

INSPECTION REPORT

**GUARDIAN ANGELS ROMAN CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tower Hamlets, London E3 4RB

LEA area: Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100945

Headteacher: Miss E Worrell

Reporting inspector: R E G Cross
154917

Dates of inspection: 30th April to 3rd May 2001

Inspection number: 192349

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whitman Road Bow London
Postcode:	E3 4RB
Telephone number:	0208 980 3939
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Guardian Angels RCP School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Wakeford
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Guardian Angels Roman Catholic Primary school educates boys and girls aged between four and 11 years. There are 197 pupils on roll altogether, which is about the same size as most other schools of its type. There are 25 pupils who are in the same class in the Foundation Stage. The school has 44 pupils on its register of special educational need, which is about the national average. Five pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is above the national average. Pupils with Speech and communication difficulties make up the largest group within the school's pupils with special educational needs. The school has about the same number of boys and girls on roll. About 49 per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly black African and Caribbean heritage, which is high compared with most schools. Ninety-one of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Three of these pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak the language. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. The most common first languages of these pupils are Yoruba, Tagalog, Spanish and Portuguese. Around 45 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. During the last school year, two pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and nine left it at times which were not those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. This is a low rate of mobility. Pupils enter the school at below average levels of attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Its leadership is very good and its management is satisfactory. The pupils enter the school at below average standards, make good progress and achieve average standards by the time that they leave. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The very good leadership of the headteacher gives the school a clear vision and has developed a team, which is committed to improvement.
- The pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to their work greatly assist the progress that they make.
- The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps it to establish a very caring ethos.
- The quality of relationships in the school is very good and promotes a very high degree of racial harmony.
- The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and in Years 4 and 5 is good and helps to raise the standards reached by the pupils.
- The pupils make good progress and achieve good standards relative to their standards on entry to the school, for example, standards are above average in mathematics, science and history at Key Stage 1 and in music at both key stages.

What could be improved

- The standards reached by pupils, particularly those of high ability and in writing by, for example, using assessment information effectively to provide pupils with work which is challenging but attainable.
- The quality of management through, for example, establishing an appropriate senior management team.
- Standards in information and communication technology, which are below average largely because the school has only recently acquired adequate resources to teach the subject effectively.
- Curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage who do not have easy access to play equipment especially wheeled toys and agility apparatus.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997 and, since then, it has made a good improvement. Since its last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved markedly and the standards attained by the pupils have risen. The key issues for action from that inspection have, overall, been well addressed. In some instances, for example, the leadership of the headteacher, improvement has been very good. In others, such as the development of progression in the children's learning, improvement has been satisfactory but issues still remain to be addressed. The school has a very good capacity to continue to improve.

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	D	D	C	A
Mathematics	D	D	D	B
Science	D	B	C	A

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

The school's trend in standards is upward at a faster rate than the national trend in the tests for 11 year olds. Girls perform significantly less well than boys in all three subjects over three years. The school exceeded its targets for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in English and mathematics in 2000 and has increased these targets suitably for 2001. The findings of the inspection are similar to the school's test results in 2000 except that standards in mathematics are also judged to be average due to the effect of the National Numeracy Strategy. In all other subjects, including literacy and numeracy, standards are average except in music, where they are above average, and information and communication technology where they are below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory at this key stage.

At Key Stage 1, the findings of the inspection are that pupils make good progress. Standards are above average in mathematics, numeracy, science, history and music and average in all other subjects except in information and communication technology where they are below average.

At both key stages, there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards in design and technology and standards in writing are below average.

Children in the Foundation Stage enter the school at below average levels of attainment. They make satisfactory progress. The children are on course to reach average standards in all areas of their development except English, mathematics, and physical development where standards are still below average by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress and reach good standards relative to their previous standards. Throughout the school, more able pupils do not always make sufficient progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils show a great interest in their lessons and an eagerness to learn which helps them to make good progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils are very well-mannered and care for each other and the fabric of the school. They are courteous to adults. There have been three short-term exclusions of boys of black Caribbean backgrounds in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils willingly accept responsibility, for example, when running the tuck shop. They show maturity in their relationships with their teachers, for example, by explaining clearly what they understand and what they find confusing in lessons.

