

# INSPECTION REPORT

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

Southam

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125708

Headteacher: Mr P. Sadler

Reporting inspector: Robert B. Bonner  
25384

Dates of inspection: 23 – 26 April 2001

Inspection number: 191966

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery, Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Daventry Road Southam Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV47 1 PS
Telephone number:	01926 812512
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Jane Cox
Date of previous inspection:	24/02/1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25384	Robert B. Bonner	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Science Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9189	John Horwood	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
8534	David Price	Team inspector	English History Music Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Personal Development
22274	Vera Rogers	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography Information and communications technology	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Learning Opportunities

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Nursery is situated in the town of Southam in Warwickshire. Most pupils come from Southam whilst others are drawn from surrounding villages. The school is for children aged three to 11, and has 236 pupils. This number is made up of 198 full-time pupils (95 boys and 103 girls) and 38 (25 boys and 13 girls) children who attend the nursery part-time, giving a full-time equivalent of 217 pupils. At the time of the inspection there were 30 children in the reception class who were under the age of six. When the children enter the reception class a very wide range of attainment is represented but is similar to that found in most schools. Eleven pupils (6 per cent) are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. There are 28 pupils (13 per cent) on the special educational needs' register, which is also below the national average. Of these pupils, two have statements of need. Almost all pupils who attend the school are from a white ethnic background.

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

The headteacher provides effective leadership and management, and is very well supported by the governing body. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Standards are average in mathematics and English and above average in science. The school is effective in its work and provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Standards in science are above average at the end of both key stages.
- The headteacher provides good leadership, and the work of the governing body is very good.
- The provision for the children in the nursery and reception classes is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The attitudes and relationships of the pupils are very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The welfare of all pupils is a high priority; they are very well cared for.
- The school works well with parents.

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

- Standards in writing.
- Standards in geography.
- The attainment of the more able pupils.
- Management role of the subject co-ordinators.
- The use of assessment to inform teachers what pupils are to learn next.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in February 1997. It has been effective in tackling most of the key issues but there are still some areas that require further work. There are now schemes of work for all subjects to underpin the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Most of these are newly in place and their effectiveness is yet to be assessed. The quality of education for the children in the reception class, which was unsatisfactory, is now very good. The staff in this class have made significant improvements to the quality of education that the children receive. Issues relating to the establishment of assessment procedures and the development of the management role of subject co-ordinators have shown some improvement but there is still more work to be done in these two areas of the school's work. The annual reports to parents give accurate and specific information about the individual pupils' progress. In other areas of the school's work standards in science in Key Stage 1 have risen, there have been improvements in the quality of teaching, and in the provision for the teaching of information and communications technology throughout the school.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	B	D	E
Mathematics	E	C	E	E*
Science	C	C	D	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The table above indicates standards in the national tests in 2000 for 11-year-olds in English and science were below the national average and those in mathematics were well below the national average. In comparison with similar schools standards were well below the average in English and science and in mathematics they were very low. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) was broadly average in all three subjects but very few pupils achieved at the higher level (Level 5) thereby lowering the overall standard. The results were lower than in the previous year due to the high number of pupils (25 per cent) with special educational needs who took the test. Taking the three years 1998 – 2000 together standards in English were above the national average, those in science and maths were below the national average. Standards vary significantly from year to year but the overall trend in the school's average National Curriculum points (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account) for all core subjects is below the national trend. Challenging targets have been set for future improvement and the pupils are on course to achieve them.

The findings of the current inspection are that the standards of pupils in Year 2 are average in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, history, information and communications technology and music and above average in science and physical education. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is average in English, mathematics, art and design, history, information and communications technology and music and above average in science, design and technology and physical education. In geography, pupils' attainment in Year 2 and 6 is below average.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen and eager to come to school. They have very positive attitudes to their work and are very enthusiastic about all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in and around school. They understand rules and show respect for people and property.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils form constructive relationships with one another and with adults. When they are provided with opportunities to take responsibility, pupils perform these duties sensibly.
Attendance	Good.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Although the teaching in lessons seen was good overall, evidence from pupils' work indicates several weaknesses relating to marking, an over-reliance on worksheets and work not being sufficiently tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils.

In all the lessons seen teaching was satisfactory or better, in 68 per cent of lessons it was good or better, in 20 per cent it was very good or better and in 2 per cent it was excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection when 10 per cent of lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory, and the percentage of good and very good teaching was lower.

Teachers manage the pupils well and in response pupils have very positive attitudes and try hard. The pupils and staff have very good relationships with one another and these add significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which they learn. The pupils feel their contributions are valued and this appreciation helps to build their self-esteem and encourages them to try harder. The teaching of English, including literacy is good, and in mathematics, including numeracy, it is satisfactory. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory overall but is very good for the children in the nursery and reception classes. The strategies for literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory and for extra-curricular activities it is good. The school has good links with the local community and works well with its partner institutions.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Inclusion is fundamental to the aims and values of the school. Pupils make good progress against the targets set within their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school operates as a caring community with a Catholic ethos and aims to provide experiences that encourage pupils to act responsibly and value one another.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils and provides them with very good welfare, health and safety. Support and guidance are effective, and there are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress are satisfactory.

There is a good partnership with parents, which is effective in supporting pupils' learning. The quality of information provided for parents is very comprehensive.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and is well supported by key members of staff. There have been significant changes to the roles of the subject co-ordinators. They now need opportunities to assess the work in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The contribution of the governing body to the effective running of the school is very good. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and are committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils. They are kept well informed and work hard in their individual and collective roles. They have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and key members of staff assess the performance of teachers and take the necessary action to improve their effectiveness. Information relating to pupils' attainment is analysed: targets are set for improvement and progress towards them is monitored.
The strategic use of resources	Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning. Spending is targeted to agreed priorities, especially the raising of standards. The governors have a good understanding of the principles of best value.

The school has sufficient numbers of teachers. The learning support staff are experienced and knowledgeable, they have a good level of expertise and give the pupils in their care good support and guidance. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy going to school.</li> <li>• Staff are approachable and parents are comfortable airing their concerns.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A greater range of interesting activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The information about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection team generally endorses the positive views of parents. However, the team does not support the views of a small minority of parents' on the provision of activities outside lessons or the range of information provided for parents about their children's progress, which it judges to be good in each case. For example, pupils participate in a wide range of sporting and musical activities. Written reports are informative, standards achieved and targets for improvement are shared with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The school's results and achievements**

##### National curriculum test results, trends and targets

1. Pupils' results in the national tests for seven-year-olds were close to the national average at the expected level (Level 2 and above) in reading and writing, and above the national average in mathematics. In the teacher assessments for science standards were above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving at the higher level, (Level 3) in reading and writing was below the national average and in mathematics it was well below the national average. In the teacher assessments for science standards were above the national average. Looking at the average points score (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account), results in reading and writing were close to the national average and those in mathematics were below the national average.
2. Compared with similar schools' results, the school's performance was well below average in all three subjects.
3. The results were much lower than in the previous year due to the high number of pupils (23 per cent) with special educational needs who took the test. Taking the three years 1998 to 2000 the performance of pupils has exceeded the national average in all three subjects. Over this period, pupils' performance has been very uneven with results rising and falling in consecutive years.
4. Inspection evidence indicates pupils in Year 2 are achieving standards that are in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and above the national average in science.
5. Pupils' results in the 2000 national tests for 11-year-olds were close to the national average at the expected level (Level 4 and above) in English and science but below the national average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving at the higher level, (Level 5) in English, mathematics and science was well below the national average. Looking at the average points score (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account); results in English and science were below the national average and in mathematics they were well below the national average. The standards were lower than in the previous year due to the high number of pupils (25 per cent) with special educational needs.
6. Compared with similar schools' results, the school's performance was well below average in English and science and very low in mathematics. The results of all three subjects taken together were very low.
7. Taking the three years 1998 to 2000 the performance of pupils in English exceeded the national average but fell below the national average in mathematics and science. Until last year, when standards fell in all three subjects, there had been significant improvements in pupils' performance in science and a steady improvement in English. Pupils' performance in mathematics was less even, with sharp rises and falls in standards.
8. The performance of girls has declined over this period of time. In previous years the girls often outperformed the boys in all three subjects but now there are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls at either key stage.
9. It is not possible to make an accurate judgement regarding pupils' progress based on their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. This is because a number of pupils have moved in and out of this particular group during the past four years, including some more able pupils.
10. The inspection's findings, which are discussed below, are that pupils' attainments in English and

mathematics in Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average but they are above average in science. Standards in science have risen due to the additional amount of attention being paid to this subject, particularly in the Year 6 class. In recognition of the low numbers of pupils achieving at the higher levels in the national tests in Year 2 and 6 additional staff have been appointed to focus specifically on raising the attainment of the more able in English and mathematics. The school has set challenging targets for 2001 but has made good progress in achieving them.

