisfactorily, to compose a short phrase comprising high and low sounds with the use of percussion instruments.

153. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know and understand musical vocabulary, such as dynamics, tempo, pitch and timbre. They sing in tune and can sing in two parts unaccompanied. Pupils in a Year 5 class sang a warm up song 'Baby One' with good intonation, clear diction and rhythmic pulse. They develop their ability with percussion instruments and recognise the tonal qualities of the instruments and beaters to assist them in their own compositions, as observed in a Year 5 lesson. They listen carefully and discuss the music they hear, in order to reproduce mood and nuance. For instance, pupils in a Year 3 class, after listening to and performing a 'rap' about rain, divided into six groups to compose descriptive pieces about the sounds of water. Their results showed the good quality of their listening and co-operative skills. Use of the computer for composition is developing throughout the school.

154. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Lessons are well planned and organised. Resources are ready for pupils to use and there is effective questioning. Pupils become more able to control sound especially when singing as they progress through the school. Overall there are very good relationships between teachers and pupils that enhance learning but in one lesson pupils were very noisy and distracted their peers when using instruments.

155. Pupils generally behave very well in both key stages when using percussion and respond to words of praise and encouragement. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs take part in all the lessons and the learning support assistants provide good support. These pupils make satisfactory social and academic progress. In all the music lessons observed, pupils appear to enjoy the subject and respond in a positive manner. They enjoy singing and performing together. Progress is less evident when teachers' subject knowledge is insecure or their knowledge of the correct way to hold and play percussion instruments is limited.

156. The temporary music co-ordinator is taking on this role until a specialist music co-ordinator is appointed. Meanwhile, she has definite ideas and aims for developing the subject further in order for pupils to enjoy performing together. There are opportunities for Key Stage 2 pupils to join the choir and to perform with other schools. During the choir practice, pupils sang the song 'Slash and Burn' very well, emphasising the mood and the meaning of the words. Opportunities exist for pupils to learn wind instruments after school. There are opportunities for whole school singing as in the Mass and during the enjoyable hymn practices. However, music is not played very regularly before and after assemblies and this omits a valuable opportunity for listening to and appreciating the variety of music from across the world.

157. Resources are unsatisfactory, for example beater heads come off and the quality and range of the instruments require an audit with advice from a specialist musician.

158. Assessment is not individually addressed but a commercial scheme gives details of the subject material taught in every lesson.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

159. Pupils have opportunities in all aspects of physical education and standards attained are in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. Some pupils attain well in swimming and the school was represented in the national championships last year. However, the proportion of pupils who are able to swim the expected distance by the age of 11 is satisfactory overall but disappointing in view of the amount of time devoted to the swimming curriculum. Pupils' achievements in the subject are satisfactory overall. Currently the amount of time devoted to the swimming curriculum is disproportionate to requirements.

160. No observations were made of gymnastics or of dance during the inspection, as the major focus was on games skills and swimming during the inspection period. Pupils enjoy physical activities and play and work together co-operatively and fairly. Whilst they enjoy the activities they are not over competitive. By the age of seven, pupils can control a ball with their feet with suitable skill and they also have suitable catching skills. Year 2 pupils have satisfactory control of hoops when they try to roll them. Key Stage 2 pupils have sound catching and throwing techniques and can understand and follow the rules of small team games when they are explained to them. Boys and girls work well together in team games.

161. The teaching of physical education is consistently satisfactory and a good atmosphere is usually preserved in lessons. Most teachers are well kitted and so set a good example to the pupils. They teach techniques appropriately as in catching skills and usually give enough time for pupils to practise after teacher demonstrations. In many lessons not enough use is made in pupil demonstration of the key skills to be looked for and evaluation of their quality. The structure of games lessons is usually sound but sometimes too many different skills are attempted in one lesson and pupils do not have enough time to consolidate their skill. In some lessons relay races reduce the amount of physical activity.

162. There are sufficient resources for the subject but the storage room is extremely small and they are badly arranged in it. The small field and playground provide satisfactory space for external lessons. The hall is of a good size and has a good floor surface but the storage of chairs and tables reduces the working space considerably. There is no co-ordinator for the subject currently. A published scheme is used for planning lessons and this is of satisfactory quality.