	This supports their development very well.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The pupils enjoy coming to school and this helps them to learn.

The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are strengths of the school and promote a high degree of racial harmony. The rate of unauthorised absence is above average. Some parents take their children out of school for holidays in term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection, 16 per cent of the teaching was very good or better, 94 per cent was satisfactory or better and six per cent (three lessons) were unsatisfactory or worse. In Key Stage 1, Year 4 and Year 5, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Throughout the school, the most important strengths of the teaching are the way in which the pupils are managed and controlled and the way support staff are used to assist the pupils' learning. The most significant weaknesses in the teaching are the way in which teachers use assessment information to plan the pupils' work and the quality of the teachers' lesson planning. The quality of teaching in English, including literacy, and mathematics, including numeracy, is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2.

The quality of the pupils' learning reflects the quality of the teaching and is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2. The major strengths in the pupils' learning are the interest and application which they show towards their work and the effort which they put into completing it well. The school meets the needs of most pupils satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, most pupils' needs are well met. Throughout the school, the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well met by good quality teaching and learning but the needs of more able pupils, and those who are gifted or talented, are not fully met.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, all subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum although there are weaknesses in planning for the pupils' personal and social education. Curricular provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and children are happy and confident in school. However, there are weaknesses in aspects of their physical and social development. Provision for extracurricular activities is not as good as it is in most schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and the well trained assistant staff. The pupils' individual education plans are well written and show specific targets which are reviewed regularly. They make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive good support from specially trained staff. They make good progress in acquiring fluency in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for moral and cultural development is very good and that for spiritual and social is good. The provision promotes the aims of the school fully and upholds its Catholic ethos. This enhances the pupils' learning.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The teachers know the pupils well and take good care of them. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good and those for child protection fully meet requirements. The school has developed good procedures for assessing English, mathematics and science and is working on procedures in information and communication technology. There are no agreed consistent procedures in other subjects. Assessment information is not used well enough to promote the maximum progress for the pupils.
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The school's partnership with parents is good.

The school's provision for pupils' with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language has improved since the school was last inspected. There are weaknesses in the children's physical development in the Foundation Stage and in extracurricular activities, particularly in Key Stage 1. The school takes great care of its pupils. The use of assessment information does not fully support the pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very good. This results in the school being very concerned to continue to raise standards while developing all aspects of the education provided for the pupils. The headteacher is well supported by the staff, particularly her deputy, who are equally committed to improvement. There are, however, weaknesses in the management structure of the school. For example, there is not an appropriate senior management team and the roles of co-ordinators are not evenly distributed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are strongly committed to it. They gain this understanding from reports from the headteacher, their meetings – including committees – and from informal visits to the school. They do not make regular structured formal visits.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Assessment data are analysed very carefully to set targets for pupils. Teaching and learning are monitored using a number of suitable strategies. The school has successfully raised attainment. However, more able pupils do not reach high enough standards and monitoring does not concentrate sufficiently on the level of work pupils are set.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The pupils benefit well from the way money is spent. They enter the school at below average standards and leave it at average standards thanks to the way resources are deployed to support them. Additional funds, for example, from the Excellence in Cities initiative are well used. Financial control is good and spending is suitably linked to the school development plan. However, spending and development planning are not forecast far enough ahead.

The school's staffing levels, the adequacy of its accommodation and the quality and quantity of the learning resources available support the pupils' learning satisfactorily.

The headteacher gives the school very good leadership and assessment data are very well analysed. There are weaknesses in the management structure of the school and in the use of assessment information. The school ensures that money is well spent. Procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of spending are not well developed and weaknesses in the criteria used to judge the success of the school development plan make this difficult.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the teaching. • The fact that their children like school. • The school expects the children to work hard. • The quality of the behaviour in the school. • The fact that the school works closely with them. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school. • The progress made by their children. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. • The quality of the leadership and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extracurricular activities. • The information that they are given about how their children are getting on. • The amount of homework that children are given.