#### The findings of the inspection

11. When the children enter the school the children's levels of attainment vary from year to year. The attainment of the children in the current nursery class is above that normally expected of children of their age. In the reception class a wide range of attainment is represented but it is broadly in line with that normally expected. The children make good progress in the nursery class and very good progress in the reception class and by the age of six a significant minority are exceeding the standards expected and are working in the lower stages of the National Curriculum.
12. In English, the standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the national average. By the age of seven, pupils listen and speak confidently in a wide range of contexts. Pupils read simple text by themselves tackling new words using letter sounds and also use illustrations to help with their understanding of the story. The majority of pupils write in sentences with capital letters and full stops. Much of the pupils' written work involves completing worksheets and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write freely. By the age of 11, pupils speak confidently and express a point of view. In discussions, they listen carefully to the contributions of others and ask questions. Pupils have developed an effective variety of strategies to find the meaning in texts and recall the significant events and characters in stories. Pupils punctuate and construct different types of sentences with increasing skill. They use paragraphs, speech, description and narrative to achieve particular effects. However, again the amount of extended writing produced by these pupils is too limited.
13. In mathematics, the standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the national average. By the age of seven, pupils recall addition and subtraction facts to 10 and have a satisfactory understanding of the value of numbers up to and beyond a hundred. They describe flat shapes using their properties, and collect information and display it in charts and on graphs. By the age of 11, pupils use skills of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication to solve problems. They understand multiples, factors, square numbers and digital roots and work out the probability of events. They convert fractions to decimals and calculate fractions of given numbers and collect data and display it in the form of block graphs and pie charts.
14. In science, the standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. By the age of seven, pupils conduct experiments, draw conclusions and record their observations accurately. They recognise that living things grow and reproduce and they make light bulbs work by creating a circuit. The pupils often record what they have learnt in pictorial form or on worksheets, and have insufficient opportunities to clarify their thinking or to demonstrate their understanding by recording what they know in their own words. By the age of 11, pupils plan and undertake experiments identifying key factors to be considered when making a test fair. They know the names and functions of the major organs in the body and the properties of various types of materials. Pupils understand that some changes are reversible whilst others are not and identify the range of forces acting on stationary and moving objects.
15. In information and communications technology (ICT), standards are broadly in line with expectations in both key stages. By the age of seven pupils enter, save and retrieve their work. When word processing they use the shift, delete keys and the space bar efficiently. They use clip art to drop in pictures to illustrate their work. They present information in a range of graph formats and use an art program to draw pictures. By the age of 11, pupils use a variety of fonts and graphics in their word processing. They create graphs and charts, use a control program to regulate a sequence of lights and use the Internet to find information about artists and the planets. There is a lack of software for musical composition, simulations and monitoring sensors.

16. At ages seven and 11, pupils' attainment in art and design, history and music are in line with those expected. In design and technology, the standards achieved by seven-year-olds are in line with those expected but they are above this level by the time they are 11. Standards achieved in physical education at seven and 11 are above those expected. Standards in geography are unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained in all subjects apart from geography in both key stages and music in Key Stage 1 where they have fallen. Standards have fallen in music because a specialist music teacher no longer takes these lessons.
17. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their learning and make good progress against their prior attainment.

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

18. The school has maintained the high standards of the previous inspection with regard to the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to school. They are happy to come to school, are interested in their learning and concentrate well. When required to do so they work well both independently and in pairs or groups. Where the work in lessons is particularly demanding and teachers have high levels of expertise, for example in mathematics and music in Year 5, pupils respond with enthusiasm and show high levels of commitment in improving their skills. Pupils are keen to participate in opportunities outside lessons, for example in the after-school clubs and extra music lessons.
19. Children in the nursery and reception classes show a confident and mature approach both to work and within their relationships with each other. They listen attentively and concentrate well, often for extended periods. The children are beginning to develop good social skills and explore new learning opportunities as they engage in their tasks and activities. They work and play very well together, happily sharing their resources.
20. Pupils' behaviour is good both in and out of lessons. Teachers have clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils in turn respond well. In a minority of lessons, a few pupils call out without putting up their hands; in these lessons, teachers insist that they develop the correct habits and ensure that they involve all pupils in discussions. Pupils generally play well together- boys and girls and pupils from different classes. There is no evidence of aggressive, threatening or racist behaviour and there have been no recent exclusions. The majority of parents agree that behaviour is good.
21. The personal development of the pupils is good overall and relationships both between teachers and pupils and with each other are very good. The pupils co-operate well with each other, for example when working on shared tasks in mathematics and science. Pupils develop good levels of confidence and maturity for the next stage of their school lives. The residential visits provide worthwhile opportunities that develop growing independence and self-reliance. Although some older pupils help with jobs such as helping the teachers of the younger pupils prepare for lessons during lunchtimes, planned opportunities for pupils to take the initiative, particularly with regard to their own learning are limited. There are few examples of pupils being required to work independently, following up an interest in the library or computer suite, devising their own investigations or making decisions about how to record their work.
22. The rate of attendance is above the national average for primary schools. The level of authorised absence is low with no unauthorised absence last year. The school has sound registration procedures with a comprehensive recording system that facilitates good monitoring of pupils' attendance.

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

23. Overall the quality of teaching and learning in the school are satisfactory. Although teaching in the lessons seen was good overall, evidence from previous work indicate several weaknesses:

- In some lessons tasks are not well matched to pupils' prior attainment, particularly that of the higher-attaining pupils. As a consequence these pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
  - There is an over-dependence on worksheets in some classes with all pupils expected to complete the same work whatever their ability.
  - In some classes pupils' work is not always marked, and that which is does not always provide pupils with guidance on how they can improve.
  - Because much of pupils' work is recorded on undated worksheets that are collected in at the end of lessons and filed, neither teachers, nor pupils themselves are aware of the rate of progress or improvement being achieved.
24. In the lessons seen during the inspection the teaching was very good overall in the Foundation Stage. It was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and it was good in Key Stage 2. In all the lessons that were seen teaching was satisfactory or better, in 68 per cent of lessons it was good or better, in 22 per cent it was very good or better and in 2 per cent it was excellent. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when 10 per cent of lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory and the percentage of good and very good teaching was lower.
25. Some of the weaknesses in teaching identified in the previous inspection have been tackled effectively but there are still some outstanding issues. The quality of teaching for the children in the reception class, which was unsatisfactory, is now very good. The staff in this class have made significant improvements to the quality of education that the children receive. Weaknesses relating to the children's rate of progress have been tackled effectively and they are now making very good progress in their learning. Teachers have improved their subject knowledge in science and history and it is now satisfactory in each case. The pace of most lessons is at least satisfactory with the time available being used well.
26. The very good and excellent teaching is characterised by lessons that are thoroughly planned and focused, and conducted at a brisk pace so that full use is made of the time available to move pupils' learning on quickly. In an excellent music lesson in the Year 5 class, for example, the planning was very good, the lesson moved along at a very good pace that involved all the pupils in their learning. The teacher displayed very good subject knowledge as he effectively questioned and involved the pupils in a discussion about the similarities and differences they had noticed in two pieces of music they had listened to. The teacher shared his enthusiasm for the subject and as a result pupils were highly motivated and made excellent gains in their learning. In several very good lessons observed in the reception class the teacher consistently revealed a very good understanding of the way in which young children learn. The introductions to the lessons were brisk and involved all of the children in practical activities. The lessons were very well organised with a range of activities that promoted the children's learning whilst encouraging them to do things for themselves.
27. The pupils and staff have very good relationships with one another and these add significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which they learn. The pupils feel their contributions are valued and this appreciation helps to build their self-esteem and encourages them to try harder. Most teachers manage the pupils effectively and they in turn behave well and try hard. A good example of very high expectations of behaviour resulting in very good levels of self-control was seen in a number of lessons in the reception class. The caring relationships that the teacher had developed with the children ensured that they listened attentively and were fully engaged in their learning. When asked to go to their group activities they did so without fuss.
28. The teaching of English, and literacy in English lessons is good. Class teachers have a good understanding of all aspects of the literacy strategy. Planning for the Literacy Hour is effective and has been implemented well. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations of their pupils and provide work that is well matched to all pupils' needs and interests. Effective use of questions enable pupils to consolidate knowledge and extend their learning. However, in some

lessons, teachers' expectations are insufficiently high, particularly for higher-attaining pupils.

29. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy in mathematics lessons is satisfactory. Learning intentions for each lesson are clearly defined in the planning and shared with pupils. Most lessons begin with a good mental session before the main teaching and a time for recapping at the end. In some lessons tasks are not well matched to pupils' prior attainment, particularly that of the higher-attaining pupils. They are expected to complete the same work whatever their ability. Teachers manage the pupils and resources efficiently and the learning support workers give effective support.
30. The teaching and learning in science is good. Teachers plan well and often provide a very good range of activities that promote the development of pupils' skills of investigation. Pupils work with considerable interest and concentration and learn well. Teachers often question very well, effectively assessing understanding, and challenging pupils' thinking. But sometimes the questions are focused on a small number of pupils and the understanding of the whole class is not effectively assessed. There have been significant improvements in the provision for this subject, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2.
31. Teaching is good in physical education in both key stages and in music in Key Stage 2. It is satisfactory in art and design and ICT at both key stages and in music in Key Stage 1. It is unsatisfactory in geography in both key stages. No overall judgement can be made about the teaching of design and technology or history.
32. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. There is early identification of pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO), along with the class teachers, assesses the needs and decides on how best to support the pupils. The SENCO has built up a very good bank of assessment material which is used to decide at what stage on the special needs register a pupil should be placed and to monitor their progress over time. Class teachers know their pupils and their difficulties well and are very patient and caring. They plan work according to the underlying abilities of their pupils and address aspects identified in their individual education plans. Teachers and learning support workers are careful to ensure pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in class activities, actively promoting and planning for this if necessary. For example, one pupil was observed taking full part in his class's physical education lesson, participating in all the activities along with his classmates. Teachers are sensitive to the different ways pupils with special educational needs learn and are quick to respond when pupils tire and their concentration flags, adapting class activities well. Pupils respond enthusiastically and are keen to show and talk about their work.
33. Homework is used satisfactorily to support the work that pupils do in class. There is a homework schedule for each year group throughout the school and this is applied in most classes. There was some concern by a few parents about the quantity of homework but during the inspection the homework seen was appropriate. In the majority of examples seen the pupils' homework was marked but the quality of constructive comment varied. Reading records and homework diaries were seen and although their use was satisfactory the quality of the documents and the content demonstrated a lack of pride in presentation of work.