The findings of the inspection support the positive views of the parents. In addition, they find that homework promotes the pupils' progress well and that parents receive good information about how their children are getting on. The range of extracurricular activities is not as good as in most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children reach below average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage taking all the six areas of development into account. Children enter the school at below average levels of attainment. They make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional development and creative development and are on course to reach average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Progress is satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development although the children are on course to reach standards that are still below average by the end of the Foundation Stage. Overall, the quality of children's learning and their achievement are satisfactory, and for those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, they are good. In some aspects of English and mathematics the more able children are not provided with work which is hard enough for them to reach their full potential which slows down the progress that they make. No clear judgement was made about the standards reached by children aged under five by the school's last inspection.

2. In the end of Key Stage 1 tests in 2000 compared with all schools, standards in reading were well below average; in writing they were below average and, in mathematics, they were above average. Compared with similar schools, standards were average in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics. The assessments made by teachers in science in 2000 were average. The trend in standards in these tests and assessments has been variable but generally upward since 1997. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys.

3. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 2, the pupils reach above average standards in mathematics, numeracy, science, history and music and average standards in all other subjects, including literacy, except information and communication technology and writing where they are below average. Compared with the findings of the school's last inspection, standards are higher in mathematics, science, history, music and physical education and similar in all other subjects. These higher standards are directly related to the improvement in the quality of teaching compared with the findings of the school's last inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about design and technology at Key Stage 1. Standards in reading are higher than those in the 2000 test, for example, because of the school's successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils' achievement is good at Key Stage 1 because of the overall good quality of the teaching, although more able pupils do not reach high enough standards in all subjects.

4. In Year 2, in English, pupils are able to speak at appropriate lengths. Listening skills are generally good and better than the pupils' speaking abilities. The range of vocabulary used and grammatical construction are the weaker areas in pupils' speech. By the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils enjoy reading, and like to take their books home, which they do regularly, to practise their reading. They handle books confidently. Average and more able pupils in Year 2 have a growing awareness of the structure of a story, and most can write or recount a simple story or make a short description or report of an event. However, there is little or no use of complex sentence construction, even in the writing of the more able. In mathematics in Year 2, when doing mental calculations, pupils progress to adding ten as the first step for finding a solution to plus nine or plus eleven. Most pupils can use mental recall of the addition and subtraction facts to ten and write three digit numbers correctly. Pupils are developing an understanding of measurement and shape - they use centimetres to measure length, can name two-dimensional shapes and are using simple tables and block graphs to record results graphically. In science, in Year 2, the pupils identify and record living animals and plants, things that have never been alive and dead animals and plants. Experimental work has successfully been linked to a consideration of the effects of friction and gravity on a car which was tested on differing slopes and surfaces. This work has also enabled the pupils to consider some of the properties of the different surfaces that the car was tested on.

5. In history in Year 2, the pupils show a good understanding of some of the major events of seventeenth Century London and of most other aspects of the subject but their understanding of the

interpretation of history is underdeveloped. In physical education, in Year 2, most pupils perform dance sequences rhythmically in time with music but they are not sufficiently aware of why they need to warm up before undertaking exercise. In a Year 2 geography lesson, pupils were engaged in a brainstorming discussion about the characteristic features of the seaside as an environment. Following this activity, they completed an early form of selective note-taking to sort and select a few definitive features for three different environments which they had previously “brainstormed”. However, the geographic content of some lesson is not always clearly separated from, for example, design and technology which slows down progress in the acquisition of skills in the subject. In information and communication technology in Year 2, the pupils are confident in inserting a CD-ROM, using the mouse to start the program and in dragging, but their understanding of, for example, how to use simulations to explore situations is under developed. In a very good Year 2 music lesson pupils’ ideas helped to form the shape of the composition using the central idea of a rainstorm, and after practising with words and body percussion, the use of some instruments was introduced, thus forming a composition with different layers of sound. Pupils have made good use of information and communication technology in art and design in Year 2 but their skills in three dimensional work are underdeveloped.

6. In the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2000, compared with all schools, standards were average in English and science and below average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. The trend in standards is improving at faster rate than the national trend. In all three subjects, attainment at Level 5 and above is below average. This is most marked in mathematics because of improvements in the quality of teaching and the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.. Girls perform significantly less well than boys in all three subjects over three years although this was not evident during the inspection. The school exceeded its targets for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in English and mathematics in 2000 and has increased these targets suitably for 2001.

7. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, the pupils reach above average standards in music and average standards in all other subjects including literacy and numeracy, except in information and communication technology and writing where standards are below average. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards in design and technology. Compared with the findings of the school’s last inspection, standards are higher in music because of improvements in the quality of teaching and similar in all other subjects. Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 although more able pupils do not reach high enough standards in all subjects.

8. In Year 6, in English, speaking is confident and generally clear, and pupils are able to express their ideas fluently, make suggestions or ask for further explanations. There was little evidence of drama and planned opportunities for pupils to speak in formal contexts such as mini-speeches and mini-debates. This more structured aspect of speaking and listening is insufficiently developed. In Year 6, pupils of all ability groups are able to read with fluency and expression, but the less able sometimes have texts too hard for them. However, the school library has only recently been developed and they do not have appropriate library skills and are unable to use the classification system for finding non-fiction topics. They have also not yet acquired the skills of skimming and scanning for quick location of information, so altogether independent research skills are relatively undeveloped. In Year 6, pupils are able to write in a good range of forms, adapting their writing to show the beginnings of appropriate styles. However, even the more able in Year 6 do not have the skill, confidence or opportunities to tackle fully extended pieces of writing, with attention to sufficient detail and redrafting. In Year 6 in mathematics, pupils are beginning to compare different fractions and place them in order of their size. They have a sound understanding of number but find difficulty with multiplication of decimals and recognising equivalence between fractions, decimals and percentages other than at the simplest level. In work on shape, space and measures most can draw common two-dimensional shapes on grids and find their perimeter in centimetres but work on three-dimensional shape is limited. They can construct simple line graphs and higher attaining pupils use straight-line graphs to convert weight from metric to imperial measures. Pupils have insufficient time for independent work. In science, in Year 6, the pupils undertake suitable investigative work into other aspects of the subject, for example, the best conditions for plants to grow in and filtration. They have a sound knowledge of forces such as air resistance.

However, their investigative and recording work is too directed by the teacher and they do not sufficiently devise their own experiments or record their work freely often enough.

9. In Year 6, in history, the pupils used photographic evidence to draw conclusions about the 1970s but their independent research skills are not sufficiently developed. In Year 6, in physical education, the pupils showed good levels of co-ordination during exercises on mats and benches but their movements were not fluent and their evaluative skills were not sufficiently developed. In a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils transferred their knowledge and understanding of the water cycle to the context of rivers. Working in pairs, pupils were presented with a relevant task to perform quickly, that of finding 4 major world rivers, Ganges, Danube, Amazon and Thames, in their atlases, to see where they were, and what types of climate zones they were situated in. However, a good opportunity to extend pupils' geographical skills in applying their mathematical knowledge by using four- or six-figure co-ordinates was lost. In information and communication technology, in Year 6 average standards were evident in pupils' work on display. For example, word-processed posters for geography demonstrated an awareness of audience. Work had variety, interest (with banner headlines or shading), colour, pictures and suitable information about Austria. However, their standards in, for example, control technology and monitoring are below average. In a very good Year 6 music lesson, pupils added to a song learned in a previous lesson. Pupils were aware of the conventional notation representing variations in pitch, the bar lines and their bar contents the timing, and how phrases were musically constructed through the cadences they could hear. In art and design, the pupils show good skills of interpretation but their ability to select the appropriate medium for their work is weaker.

10. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress in their learning, against their capabilities and their previous learning. The individual education plans drawn up for many of these pupils show very clear and specific learning objectives. These targets are revised termly, and show steadily increasing learning and achievements. This is due to the good support and, for some, the special tuition they receive, as well as to the generally well co-ordinated teaching which they get in the classroom. Some pupils have made sufficient progress to come off the register or to be placed in categories needing less support, demonstrating the success of the school's strategies for special educational needs.

11. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their learning against their capabilities and their previous learning. Those at an early stage of the acquisition of English have made a good start in beginning to learn the language and are beginning to speak in and understand English. Others do well in their use of English as a learning medium, particularly by the time they reach the top of the school. Pupils with English as an additional language generally do well in the national end of key stage assessments in English at both key stages, showing similar, and sometimes better, ranges of results than native speakers of English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships with each other and adults are strengths of the school and make a very good contribution towards promoting their attainment and progress. This conclusion is similar to the findings of the previous inspection and reflects the widespread views of parents. Parents state that their children enjoy school.

13. Throughout the school the pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. This includes those of pupils with special educational needs. They show interest in what they are doing, as was seen particularly when Year 5 pupils sustained their concentration when creating a sequence of movements during a physical education lesson. They have confidence in their abilities, as shown in a Year 1 mathematics lesson when the pupils explained how they calculated their answers to add and subtract up to ten. Year 6 pupils were keen to do well and were eager to contribute their ideas in a discussion about rivers and canals in a geography lesson. Pupils settle quickly to group work in lessons and maintain their interest even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom.

14. Pupils behave very well in the classroom, at play and lunch times. They are open, well mannered, courteous and very welcoming to visitors. Pupils are polite to adults and willingly hold doors open for each other. They move around the school in an orderly way when supervised though some of the older ones

occasionally run if there is no adult present. In particular they take especial care when using the stairs and wait patiently for other classes when going into school at the end of breaks. Even when excited, they show self-discipline and Year 4 pupils took care to avoid others when in the swimming pool and showed no silly behaviour. There were three temporary exclusions of boys who showed extremely poor behaviour in the last school year. However, aggression is rare and the school has appropriate procedures to deal with any that may take place. Those excluded, and those affected by their behaviour, are well supported by the school.

15. Relationships between pupils and with adults are also very good and contribute to the quality of work in lessons. Pupils get on well with each other when playing games at break and lunch times. The good relations with adults mean that even the youngest pupils in the Reception class feel safe and secure. Pupils can hold sensible conversations with their classmates, as seen when Year 3 pupils were asked to discuss colour and texture with a partner during an art lesson. Year 5 pupils made very thoughtful comments during group work in geography discussing whether the high street should be closed to traffic. Boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together very well in the classroom and when playing at break and lunch times.

16. The pupils' personal development is also very good. They use their initiative and, for example, move around the classroom to find materials they may need. The pupils in the Reception year show maturity: they work purposefully, share equipment and are learning independence. Year 2 respected the contributions of their classmates when discussing the characteristics of different environments during a geography lesson. Since the last inspection, the school has increased the occasions to take on responsibility. Pupils respond well to various tasks both within the classroom and outside. The older pupils organise the tuck shop each day and help to supervise the younger. Next term, all classes will be taking part in the school council. The pupils also benefit from collecting for charities during the year.

17. Children in the Reception year feel safe and secure, which enables their confidence to develop. Their attitudes to school are very good. They are eager to learn, interested in new information, enjoy stories and rhymes, and like to explore. Their behaviour is very good for their age; they sit quietly, are able to take turns, like to help one another, and listen attentively. The teacher encourages independence appropriate to this young age well, and opportunities are built into lessons and activities. Relationships between children and between adults and children in the Reception year are very good.

18. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to school, and to their work. Most are very interested in the activities and experiences presented to them, and they try hard for their capabilities. Their behaviour is generally good, although there is a very small minority with attention or behavioural difficulties. They usually show good respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others.