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

### **Learning Opportunities**

34. The curriculum provided for the children in the nursery and reception classes is very good. It is well planned and managed and provides effective transition from the Foundation Stage to the National Curriculum. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to ensure that curriculum documentation is in place for all subjects. The school has taken into account the recommendations of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidance. This is well complemented by medium- and short-term plans that provide for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
35. As a result of the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the improvements in the curricular organisation, standards have improved in literacy. There are however still some deficiencies. There is still too little time devoted in English for pupils to write freely at length and during the activity time, pupils are often given the same task instead of having work in their groups that meets their particular needs and enables them to make better progress.
36. In mathematics, standards are improving as a result of the tighter organisation of the curriculum as well as the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. However, in some classes there is an over-dependence on the use of published schemes of work and worksheets with all pupils given the same tasks so that work is not well matched to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able. While some teachers effectively develop pupils' numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum such as science and design and technology, this is not to be found in all classes.
37. The school has made good progress towards fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum for information and communication technology although there remain some gaps in appropriate software to enable the teaching of all elements. These include the manipulation of sounds, exploring simulations and monitoring environmental conditions. The school is aware of these gaps and has included plans to address them in the school improvement plan.
38. The school provides pupils with full access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are especially well catered for through their early identification and good support provided by the SENCO and the special education assistants. Individual education plans (IEPs) are very detailed and set realistic targets for the pupils. They are kept up to date and record parental involvement. Pupils are fully integrated into the school, particularly those with physical disabilities. In one case a child with cerebral palsy was seen joining in physical activities, such as kicking a ball, with as much enthusiasm as the rest of the class. Some further help is given to pupils through booster classes in literacy and numeracy and a special link with the local secondary school for teaching mathematics to more able pupils in Year 6. However, the needs of these pupils are not yet being fully met.
39. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good. The school offers pupils opportunities to take part in a number of regular activities that support pupils' social development. These include violin workshops, an orchestra, guitar groups, netball and football, including competitive sports matches. Pupils make good use of the local area in lessons and learning is further supported by educational visits, including residential visits that enrich the curriculum.
40. The programme of work for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory and is currently under review. Proper attention is given to sex education and to teaching pupils about the dangers of misusing drugs. However, there is not yet a structured whole-school approach to the teaching of this aspect of the curriculum.
41. The contribution made by the community to pupils' learning is good. The school has strong links with the local parish and this is central to the school's ethos. There are regular visitors to the school such as specialist speakers and musicians. The school organises a good range of visits



for pupils to develop work in the classroom including an annual field trip for the older pupils. Parents make positive contributions to pupils' learning in school and members of the governing body share their expertise with the school.

42. There are good links with the two secondary schools to which most pupils transfer and other primary schools in the area. The effectiveness of the secondary links has been further enhanced by the successful applications of both local secondary schools for technology school status. The school had supported both applications and is now fully involved in the partnerships and benefiting from sharing experience and expertise. Examples of the benefit to the school are the Year 6 booster classes in mathematics and the support provided for pupils' learning on computers. The liaison between staff about transfer of pupils is good and there are good induction facilities provided to ensure pupils and parents are well informed before transfer to the secondary school. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has very good relations with outside agencies and with the SENCOs of the two secondary schools to which the majority of pupils go.

### **Personal Development**

43. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The aims of the school express a strong caring philosophy and commitment to a Christian education and way of life. This is reflected in the daily acts of collective worship that make effective contributions to the promotion of spirituality. The displays around the school, particularly those devoted to the periods of Lent and Easter further enhance pupils' spirituality by encouraging them to marvel at the dedication of characters from the Old Testament of the Bible and the sacrifice made by Jesus. Times for prayer and collective worship are used well for reflection and the celebration of achievements. An effective spiritual atmosphere is created when candles are lit and pupils sit quietly at the beginning of assemblies. Some areas of the curriculum also contribute well to the promotion of pupils' spiritual development. In science, while using the Internet, pupils express wonder as they see the terminator across the earth and see that parts of the world are in darkness although it is daytime here. Young pupils are amazed to see older pupils launch rockets that they have made in design and technology lessons.
44. The school's provision for moral development is very good. There is a strong Christian ethos to guide how everyone in the community behaves. The school promotes a clear understanding of right and wrong and pupils know how to behave. School rules have been written with the full involvement of pupils and they follow these. From the earliest days in the nursery, children are encouraged to consider how their actions affect others. Values are fostered through the caring, supportive and very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils and the good example set by all those working in the school.
45. The provision for pupils' social development is good. Positive relationships are successfully promoted and pupils are encouraged to show consideration and sensitivity for the needs of others in the school, in the local community and the parish and throughout the world. In most lessons, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to co-operate as they work in the classrooms. Good examples were seen in science during investigations, in geography and in English in group activities. The school promotes good links with secondary schools. Some older pupils are taught mathematics by staff of one secondary school during the week. Care is taken to ensure that those pupils who have special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. Residential visits greatly enhance pupils' social development, through the visit to Marle Hall for Year 6 pupils, for example. Pupils are friendly and welcoming.
46. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' cultural development. The school celebrates appropriate festivals and saints' days from the Christian calendar. History lessons provide pupils with many insights into British culture and ancient civilisations and how they contribute to lifestyles and customs today. In geography, teachers effectively provide opportunities for pupils to understand the different ways in which people live. Music, both in lessons and in collective worship, contributes positively to pupils' cultural development. The provision for pupils' multicultural development is a weakness and pupils are not prepared satisfactorily for life in contemporary British society. Some opportunities are given, through visits by groups involved mainly with music,

drama and dance, for pupils to understand something of the culture of minority ethnic people living in this country. These opportunities are limited and there are few visitors coming to the school so that pupils can ask them questions and extend their understanding of different ways of life.

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

47. The provision for the welfare of the pupils is very good. It is underpinned by the strong ethos of the school and its links with the Catholic community. The 'family' relationships within the school are clearly reflected by very good relationships within the school and the welcoming and polite reception given to everyone by the pupils. The 'family' includes staff, parents, children and governors who are all clearly working together for the good of the school. The close relationships ensure that children are well known to the staff. The governors carrying out regular risk assessments and fulfil all their relevant duties in this area. The school is a secure place with the grounds enclosed by fences and gates. Activities throughout the school are adequately supervised.
48. The school has a first-aid room, a member of staff trained in first-aid and a nominated person to control the equipment and records. Staff are supported by external agencies as required. All records and reporting of injuries are kept accurately and securely. Procedures for child protection and health and safety checks are very good and meet legal requirements. The Child Protection Officers are the SENCO and the headteacher who are both fully trained. They ensure that all staff are aware of their duties as soon as they join the school and hold in-service training to update staff.
49. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance and ensures that parents are aware of the requirements to notify the school of absence as part of the home-school agreement. Because of the good attendance figures, which have been constant for many years, there are no major initiatives to improve it.
50. The arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. The school's record of achievement system, which is still in its infancy, is a particularly good feature. Results of tests and special pieces of work chosen by the individual are collected and passed on to the next teacher as the pupil moves through the school. Part of the record is the annual pupil reports that contain teachers' comments on the personal development expected and achieved by the pupil. Although the system has been introduced throughout the school its benefit will not be fully felt until pupils have been through the full cycle with the scheme in place.
51. The school has good procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The rare incidents of bullying that occur are recorded in the discipline book but there is not a system for recording follow-up actions.
52. Assessment procedures for the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are satisfactory. The school is beginning to use its analysis of assessment data effectively to monitor the achievement of different groups of pupils. This information is being used to identify trends and set targets for groups and individuals, particularly in English and mathematics. Based on this information, and observations made by class teachers, higher- and lower-attaining pupils are identified for additional support in literacy and numeracy. This aspect of the school's work is particularly good, but is relatively new in regard to raising the attainment of the more able. The impact of this work has yet to be fully assessed.
53. Teachers have begun to keep detailed records of pupils' achievements in all subjects and this information is to be used to monitor pupils' progress and to guide curricular planning. This is a good initiative but again is relatively new. At the end of the year it is planned that these records are to be passed on to the next teacher with samples of pupils' work and an analysis of the tests that pupils have taken.
54. The school has good procedures for identifying pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers assess pupils' progress thoroughly and if there is need for intervention from an outside agency, the school is able to contact the appropriate agency for more specialist support. All

pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual education plans with specific targets against which their progress is assessed. The pupils who have a statement of educational need are well supported.

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

55. The majority of parents are very positive about the school. They are very supportive, many have involvement with the school through an active parent teacher association, or as parent governors, or providing help in school. The majority of parents thought that their children liked coming to school and were making good progress as a result of good teaching. Most parents considered that the school is well led and managed and felt that the school was very approachable. There were mixed views about the quantity and type of homework. Although most parents agreed that the school is very approachable and works closely with them there were mixed views on how effectively they were kept informed about their children's progress. There was particular concern about the range of activities provided outside lessons.
56. During the inspection all the points raised by parents through the meeting and through questionnaires were examined. Issues relating to teaching are discussed earlier in the report but do confirm that there are variations in the quality of teaching within the school, however, during the inspection there were no unsatisfactory lessons seen. The inspection findings on information supplied to parents are discussed below. Some parents considered that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons but the inspection team considered that with the sporting and music activities provided together with facilities offered through the after-school club, provision was good.
57. There is an effective home-school partnership supported by a range of newsletters, an annual report and several meetings during the year – in addition there is an 'open door' policy for parents to discuss matters with the school. The total 'package' is considered to provide very good information to parents. The annual reports have been revised several times in recent years and now have a very good format – each subject/aspect has a 'word-processed' entry describing what should have been achieved during the year accompanied by a handwritten entry describing the individual pupils' progress. The annual reports also include comment on personal development together with information about tests. Pupils contribute by providing a record of their various achievements during the previous 12 months. The newsletters, which are issued monthly, identify future events and celebrate those that have taken place recently in school. There are special letters sent out to give information on such matters as work programmes and course content. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and are involved in the review processes.
58. Many parents come into school to help and the school provides good training and induction for them, which enables them to make a significant contribution. The school is an integral part of the Catholic Community and pupils are involved with reading at mass etc. The Priest, as well as being involved as a governor, is a regular visitor in school. The parent teacher association (PTA) has regular meetings and organises social and fund-raising events that will involve the wider community. Fund-raising has been successful and the PTA is very purposeful in what use the money is put to.