19. Attendance is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, it has steadily improved to be over 95 per cent last year and makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved by the pupils. However, this year it has fallen to around 94 per cent. Absences are usually due to the inevitable childhood illnesses, although a number of parents insist on taking their children on holiday in term time. In line with the guidance from the Local Education Authority, the school has decided that holiday absences will not usually be approved. Nevertheless, parents still insist on taking their children away in term time and this has, understandably, resulted in the level of unauthorised absence this year being higher than what is expected generally. Pupils are generally keen to come to school and punctuality is good. Only a few pupils arrive late and then normally only by a few minutes. Registration takes place commendably promptly at the start of the day, but in the afternoon, it sometimes does not take place until an hour or more after the start of lessons. Although this is acceptable as far as the regulations are concerned, it does mean that no record is available if pupils need to be evacuated in an emergency.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This represents a significant improvement compared with the findings of the school's previous inspection which concluded that there were "major shortcomings in the quality of teaching". During that inspection, 38.5 per cent of the teaching was judged to be less than satisfactory, 61.5 per cent satisfactory or better and 6.25 percent very good or better. During

this inspection, 16 per cent of the teaching was very good or better, 94 per cent was satisfactory or better and six per cent (three lessons) was unsatisfactory or worse. Teacher's expectations are higher than they were at the time of the school's last inspection.

21. Throughout the school, the most important strengths of the teaching are the way in which the pupils are managed and controlled and the way support staff are used to assist the pupils' learning. The most significant weaknesses in the teaching are the way in which teachers use assessment information to plan the pupils' work and the quality of the teachers' lesson planning. The major strengths in the pupils' learning are the interest and application which they show towards their work and the effort which they put into completing it well. The school meets the needs of most pupils satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, most pupils' needs are well met. Throughout the school the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well met. The needs of those who are gifted or talented and more able pupils are not fully met which was a weakness also identified by the school's last inspection. Training needs exist for some staff in information and communication technology, design and technology, art and physical education which is an improvement on the weaknesses in teacher's subject knowledge identified by the school's last inspection.

22. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. No judgement was made about the teaching of children aged under five by the school's last inspection. Teaching and learning are good in knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional development and creative development and satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development. During the inspection, seven observations of teaching were made. One was very good, two were good and four were satisfactory. Relationships and the management of the pupils are good. The teachers show sensitivity to both the personal and academic needs of these young children. The teachers' knowledge of the subjects that they teach is generally good, particularly so in the teaching of phonics, and teaching methods are effective. Expectations of pupils are generally appropriate. However, the lack of appropriate assessment procedures leads to some lack of accuracy in matching work to the needs of the children, particularly for the more able in some aspects of mathematics and writing. Otherwise planning is sound, and caters for other ability groups satisfactorily. Other aspects of assessment also are satisfactory. The management of pupils is good, and is sometimes very good, and the deployment of the teacher assistant and other helpers is also good. The teacher assistant makes a valuable contribution to the children's learning and their progress.

23. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. During the inspection, 15 observations of teaching were made. Two were very good, eight were good and five were satisfactory. These figures represent a major improvement compared with the findings of the last inspection when almost half of the lessons seen at Key Stage 1 were unsatisfactory or worse. At this key stage, the quality of teaching and learning is good in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, science, music and history and satisfactory in all other subjects. No judgement was made by this inspection of the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology at Key Stage 1.

24. A Year 2 numeracy lesson about rounding numbers to the nearest ten exemplified the strengths of the teaching at Key Stage 1 and the effective way in which the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented throughout the school. The lesson was very well organised and the pupils were eager to be involved. The teacher kept the pace of the lesson moving with an easy, friendly manner and ample praise. The teacher maintained very good control. For example, when some pupils laughed at another's mistake, the error was carefully explained and a fresh example was provided to consolidate the learning. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language were well supported. Resources were well used to enhance the pupils' learning. The work was challenging and pupils were required to think things out for themselves, for example, when working on the "rule" for rounding up numbers ending in five. The teacher moved around the class well, probed their understanding and helped those who were having difficulty. At the end of the lesson, a number of examples were worked out with the pupils so that the teacher could assess their level of understanding. The pupils made good progress in this lesson.

25. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is some variation in the quality of teaching and learning between the year groups in the key stage. Teaching and learning are consistently good in Years 4 and 5 and they are satisfactory in the other year groups. This is a considerable improvement on the findings of the last inspection when 25 per cent of the lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. In this inspection, 35 lessons were observed at Key Stage 2. One was excellent, five were very good, 12 were good, 14 were satisfactory, two were unsatisfactory and one was poor. This means that only 9 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory compared with 25 per cent in 1997. At this key stage, the quality of teaching and learning is very good in music and satisfactory in all other subjects, including literacy and numeracy, where judgements are made. There was insufficient evidence to make firm judgements in design and technology.

26. A satisfactory Year 3 literacy lesson about creating an atmosphere at the start of a piece of writing exemplified the quality of the teaching at this key stage. It also showed the effective way in which the National Literacy Strategy is implemented throughout the school. The pupils were clearly well used to the routines of the class and the lesson began promptly with the teacher asking skilful questions about “oy” words which built on previous work. The pupils were very receptive and readily offered words such as “oyster” and “loyal”. They suggested the use of dictionaries to help them in writing sentences and used them with ease. The teacher did not make clear his expectations for the quality of the pupils’ work, their productivity or the nature of their response. However, they behaved well and maintained good levels of concentration. The teacher made good use of timed targets to keep the pace of the lesson moving. Praise and supportive comments were well used to create a good learning atmosphere but there was insufficient purposeful intervention in group work. The class discussion about creating an atmosphere was over directed by the teacher although the pupils were keen to offer suggestions: “Make it hang-glide,” one suggested, meaning a cliff-hanger. The pupils made satisfactory progress as a result of the teacher’s good management skills, sound knowledge of the subject and the way in which their contributions were valued. However, the challenge for more able pupils was not sufficient to maximise their progress.

27. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are generally good which is an improvement on the findings of the school’s last inspection. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and the specialist teacher assistants have a good understanding of the needs of these pupils. Class teachers generally provide work at suitable levels for pupils with special educational needs. There is good liaison between class teachers and the specialist staff, and support work is well integrated within the mainstream classroom work wherever possible. Sometimes, there is a need for individual or small group special tuition, and this is either done by the special educational needs co-ordinator, or by the specialist teacher assistants. Progress is carefully monitored, and special assessments and tests are available if required, as are the services of the local educational psychologist and other relevant external agencies. Specialist teacher assistants for special educational needs meet with class teachers, and also from time to time with the co-ordinator, to plan work for the pupils. They also complete feedback sheets about pupils’ progress on a daily basis which are seen by the teachers and used for further planning.

28. Teaching and learning for pupils with English as an additional language are good. This represents an improvement on the findings of the school’s last inspection. Class teachers make generally good provision for these pupils, and are aware of their needs, responding to them with sensitivity and care. A specialist part-time teacher for English as an additional language is employed for four half-day sessions a week. She gives specialist tuition and support to the three pupils at the very early stage of acquisition, and some in-class support to those still at other early stages. Specific plans for their learning sequences are well drawn-up, and targets and assessments are carried out on a daily basis, with periodic reviews of their learning over the half term. Targets are very clear and specific and assessment is thorough. There are also three teacher assistants with special responsibility for supporting and tutoring pupils with English as an additional language, who together provide in-class support and tutoring across all year groups. The main emphasis for all pupils is on in-class support, and individual or group tutorials are only for specific work demanding careful listening, such as early phonics or very basic stages of vocabulary acquisition. The work is well structured, and the teacher assistants contribute to the planning of work, and the assessment of learning of pupils, on an ongoing daily and weekly basis. Specialist advice is available to class teachers supporting pupils with English as an

additional language. Teacher assistants are well trained, and all staff have received specific in-service training on the support of pupils with English as an additional language.

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

29. The school's curriculum, including the Foundation Stage, is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2. There are weaknesses in elements of the curriculum, such as personal, social and health education and the range of extracurricular activities currently available. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, and most make good progress, but more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by all teachers. However, in music, a talented specialist teacher challenges pupils very effectively by using and developing particular features in lessons to move them on towards the next level. Class teachers observe how pupils respond and make progress and, from this, are able to make valuable contributions during group work. Homework is used appropriately to enhance learning. Key issues from the last inspection: to review the time allocated to teaching different subjects, for a better balance, and to ensure that schemes of work were in place to improve progress from year to year have been met. The school has been particularly successful in music, where standards are now above average and in information and communication technology, where significant improvement has taken place. In this subject, the staff's expertise is improving and the resources have been extended to include a new computer suite.