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

59. The headteacher leads and manages the school well and with the support of the deputy head and the curriculum co-ordinators, provides the school with clear educational direction. The staff share a vision of Catholic Education where each individual is recognised, valued and encouraged to work hard. This vision is to be seen in the very good relationships that are shared between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves. The school is committed to raising standards with equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school is clear about where it needs to improve and there is a shared sense of determination to succeed and move forward. It is in a good position to make further improvements and has the capacity to achieve these.

60. The headteacher assesses the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations, and monitoring of teachers' planning. He oversees the standards the pupils achieve by regularly looking at their books and analysing test results. In response to the outcomes of this monitoring he has initiated a range of significant changes:
- In recognition of the low numbers of pupils achieving at the higher levels in the national tests additional staff have been appointed to focus specifically on raising the attainment of the more able. The headteacher also supports these pupils in one class.
  - In order to raise standards targets have been set for all pupils in English and mathematics and these are shared with parents.
  - Curriculum co-ordinator posts have changed; new appointments have been made in the key areas of English, mathematics and assessment.
  - Teaching staff who have been identified as requiring additional help have been supported well. This is evidenced by the improvement in the quality of teaching.
61. Some of these initiatives are relatively recent and so it is not possible to fully assess their impact. Standards are set to rise this year in English, mathematics and science, but it is not possible to attribute this solely to the measures that have been taken. The curriculum co-ordinators for English and mathematics have started to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. These observations are clearly structured and well documented. The co-ordinator for science has assessed the pupils' learning by looking at a sample of books. He has not had an opportunity to assess the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations. The curriculum co-ordinator posts for other subjects have changed recently and the staff have not had sufficient opportunities to assess the quality of the pupils' work or the progress that they are making.
62. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and all the paperwork is detailed, clear and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for children with special educational needs. The co-ordinator gives good support to the class teachers, supporting them during pupil review meetings and advising on the writing of individual education plans and on effective methods for meeting pupils' needs. She ensures that special needs assistants are fully trained and kept up to date with developments in special education. The SENCO has built up an impressive amount of material for use with pupils, covering both literacy and numeracy.
63. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and is very effective in its work. There are good procedures to ensure that individual governors are kept well informed and play a vital role in shaping the direction of the school. Governors are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how the school needs to move forward. The chair of governors works closely with the headteacher and is highly influential in the work of the school. Governors are actively involved in curriculum policy development, interpretation of test data and target setting. They monitor classroom practice and contribute significantly to the school development plan. Individual governors take their responsibilities seriously and are committed to raising standards in the school. A particularly good feature of their work is the contribution that two governors have made in the establishment and development of the computer suite. Arrangements for performance management are in place and targets have been set.
64. The school improvement plan is an effective working document of high quality and is based on a thorough audit of the school's present position. The school has set itself a manageable number of clearly defined measurable targets that focus on the raising of standards. All new initiatives are carefully appraised in relation to likely costs. The school has established effective and efficient working practices to plan, manage and monitor its finances. Budget setting is firmly linked to development planning and reflects well the educational needs of the pupils. Financial control and administration are good. There are close links between planning and resourcing. Records of financial decisions are accurate and clear. All the minor recommendations in the last audit report

have already been implemented. Budget monitoring systems are effective

65. Specific grants received by the school are used for the purposes for which they are intended and there is a detailed record of how the money has been spent. The specific grant for special educational needs is used very effectively for its designated purpose. The school applies the principles of best value well. It analyses its performance using both national and local data and uses this to evaluate the standards that its pupils are achieving and where improvements are needed. Parents are provided with a range of opportunities to voice their opinions. For administrative purposes, the school makes satisfactory use of its technological capacity. Many of the administrative records are computerised and are well kept. The school seeks to obtain good value for money when purchasing goods and services.
66. The school has a satisfactory number of teachers to teach the subjects of the curriculum. The teaching staff has a range of qualifications and experience and they work well together as a team. There are good procedures for the induction of new staff into the school. The learning support staff is experienced and very knowledgeable; they have a very good level of expertise and give the pupils in their care very good support and guidance.
67. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory for the teaching of the curriculum. The nursery is separated from the main building, but is secure and has an appropriate outdoor play area. There are good areas for specialist teaching, particularly for art and design and for design and technology. A computer suite has recently been provided in a room on the first floor. This room is rather small and it is not large enough for a whole class to be taught computing skills at one time. Classrooms generally are of a reasonable size. The main part of classrooms used for Key Stage 2 pupils are crowded when all pupils are working there, but each has a useful space where pupils can work in groups. There is currently no secure play area for the children in the reception class.
68. Resources are good for the children in the nursery and reception classes and for pupils with special educational needs and they are satisfactory for all subjects except Information and communications technology and geography, where they are unsatisfactory. This has been an improvement in the provision of resources in mathematics and science since the last inspection but there is still a shortfall in regard to books for the library and computer programs.

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

69. The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection but in order to further improve the quality of education in the school, the headteacher, governing body and staff should:
  - 1) # Raise standards in writing by:
    - Providing pupils with more opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences,
    - Decreasing the amount of use of photocopied worksheets in all subjects and thereby improving the provision for pupils to record their work in a variety of ways.  
*(see paragraphs: 1-8,12,14,87,88,92,93,114,133,138)*
  - 2) Raise standards in geography by:
    - Ensuring that all elements of the curriculum are planned and taught to an appropriate level,
    - Ensuring that what is planned is taught effectively,
    - Assessing the progress that pupils make,
    - Improving resources.  
*(see paragraphs: 16,68,130,134,135)*
  - 3) # Raise the attainment of higher-attaining pupils by:
    - Ensuring that they are provided with challenging work in each lesson,
    - Continuing with the initiatives already in place for raising attainment levels,

- Carefully assessing the progress they are making against national standards.  
(see paragraphs: 1-8,23,28,52, 60,88,99,101,104)

4) Increasing the management role of the subject co-ordinators by:

- Providing them with opportunities to monitor standards in their subjects.  
(see paragraphs: 60,61,97,108,117,128,134,140 )

5) Improve the use of assessment to inform teachers what pupils are to learn next by:

- Improving the quality of marking and use this information to inform planning,
- Use assessment in all its forms to ensure all pupils are provided with appropriately challenging work.

(see paragraphs: 23,104,105,106,114,134,140)

*# denotes an issue already highlighted as a priority in the school's improvement plan  
(numbers in brackets indicate a reference to the main paragraphs where the weaknesses are discussed.)*

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

- Improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work.
- Improve the provision of library books and computer software.
- Provide further opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	44
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
2	20	46	32	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19	217
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	28

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	13	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	17
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	25	26	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (97)	87 (97)	97 (97)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	17	17
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	26	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (93)	97 (90)	97 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	12	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	13
	Girls	10	8	11
	Total	20	18	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (76)	67 (85)	89 (91)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	11
	Girls	11	10	10
	Total	20	19	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (85)	70 (88)	78 (91)
	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	2
White	166
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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25:1
Average class size	28

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	76

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20:1

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10:1
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	382733
Total expenditure	380873
Expenditure per pupil	1587
Balance brought forward from previous year	5603
Balance carried forward to next year	7463

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	236
Number of questionnaires returned	133

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	37	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	47	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	45	2	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	45	12	2	3
The teaching is good.	50	44	2	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	52	16	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	35	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	42	2	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	33	54	8	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	46	51	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	44	2	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	40	15	4	12

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

70. The good provision in the nursery recorded in the last inspection report has been maintained. The quality of education for the children in the reception class, which was unsatisfactory, is now very good. The staff in this class have made significant improvements to the quality of education that the children receive. The quality of teaching in the reception class is very good and the children make very good progress in their learning. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when the rate of children's progress in mathematics, reading and writing was slow.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

71. In personal and social education by the time they are five most children achieve above the standards expected. The children in the nursery class quickly learn the class routines. The teacher and support staff help these children to feel safe and confident. As a result, they settle well, work and play independently and most are willing to take turns and share equipment. They play well together and take turns when playing games like hopscotch. When preparing for role-play they sensibly set up the activities, for example the table in the house of the three bears, and then clear away at the end. Good routines set up in the nursery are extended and developed in the reception class.
72. In the reception class, the children are attentive during the introduction to lessons and participate well in the very good range of practical activities that the teacher provides. They make independent choices about the activities they want to do, for example whether they want to play in the post office or design writing paper, and then mark off the activities they have completed. They show maturity when negotiating roles and responsibilities and join in willingly with the teacher's suggestions. The children build effective relationships with adults and with each other. Daily events such as milk-time are very social occasions with each child saying 'please' and 'thank you'. The children are polite, friendly and well behaved and have a good understanding of what is right and wrong.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery and very good in the reception class. Strengths of the teaching relate to the high expectations of the children's attitudes and behaviour and the very good range of opportunities that the teachers in both the nursery and reception classes provide for the children to make choices and develop independence. The class teachers and learning support assistants are consistently positive and this builds children's self-esteem and helps them to persevere with challenging tasks.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

74. In language and literacy by the time they are five, the majority of children attain standards that are in line with those expected. The children in the nursery and reception classes listen carefully and join in with stories and rhymes. In this way they learn to recite nursery rhymes and number rhymes. These activities develop not only the children's speaking skills but also their capacity to memorise songs. In the nursery class most of the children speak clearly and with confidence. They describe their activities well and enjoy sharing their knowledge with the class teacher, the classroom assistant and each other. They participate well in role-play activities on such themes as 'Goldilocks and the three bears', speaking their parts loudly and clearly. The children enjoy 'reading' books such as 'We're all going on a Bear Hunt', carefully turning the pages and retelling parts of the story in their own words.
75. Children in the reception class listen attentively and respond well to instructions and directions. They enjoy reading books, handling them carefully and willingly talk about their favourite story. The children know that the print conveys meaning, and understand stories read to them. They identify the author on a book cover and read with a satisfactory level of fluency using letter sounds and pictures to help them. Opportunities are provided for the children to write for different

purposes, such as writing letters. Children write their own names, forming letters carefully and accurately and are beginning to use their knowledge of letter sounds to write other words. More able children use both small and capital letters.

76. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery and very good in the reception class. In both classes lessons are well planned and prepared with tasks that are well targeted to meet the needs of all children. In the nursery class the teacher provides the children with a good range of opportunities to develop skills of speaking and listening. The teacher questions children effectively, provoking them to make decisions about what is going to happen next in the stories they are writing. This is continued in the reception class where the teacher encourages the children to predict what might happen next and why when discussing books such as 'Dear Greenpeace'. The teacher has high expectations of the children and often reminds them of what they are expected to achieve. In response the children work hard and try their best. The teacher provides good opportunities for the children to talk about their work at the beginning and end of lessons. The children enjoy sharing their achievements and the positive approach taken by the class teacher and learning support assistant enables the children to develop in confidence and self-esteem. The children in the reception class are often taken to the local library to promote their interest in books and to aid their reading skills.

### **Mathematical development**

77. In mathematical understanding, most children attain standards in line with those expected for this area of learning by the time they are five. The children in the nursery class count to 10 and recognise and order numbers to five. More able children recognise and order numbers from zero to 10. After putting all the numbers from one to nine in sequence one boy spent some time looking for the number 10 amongst the plastic numbers he was using and when he could not find it decided to put a zero at the beginning instead.
78. In the reception class, children count to 10 forwards in ones and twos and most count to 20 and beyond. All children add single digit numbers up to five and beyond whilst higher-attainers add numbers up to 10. During the inspection the children were beginning to add three single digit numbers together through a range of practical games and activities that were provided for them. The children understand the meaning of the plus and equals signs and recognise some coins. They know the names of some flat shapes, such as square and circle and sequence coloured shapes into a repeating pattern.
79. Teaching and learning in the nursery are good and in the reception class very good. In the nursery class the teacher provides a good range of activities to promote the children's awareness and appreciation of shape and number. In the reception class the children are provided with a very good range of games and practical activities to promote effective learning. In one lesson, for example, the children thoroughly enjoyed making up different addition sums as they got in and out of 'railway carriages'. The teacher involved all of the children, who in turn were keen to participate. As a result of this they make very good progress in their learning.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

80. In knowledge and understanding, most children attain the standards in line with those expected for this area of learning by the time they are five. Children in the nursery recognise the different stages of the life-cycle of a frog. This understanding is further developed in the reception class where the children use magnifying glasses to study pond snails, frogspawn and tadpoles and draw sketches of the specimens. These children know that tadpoles eat the jelly in which they are born; they further develop their knowledge by looking in information books. Children in the nursery class effectively operate a mouse to explore such programs as 'PB Bear's Birthday Party'. The children in the reception class know the names of different parts of the computer and create pictures and patterns using a paint program. The children in the reception class sorted through different types of materials deciding which would be the best to protect a parcel being sent through the post.
81. Teaching and learning are good in the nursery and very good in the reception class. Teachers in

the nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of activities that are planned to extend early concepts in science, design and technology, history, geography and information technology. The reception teacher sets particularly high expectations, always seeking to challenge and develop the children's thinking. The learning support assistant in the reception class worked very well with the group of children studying pond life, making learning enjoyable.

### **Physical development**

82. In physical development, most children attain standards that are above those expected by the time they are five. Children use a range of equipment and materials in their work. Their skills develop well. Children display good control when using scissors, pencils and paintbrushes. Children in the nursery enjoy working with the outdoor equipment. They guide their tricycles in and out of obstacles, they climb confidently and balance on beams and tyres. In physical education lessons, children in the nursery class march around the hall showing a good awareness of space as they run, jump and skip around the hall. In the reception class, children travel along a bench in a variety of ways and jump from the end onto a mat. They hold a balanced shape and try hard to improve their work.
83. Teaching and learning are good in the nursery and very good in the reception class. Lessons in both classes are well planned and managed and there is good attention paid to issues of health and safety. In a very good lesson in the reception class the teacher set very high expectations of the children's attitude and behaviour. In response the children moved to their groups with no fuss and settled very quickly to their work. The teacher deployed support staff effectively and they worked well with each of the groups. The teachers in both classes give very good demonstrations for the children to follow and involve all the children in the various activities. In response the children are very well behaved and highly motivated, working well individually and in groups. There is at present no secure play area in which the children in the reception class can play.

### **Creative development**

84. In creative development, most children attain the standard expected in this area of learning by the time they are five. The children in the nursery mix colours when painting pictures and use a range of vegetables and other objects to print patterns. They create very effective sculptures using sticks, twigs and paper and they make faces using paint, wool and tissue. In the reception class the children make animal faces from card, felt and tissue. They make zig-zag books to write in and use cutting and folding techniques to make frogs with concertina legs. In music lessons the children beat the rhythm of their name or that of a nursery rhyme such as 'Humpty Dumpty'.
85. In both the nursery and reception classes the teaching is good. The teachers provide a good range of opportunities for the children to develop creatively. There is constructive support for children and techniques and skills are well taught. Keen intervention by adults keeps the children well on task. Displays around the rooms indicate that children are allowed to make their own interpretations with the materials that they are given. The teacher in the reception class effectively uses songs to help the children with their learning in many aspects of their work. These include number songs in mathematics and songs to warm up and cool down to in physical education lessons. The children particularly enjoy singing 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' and 'Happy Hippopotamus'.

### **ENGLISH**

86. The findings of the inspection are that the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining standards that are in line with the national average. Compared with the previous report, standards have been maintained overall.
87. Results in the national tests in 2000 showed that standards attained by seven-year-olds in reading and writing were in line with the national average. These results were well below the average when compared to similar schools. This represents a decline in comparison to the

previous year and is mainly due to the high number of pupils with special educational needs (23 per cent) in the 2000 year group. Although the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 2) was close to the national average comparatively few achieved at the higher level (Level 3).

88. A similar picture is to be found in the results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6. In these tests the standards for 11-year-olds were below the national average and well below those of similar schools. This also represents a decline in comparison to the previous year and is mainly due to the high number of pupils with special educational needs (25 per cent). Although the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) was close to the national average comparatively few achieved at the higher level (Level 5). Evidence from the inspection broadly reflects these outcomes.

### **Speaking and Listening**

89. By the age of seven and 11 pupils show good speaking and listening skills. Opportunities are taken to develop these skills. For example, one class enjoyed pupils acting as characters from an account they had read. The pupils posed appropriate questions and those acting spoke of their feelings as, in the account, they faced a possible disastrous situation. Pupils make good progress in developing their skills in posing questions, giving descriptions, providing explanations and engaging in discussions. In subjects such as history and geography pupils are given opportunities for discussion, about such issues as the advantages and disadvantages of living in the local town. Pupils talk confidently about the books they are currently reading and about other books they have enjoyed.

### **Reading**

90. By the age of seven, pupils read simple text by themselves. They tackle words using letter sounds and read for meaning on the basis of clues from the surrounding text. They take a lively interest in the characters and use illustrations to help with their understanding of the story. More able pupils use a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. They talk about the plot, key characters and express opinions about the books they have read.
91. By the time they are 11 years old, pupils have developed an effective variety of strategies to find the meaning in texts. They break down words into syllables and pick up small clues to discover fuller meanings. Most pupils recount the significant ideas, events and characters in stories. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support through the teaching of the SENCO and special education assistants together with good reading resources provided. The study of vocabulary and sentence structure in texts gives useful practice to enhance reading comprehension. Links with the local public library are very good with classes of pupils making frequent visits. In Key Stage 2 there are still not sufficient quantities of good quality children's novels to maximise the love of reading expressed by many pupils. Some pupils are bringing their own books from home to read in school. This was a point raised in the last inspection report. Some pupils do not understand how to use the school library effectively to find books required for research purposes. The Dewey/colour code, which the school uses, is not clearly understood. The school library is not well stocked with non-fiction books. The section devoted to fiction, which attempts to place books in alphabetical order by author, is untidy with many books out of place. The number of fiction books is also quite limited. During the inspection pupils were not seen using the library for reading or research purposes.

### **Writing**

92. By the age of seven, most pupils are using joined handwriting, which they produce with reasonable care. The majority of pupils write in sentences with capital letters and full stops. The teaching of letter shapes and patterns helps most pupils to achieve satisfactory standards in spelling. Teachers encourage pupils to learn and practise weekly spelling lists at home. Much of the pupils' written work involves completing worksheets and there was a lack of sustained story writing. There was some evidence of writing for a range of purposes including poems about spring.

93. By the age of 11, pupils use a widening vocabulary to create a sense of narrative and atmosphere to their stories, but again the amount of extended writing produced by these pupils is too limited. Regular practice in the conventions of writing in English helps pupils to punctuate and construct different types of sentences with increasing skill. Planning sheets to help with the drafting of written work are used with some success in arranging the order of events in a story such as 'You're in Charge' written by pupils in one class. Examples of extended writing show that pupils understand how to use paragraphs, speech, description and narrative to achieve particular effects. In one class pupils create an atmosphere of fear and excitement as they write short pieces about dragons and trolls. Pupils practise and use a reasonable number of forms of writing; for example, poems, stories, eyewitness reports, letters and comparisons of novels and films. Pupils in one class composed interesting scripts of an imaginary interview with someone involved in floods. Pupils' writing benefits from the regular weekly learning of spellings.
94. The quality of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Very good and good lessons were characterised by high levels of interaction between teachers and pupils so that learning was carried forward at a stimulating pace. In one lesson, the teacher involved pupils in a challenging discussion on differences in instructional texts. The teacher questioned the pupils effectively, challenging their thinking and taking their learning forward. In other lessons teachers listen and question effectively and help pupils to build systematically on earlier learning. For example, older pupils were keen to answer questions to show their previous understanding of prefixes, before going on to use dictionaries to find further examples of words with prefixes and then suffixes. Very good teaching, with challenge for all ability levels and provision of relevant materials enabled the pupils to develop very good knowledge and understanding of writing for a specific purpose. In one class, the provision of a sheet showing a snake and the layout of a 'thin poem' round its body, was a good stimulus for pupils to write their own 'thin poems'.
95. The school makes good use of the national guidance for the literacy hour and teachers' lesson plans are good. In some classes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. Much of the work set by these teachers is based on the completion of published worksheets giving little scope for pupils to develop independent learning or to show any personal initiative. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development in English are good. The structure and routines of the literacy hour help pupils to know that tasks have to be completed in a given time. Pupils settle to their work quickly and generally concentrate well. Most pupils enjoy participating in conversation and discussion. This reflects the teachers' good choice of interesting books and topics. Pupils collaborate well with each other on joint tasks and are consistently well behaved and polite. Nearly all pupils find increasing personal satisfaction in reading, as they grow older.
96. Throughout the school, patient and persistent teaching of pupils with special educational needs helps them to make good progress. For example, the SENCO made sure that the group of pupils she was teaching spent their time in breaking down words into syllables and finding these words using a specialised dictionary. Only limited use of computers was seen in literacy during the inspection. In one class, a group of pupils, helped appropriately by the teacher, successfully sent an e-mail to another class in the school, telling them of what had happened to the characters in a story they had just studied. Additional learning support to lift the attainment of pupils whose attainment is just below average is taking place in some classes, but it is too early to judge the benefits of this initiative.
97. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator for the subject has only been in this role since the beginning of the academic year. She is very enthusiastic and keen to develop the subject. She recognises the weaknesses with regard to the under-achievement of higher-attaining pupils and the need to develop assessment procedures to inform future planning and clearly identify the attainment levels of pupils. The co-ordinator has already taken steps to get someone to help sort out the library provision.

## MATHEMATICS

98. The findings of the inspection are that standards attained by pupils when they are seven and 11 are broadly in line with the national average. These are similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
99. Results in the national tests in 2000 showed that the large majority of pupils in Year 2 reached the expected level, (Level 2). However, too many of them only reached the lower end of this level with not enough achieving the higher levels (Level 3) for the school to reach the expected standard as shown by the points score (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account). Standards were lower than in previous years due to the high number of pupils with special educational needs. When compared with pupils from similar schools their attainment was well below average as few reached the higher level.
100. The test results for 2000 show that too many pupils in Year 6 remained at a below average level and that the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was well below the national average. When this is converted into a points score (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account), it shows that standards were well below average, overall. When their results are compared with pupils from similar schools, their attainment was very low. Standards were particularly low in 2000 due to the high number of pupils with special educational needs.
101. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress against their prior attainment. The progress of the higher-attaining pupils, however, is below expectations. The school has recognised the need to improve standards in mathematics and as a result has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy, with clearer planning of the curriculum, training for teachers and some booster classes for the more able. However, there is still too much dependence on the completion of published workbooks and worksheets in lessons, with pupils often given the same tasks to complete with no matching of work to pupils' prior abilities.
102. By the age of seven, most pupils subtract 20 from higher two-digit numbers, read and write figures to 100 and distinguish between odd and even numbers. The average and more able pupils add and subtract three numbers. In Year 2 pupils are developing an understanding of multiplication through the use of repeated addition. The scrutiny of pupils' books shows that they have a satisfactory understanding of the properties of flat shapes, they use standard units when measuring and are beginning to represent data in block graphs.
103. By the age of 11, pupils' earlier work shows that most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages and can add and subtract decimals to two places. They use negative numbers and have a sound knowledge of multiplication tables. The higher- and average-attaining pupils understand multiples, factors, square numbers and digital roots and work out the probability of events. They develop their knowledge of the properties of shapes such as circles and triangles and rotational symmetry. In lessons most Year 3 pupils add three-digit numbers using their knowledge of number bonds. Pupils in Year 4 add more than two numbers in columns using a 'short' and 'long' method. Pupils in Year 5 use the correct mathematical language when describing the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes. They identify a range of nets that are used to construct solid shapes. Year 6 pupils recognise and order decimal fractions and express quotients as a fraction or as a decimal.
104. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good lessons. Staff have worked hard to introduce the National Numeracy Strategy and lesson planning has improved as a result of this. A good deal of staff training for teachers and teaching assistants has taken place and this has improved their subject knowledge and expertise as well as their confidence in the subject. Most lessons contain a good mental session before the main teaching is done, and they also finish with some form of recap of the objectives, although not always enough time is left for this. However, in some lessons tasks are not well matched to pupils' prior attainment, particularly that of the higher-attaining pupils. As a consequence these pupils are not sufficiently challenged. There is an over-dependence on published workbooks and worksheets in some classes with all pupils expected to complete the same work whatever their ability. The marking of pupils' work



varies from teacher to teacher. In some cases work is marked well with clear indications as to what the pupils have done well and where they need to improve, however this is not the case in all classes. Worksheets and workbooks in some classes are rarely marked. Lower down the school, work is not always annotated or dated, which makes it difficult for the teacher and others to monitor progress over time.

105. In Year 6 the higher-attaining pupils are being effectively challenged with some extension work which takes place with the secondary school teacher. It is anticipated that this will result in higher standards than were achieved last year, with the possibility of a higher proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in the national tests. In lessons they are enthusiastic but well behaved, joining in with mental sessions and showing enjoyment in their work. They concentrate well and are well motivated. Pupils also respond to challenge very positively when they are set problems, as in Year 5 when pupils were learning how to use nets to construct solid shapes. They found some elements of the given tasks difficult at first but persevered until they recognised and were able to describe why some nets would not achieve the task.
106. Arrangements for assessment and the recording of pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection and there are now satisfactory procedures in place. However, the results of assessment are not always used by teachers to plan work that is matched to the ability levels of pupils. Teachers use informal observations which they record on their lesson planning sheets and there are also regular formal tests which are used both to set individual and school targets. The school has started to analyse the statutory tests and this information is being used to identify and target weaknesses.
107. There is some evidence of pupils using mathematics to help their learning in lessons such as in science and design and technology. In science, for example, pupils measure the mass of different weights in Newtons, and record their findings in tables and graphs. In design and technology in Year 5 pupils use their skills in constructing shapes using nets. However, this area of the curriculum is generally not developed as well as it might be across the school.
108. The co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for the management of the subject. Since taking over she has started to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, to ensure the necessary consistency in provision throughout the school. These observations are clearly structured and well documented. In addition to the support given to Year 6, the school has provided extra support for the current Year 3 and 4 classes, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are adequate; they are generally used well.

## **SCIENCE**

109. The findings of the inspection are that the standards of attainment at seven and 11 are above the national average. These results are better than those recorded at the time of the last inspection.
110. The school's results in the teacher assessments of pupils in Year 2 were above the national average but average when compared with similar schools. In the national tests in 2000, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards that were below the national average but well below average in comparison with similar schools. Standards fell last year due to a significant number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. Until then there had been a steady rise in standards during the previous three years.
111. By the age of seven, pupils conduct experiments and record their results in charts. For example, during a lesson on magnetism, pupils recorded those objects that were attracted to the magnet and those that were not. Pupils have some understanding of the forces such as pushes and pulls that are in operation to make something move. The pupils know that some appliances need electricity to make them work and construct electric circuits with batteries, wires, switches and bulbs.

112. By the age of 11, pupils select the equipment they require to conduct an experiment and make predictions based on their scientific understanding. They know that some materials are magnetic, some can be separated by filtering whilst others are soluble and can be separated by heating. Pupils have a good understanding of gases, liquids and solids and know that when yeast is mixed with sugar and water it produces carbon dioxide. Through experimenting with different sizes of paper pupils develop a good understanding of the forces of gravity and air resistance and balanced and unbalanced forces. The results of these experiments were recorded on charts and graphs and the pupils drew conclusions based on their results. They have a good understanding of the functions of the skeletal system and the main organs of the body.
113. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall; this is broadly similar to that recorded at the last inspection. There was a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in the last inspection while in this inspection all teaching was satisfactory or better. At the beginning of lessons teachers share the learning objectives so pupils understand what they are expected to achieve. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and emphasise the importance of subject specific vocabulary. In a very good lesson in a Year 5 class about the sun, earth and moon the teacher used terms such as 'rotation', 'sphere', 'hemisphere' and 'axis'. In the introduction to their lessons teachers make good links with previous learning and ensure that lessons carefully build upon pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. In the best lessons there is a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' skills of investigation. In a good lesson in the Year 2 class, for example, pupils tested to see which materials were magnetic. The lesson was well managed and organised and the pupils responded by sensibly testing different objects and recording their results on a chart. Similarly, in a good lesson in the Year 6 class, the lesson was well planned and organised and the pupils worked with interest and enthusiasm.
114. Examination of pupils' past work shows an over-reliance on worksheets, particularly in Key Stage 1, with too few opportunities for pupils to record their observations in a variety of ways. In addition, many of the worksheets are not marked so pupils are not provided with any indication about the quality of their work or how they might improve. In Key Stage 2, there is a better balance between the work teachers require the pupils to record on worksheets and the opportunities that they provide for pupils to record their work independently.
115. The curriculum is based on the QCA scheme of work, which underpins the progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. A particularly good feature of the school's work is the emphasis that is placed on the skills of scientific enquiry. There is good provision for pupils to develop skills of investigation through conducting experiments, obtaining and presenting their findings and drawing conclusions.
116. There is satisfactory provision for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in this subject. Although pupils write detailed accounts of what equipment they used in their experiments and the outcomes of their tests at the end of Key Stage 2, there are insufficient opportunities for them to do this in other classes. In Key Stage 2, pupils frequently use instruments such as force meters and capacity cylinders for measuring and display their findings on charts block graphs, sometimes using computer databases. Computer programs are used effectively to support learning in this subject. In Year 5, for example, pupils used the Internet to research for information about the earth and the moon. There are good assessment procedures to record and chart the pupils' progress in their learning. Some teachers test the pupils at the end of topics to ascertain what they have learned, but this practice is not to be found in all classes.
117. The subject co-ordinator leads the subject well. The monitoring and evaluation that he has undertaken has been valuable in assessing the effectiveness of teachers' planning for progression and assessing pupils' levels of attainment. As a result of his close examination of samples of pupils' work he has developed a clear view of where there needs to be improvement. For example, he had identified the overuse of worksheets in some classes. This sampling was undertaken quite recently so there has been insufficient time for him to influence current practice. There has not as yet been an opportunity for him to assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

118. During the week of the inspection it was only possible to see a limited number of art lessons being taught; only two lessons were observed in the juniors, and one lesson in the infants. However, evidence from teachers' planning, pupils' past work and lesson observations indicate that standards are broadly in line with those expected when pupils are seven and 11. This is similar to the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.
119. By the time they are seven, pupils use a range of tools and materials appropriately. They develop their skills in observational drawing and use these to illustrate their work about the environment satisfactorily. Younger pupils make satisfactory use of pastel colour and paint in their pictures of life in the Arctic. They mix paints to match shades achieving an appropriate consistency and neat application. Pupils in Year 2 draw pencil sketches of trees in their study of springtime and use a range of materials to make collage pictures. Pupils have made careful weaving patterns using paper to simulate fabrics they have been studying.
120. By the time they are 11, pupils carry out an appropriate range of work to build on their skills and techniques, using a wide range of media. Pupils in Year 6 make good pencil drawings of moving figures, sketching these carefully before transferring their ideas onto a larger background that they prepare by crayoning colours to represent a cave. Pupils throughout the key stage make successful links with other subjects, for example in illustrating life at the time of the Tudors. Pupils paint pictures to illustrate modes of transport. They continue to use the environment to develop their techniques in observational drawing, collage pictures and paintings. Pupils make three-dimensional models and pots using clay; some of these have been glazed successfully. They use computer programs to generate pictures.
121. In the lessons seen, pupils' attitudes towards the subject are positive and enthusiastic. Pupils of all ages show care in what they produce, and good levels of concentration. They value the comments of their partners particularly in the older juniors, often asking for advice or comment about the work they are doing. In the few lessons it was possible to observe, the pupils put thought and effort into their work making improvements when they were not satisfied with the end product. In the lessons seen they behave well and handle tools and materials appropriately and with care.
122. Very little direct teaching of art was seen and therefore it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. Teachers' planning for lessons is secure. What the pupils learn indicates that teachers' subject knowledge varies across the school. Pupils acquire a satisfactory range of skills, knowledge and understanding in their learning. The opportunities given to the pupils with special educational needs are the same as those for other pupils and they make satisfactory progress across the school.
123. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and provides sound leadership. She has not had the opportunity to monitor the teaching and learning but informally monitors provision by seeing pupils' completed work on display. The school has adopted the recommendations of the QCA guidance to provide continuity across the school. There are currently no procedures for the assessment of pupils' work or records of pupils' achievements. Resources for art are adequate and are easily accessible to both teachers and pupils. The school makes good use of the kiln, which is securely housed, within a shared area. The school does not have a policy for display. Although there is a large amount of pupils' work on display in the school the quality of display does not generally enhance pupils' work as well as it could. The school has a good capacity for improvement in this area.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

124. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, making reliable judgements on the overall quality of teaching and learning in the subject impossible. An analysis of the samples of work on display, and discussions with teachers and pupils indicates that pupils in most classes undertake

a satisfactory range of activities in which they design, make and evaluate products. This provision improves in Years 5 and 6 and in these two classes it is good. This is a similar situation to that recorded at the time of the last inspection.

125. By the age of seven, standards are broadly in line with those found in most schools. Pupils have opportunities to design and make and to work with a range of recycled materials, card, textiles and food. They use construction kits and recycled materials, developing their skills of cutting, sticking and joining. For example, pupils in Year 2 designed and made wheeled vehicles from recycled materials. They thought about the structure of the design, chose the materials that they wanted to use and made them from wood and cardboard. When the vehicles were completed they tested them by pushing them along the floor or down a ramp and measured how far they travelled.
126. By the age of 11, pupils have developed further their designing and making skills and standards are above those found in most schools. Pupils in Year 5 make rockets from lemonade bottles surrounded by a wooden framework. The modules on top of the rockets are detachable and a parachute deploys to ensure a smooth landing. During the inspection the pupils in this class were successfully launching their rockets using pneumatic pressure provided by a car pump. Pupils in Year 6 undertake diverse projects such as designing and making a pair of shoes or an electrical vehicle. The designs for the vehicles were particularly good. They are detailed, indicating the construction materials to be used for each part of the vehicle, the sizes of the pieces of wood, how they are all to be joined together, the position of the battery and motor and how it will function. When the pupils completed the vehicles they tested and evaluated them, identified weaknesses and made changes to make them work more efficiently. Pupils in Year 6 make bread, considering the effects that might occur if they do or do not add yeast to the mix.
127. The teaching and learning in the one lesson seen in Year 5 were very good. The lesson was very well prepared and organised. The class teacher displayed very good subject knowledge as he posed challenging questions about how well the rockets that the pupils had made had worked and what modifications they would need to make to improve their performance. The teacher set high expectations of the pupils' effort and concentration as they constructed a container to protect a passenger who was travelling in the rocket. In response the pupils worked with great interest and enthusiasm. They estimated, measured and evaluated their structures making modifications during the construction.
128. The school is currently adapting the QCA guidance to provide a broad range of activities for the pupils to enjoy whilst securing the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding. In their planning teachers make some good links with the science curriculum. Plans are in hand for the pupils in Year 6 to work with the local college to design and create a personal logo using a Computer Aided Design package. The subject co-ordinator leads the subject well through the example of his teaching and influences the work of other teachers on an informal basis. There have been no opportunities for him to assess pupils' standards or the quality of teaching and learning.

## GEOGRAPHY

129. Due to timetable arrangements it was possible to observe only two lessons, both in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on the two lessons observed in Key Stage 2, an examination of planning and pupils' work and discussion with the co-ordinator.
130. From the evidence available, the progress pupils make in geography through both key stages in developing mapping skills is satisfactory whilst their progress in acquiring the knowledge and understanding in the remaining elements of the National Curriculum requirements is unsatisfactory. As a result, standards and progress in geography by the end of both key stages are unsatisfactory. This represents a fall in standards from the previous inspection when standards were reported to be broadly in line with expectations.
131. Pupils in Year 1 draw a plan of a playground they would like. On prepared worksheets they identify key features and street furniture as directed by the instructions given. Pupils in Year 2 continue to develop their mapping skills using published worksheets, identifying objects on a plan of a classroom giving grid references. They give directions using the four points of the compass. They identify the position of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on a map of Britain.
132. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop mapping skills satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 3 identify key features on a map of the world. They study the weather and the effect it has on the lifestyle of the Egyptians, linked to their study of the Ancient Egyptians in history. In a lesson about the local area they indicate where Southam is on a map of Britain and identify places of interest on aerial photographs of the local area. In Year 4 pupils learn about the climate and farming in their work about an Indian locality but their knowledge is limited and superficial. Pupils in Year 5 have studied the water cycle and linked this with their work in science. Other work in this year group has been in history. In Year 6 pupils develop mapping skills when studying the course of the local rivers. They use the correct terminology in relation to a river system explaining the meanings of the terms meander, tributary and delta. They are developing their knowledge of the symbols in use on Ordnance Survey maps and read co-ordinates well.
133. In the two lessons observed one lesson was good and the other satisfactory. However from the scrutiny of pupils' previous work it is evident that there is too much dependency on the use of published worksheets in both key stages which limits the development of geographical enquiry and understanding of places, patterns and processes.
134. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator who has recently taken over responsibility has limited knowledge of the subject and has not yet had opportunity to develop this through in-service training. As yet there have been no opportunities for the monitoring of teaching or learning. The school has adopted the QCA guidance to organise the curriculum. Further consideration of geography is required to ensure that teaching is consistent and that in all classes, topics studied not only conform to the revised orders but are taught in sufficient depth to develop fully the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Provision for assessment has been introduced based on coverage of the units of work. This is not used to ensure that work is matched to pupils' abilities. The marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory; much of the work seen was not marked whilst that which was marked does not indicate to pupils what they need to improve.
135. Resources for the subject are inadequate, although the school has purchased some computer software, which was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection. The curriculum is enriched by visits to the local area to support pupils' work particularly in their work about rivers and the residential visit to Wales further supports this.

## **HISTORY**

136. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils achieve levels of attainment typical for their age. In the last inspection, levels of attainment were not recorded for seven-year-olds, as there was insufficient evidence. Standards of pupils' attainment by the time they are 11 remain the same as those found in the last inspection.
137. By the time they are seven, pupils gain an understanding of the passage of time. They sequence events such as the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 and the Great Fire of London in 1666. They identify the uses of inventions from the past to the present day. For example, how the Braille alphabet helps blind people to read. They know about famous people such as Florence Nightingale and the type of nursing she did and the difficult conditions in which she had to work. Pupils compare and contrast such items as toys from the past with those of today.
138. By the age of 11, pupils have an appropriate understanding of past civilisations such as the Ancient Greeks. They recognise that people invaded and settled in Britain over a period of time as they study the Vikings as one example. Pupils' presentation of their topic work on the Vikings showed some good use of information technology. They are aware of the principal changes, which occurred during the Tudor period especially in terms of the rulers of the country, conflict with Spain, and the life of the local playwright William Shakespeare. In some classes pupils use their literacy skills well to find information from books and CD-ROMs, but in other classes there is too much reliance on the completion of worksheets which inhibits pupils' scope for independent learning.
139. From a scrutiny of pupils' books the majority, including those with special educational needs, think carefully about the tasks they are set and are keen to produce work which is of a satisfactory standard and in some cases is good. The quality of presentation of some pupils' work is unsatisfactory. In the one history lesson seen pupils were keen to contribute in the identification of toys from the past.
140. It was possible to see only one history lesson, so an overall judgement of teaching is inappropriate. However, planning is sufficient to ensure that curricular coverage is broad and balanced. Pupils' work is not always marked regularly and in some classes there are insufficient evaluative comments to encourage improvement. The history co-ordinator has overseen the introduction of a scheme of work based on QCA guidelines. However, insufficient opportunities have been provided for the co-ordinator to assess the standards pupils' are attaining or the progress that they make.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

141. The previous inspection reported that standards were in line with those expected at the end of both key stages and that pupils in Key Stage 1 made satisfactory progress across all strands except control technology, whilst progress in Key Stage 2 was good. However, there were no systems to assess pupils' attainment or to check progress. The school has maintained the overall satisfactory standards in both key stages although there are some omissions in meeting standards in some elements of the new requirements for information and communications technology.
142. There have been significant improvements in provision for the subject. Grant funding, for example through the National Grid for Learning has been used well to upgrade resources and to improve teaching skills. There is now a computer suite that can accommodate half a class, working two to a computer. Teachers and support staff have received training so that they are now competent to teach the required curriculum. Training is ongoing to ensure that the school keeps up with continuous developments. Two governors with specific skills have given very good support to the school both in developing the skills of teachers and in installing links with the Internet and Intranet. These initiatives are helping to raise provision and standards further throughout the school. This subject is a priority for further development and there are clear targets for improvement in the school's development plan.

143. By the age of seven, pupils develop their knowledge of how to use the computer keyboard satisfactorily. They use their word processing skills to write text and use clip art to drop in pictures to illustrate their work. They present information in a range of graph formats. They use an art program when drawing pictures, using the fill tool carefully.
144. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are beginning to explore the Internet as a source of information. Pupils in Year 3 use their skills to find information for their work in history about the Vikings. They search databases to find information and present this in graph form. Pupils in Year 4 use their word processing skills well to draft and edit their writing, using graphics to illustrate their work. They experiment with a range of fonts to produce an interesting collection of name cards. Pupils in Year 5 access the Internet to find information about the planets and create abstract pictures in the style of Henri Matisse. Pupils in Year 6 use a variety of fonts and graphics in their word processing. They create charts that illustrate the relationship between the area and perimeter of shapes and use a control program to regulate a sequence of lights. During the inspection a group of Year 6 pupils were beginning to develop their skills further by creating a multimedia presentation with the help of a teacher from the local high school. Some gaps in the pupils' knowledge and skills remain as a result of the lack of appropriate equipment. There is a lack of software for musical composition, simulations and monitoring sensors. The school is aware of these gaps and has plans to further improve its provision.
145. Although there were few lessons observed during the week evidence suggests that teaching is satisfactory overall. Although teachers at both key stages are responding well to training opportunities, a few still lack confidence in using computers across the curriculum; during the inspection the computers in classrooms were not used at all in some classes. Where teachers have confidence, there was good use of the computers to extend and develop the skills and knowledge that the pupils gained in their lessons in the computer suite, within class lessons, such as in a science lesson in Year 5. A good lesson was observed in Year 6 where a group of pupils were being taught how to present their work in a multimedia presentation. In this lesson, which was taught by a teacher from the high school, the teacher explained the processes carefully and used pupils' previous knowledge well so that they were able to get on quickly, as a result. They made substantial gains in learning. The appointment of a skilled teaching assistant is having a considerable impact on the quality of teaching and learning. As well as being technically competent she gives expert advice to teachers and pupils, taking charge of teaching small groups.
146. The attitudes and enthusiasm of the pupils is obvious and contributes well to their learning. Pupils concentrate well, as a result, and put a lot of effort into their work. They co-operate well in pairs, discussing the way forward and overcoming problems. They take a pride in their completed work.
147. The subject is led by a very enthusiastic co-ordinator. Relatively new to the post she has made very good use both of the opportunities she has been given to develop the subject and the expertise available to her from two of the governors with computer skills. She is well supported in her role by the headteacher who takes a particular interest in developing the subject. Recently the school has introduced a system for assessing and recording pupils' progress. This is not yet established sufficiently to make a contribution to the quality of teachers' planning for different groups within the class. Resources are unsatisfactory overall. The computer suite provides a good resource and is used well although it is in a small area and there are insufficient computers for a whole class to use in there. This creates some difficulties with organisation. There is also a shortage of some specific software as already mentioned, to enable all required areas of the curriculum to be taught in Key Stage 2. The school is aware of these shortages and has plans to rectify the situation.

## **MUSIC**

148. Standards are broadly in line with those seen typically for seven and eleven-year-olds. The judgement in the last inspection report recorded standards at the end of Key Stage 1 as being good. The apparent decline in standards can be accounted for by the fact that a specialist music teacher was taking all lessons in Key Stage 1 until the start of this academic year. The teachers of Key Stage 1 classes are now adapting to take music with their own classes.
149. In collective worship, pupils listen attentively to music played which helps them to reflect on the theme for the day. For example, pupils listen to part of Elgar's 'Pomp and Circumstance March Number 1' and when questioned can explain how they feel it gives a sense of triumph and victory. This music was used to set the tone for St. George's Day and the triumphant resurrection story of Jesus. The pupils' singing of sacred songs is generally well pitched and rhythmical but older pupils do not join in the singing with any degree of enthusiasm.
150. By the age of seven pupils develop an understanding of pitch and dynamics as they produce high, low, quiet and loud sounds with their voices and by using a variety of tuned and untuned instruments. They are able to name these instruments and explain how they are played. Their listening skills develop well as they play and listen to a range of instruments. They consider how sounds are made and understand the term 'vibration'. They recognise that different effects are achieved by scraping, shaking and tapping instruments. Through their careful listening and playing they develop a good sense of rhythm. The majority of pupils are able to repeat, with reasonable accuracy, a rhythm clapped by the teacher. Pupils can sing a variety of songs keeping a good sense of rhythm and pitch. They particularly enjoy songs with actions.
151. By the age of 11, pupils demonstrate a well-developed sense of performance for an audience. In one class pupils compose music for their project on space, and various groups perform their pieces for the rest of the class. They know a reasonable variety of songs and work well together as they perform, some singing and clapping, and others playing percussion instruments. Pupils listening skills are developed as they hear tapes of contrasting music such as pieces by Moody Blues and Gustav Holst and explain how they believe they differ. Pupils benefit from opportunities to learn brass and woodwind instruments and violin. This extends their musical skills and gives them practice in simple ensemble work.
152. The quality of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2 with one excellent lesson seen, and most pupils enjoy their music. They generally listen well to advice from their teachers and want to improve their performance. Lessons are well planned so that there is usually a stimulating range of activities that engage pupils' interest and give them opportunities to play instruments. Teachers manage pupils well through motivating them and choosing interesting songs and catchy tunes. In lessons, social skills develop well during musical activities, when pupils realise that it takes an effort from everyone to achieve a good performance.
153. The co-ordinator has made use of QCA guidelines to produce a helpful policy and systematic structure for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. This will be reviewed at the end of the year together with a new local authority scheme. Pupils have opportunities to perform to an audience through assemblies, Christmas plays, visits to elderly people and linking with other primary schools for a joint performance for parents. The school has an adequate range of tuned and untuned instruments. The co-ordinator hopes to purchase more keyboards.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

154. The attainment of seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds is above that expected for their age. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Standards in swimming are well above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were above the national average in Key Stage 1 but were average at the end of Key Stage 2.
155. By the age of seven, pupils travel using their hands and feet, walking, jumping, tummy down and



tummy up. In a lesson in the Year 2 class, the pupils effectively combined various movements, travelling forwards, backwards and sideways showing good awareness of the space around them. More able pupils displayed good skills when climbing ropes and performing forward rolls. Most pupils move on and around the apparatus displaying good levels of control and co-ordination. Pupils in Year 2 attend swimming lessons and by the end of the year most can swim 10 metres or more.

156. By the age of 11, the pupils swim 25 metres and more and most are participating in personal survival and life saving training. They participate in a range of games' activities such as tag rugby and football where they display good levels of ball control and awareness of space. In rugby lessons, pupils throw, catch and pass the ball effectively and demonstrate skills of teamwork and co-operation. In football lessons many pupils show good levels of ball skills as they pass the ball accurately and control it in different ways. In dance lessons, pupils create reaching, stretching, pushing and turning movements, responding well to the music.
157. The quality of teaching and learning are good. The teachers ensure that the pupils are fully warmed up at the start of lessons and cooled down at the end. Lessons are well planned and structured to include all pupils. In a games lesson in the Year 6 class for example, a pupil with a statement for special educational needs was fully involved in developing his football skills along with all the other pupils. The teachers display good subject knowledge through their explanations and directions to pupils at the beginning of lessons. In the best lessons, such as one in Year 5, the teachers provide a variety of games to develop pupils' skills and involve them fully in the activities. In this lesson the teacher was sensitive to issues of ability and gender and ensured total participation. In most lessons but not all, the teachers intervene as the lesson proceeds providing good guidance on how pupils might improve their performances. The teachers manage and organise the pupils well and set high expectations of concentration and effort. As a result the pupils work hard, at a good pace and progress well in their learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to this subject and enjoy working individually and in groups.
158. A good range of activities is provided for pupils to participate in outside of normal lessons, including, football, netball, table tennis and cricket. Most of these activities are provided for the oldest pupils. The school also participates against other schools in football (both boys and girls), netball, swimming, athletics and cricket. Opportunities are provided for the pupils in Year 6 to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities, such as following trails, when they attend a residential visit. The subject co-ordinator, who is also the headteacher, is enthusiastic and is extremely active in providing the pupils with the wide range of activities that they enjoy. The school has a good range of equipment to support pupils' learning.