30. Despite the fact that the curriculum has improved since the last inspection, some aspects have not been fully addressed. Art does not have a policy and the ones for design and technology and geography are out of date. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects, except personal and social education, which lacks a coherent, written programme. Schemes published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority have been implemented although some, such as art and design and technology, are quite recent and have yet to influence standards. Although subjects now have an appropriate allocation of time the current approach to 'blocked units' has weaknesses which the school plans to address from the start of the next school year. This approach hinders subject coordinators, as they cannot carry out their monitoring role in the most effective way because the evaluation of pupils' standards and the quality of teaching cannot be compared easily across the school. In addition, compliance with the correct allocation of time to subjects cannot be assured, as there are occasions when it is unclear which subject is the focus of a lesson. In turn, this also affects the depth in which some subjects can be studied, for example, geography and design and technology. There is also a weak link in the planning and assessment cycle. The school does not have a system for short term planning for the non-core subjects and teachers work directly from the published schemes to prepare brief half-termly plans. Some teachers, however, do not have sufficient experience or adequate subject expertise to formulate their lesson plans in this way. By following the prescribed suggestions in a unit, they do not always take account of earlier work on which to build or make sufficient reference to a coherent, developmental approach to the acquisition of specific skills.

31. English and mathematics are suitably planned on a weekly planning sheet using the National Literacy and National Numeracy frameworks for guidance. The school has implemented the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy well and teachers follow the guidance for three parts to each lesson. In Key Stage 2, although pupils receive the correct amount of time for mathematics, during the inspection, one class did not have a numeracy lesson each day and, in another class, all lessons took place at a time of day which is not in the best interests of pupils' learning.

32. The curriculum has appropriate opportunities to support and extend it. Homework is provided on a regular basis and there are mathematics booster classes for Years 5 and 6 twice weekly after school. Visiting specialists enhance provision, for example, by supporting pupils with English as an additional language and leading the music lessons in school. In the summer term, there is a five-day residential visit to Wales for pupils in Year 6. Day trips also take place, for example, to Buckingham Palace, Westminster Cathedral and Thorpe Park. There is a lunchtime flute class and some after school activities such as a pottery club and a sports club but the range of extracurricular activities is limited. There are also lunchtime recorder lessons for all Key Stage 2 classes. Pupils receive good equality of opportunity. The only significant weaknesses in

equality of opportunity is that more able pupils do not always make the maximum progress of which they are capable.

33. The quality and range of all the opportunities for learning for children in the Reception year are sound generally. They are good in the area of personal and social development, reading, creative work and knowledge and understanding of the world. Mathematics and literacy are taught thoroughly, and the good personal and social development takes place in many ways as well as being specifically planned. The Foundation Stage curriculum follows the locally produced scheme of work for this stage in local schools, and work is appropriately planned in the six designated areas of learning and development. The National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy frameworks are appropriately represented in the literacy and mathematics teaching. These are satisfactorily implemented and adapted. Good attention has been paid to the value of first hand experience and the development of accompanying vocabulary in increasing children's understanding of the world around them, and creative and expressive areas of the curriculum are well taught. In physical development, practice and control in larger movements are well catered for in formal physical education lessons, but there is a lack of free use of wheeled toys and suitable agility apparatus on a voluntary "in and out" play basis, since the outdoor area is not completely separate from other outdoor areas, has no direct access, and, therefore, requires planned supervision as well as more equipment.

34. In the Reception year, provision for moral, social and cultural development is generally good. Provision for spiritual development is good, and is stimulated by story, prayer, poetry, music, and by attending some assemblies. Moral development is given a high profile, along with social development, and day-to-day issues form an important part of this provision at this age. Opportunities for further developing social abilities include the provision for role-play, group work, and learning to take turns. Both moral and social development are well supported. Stories, music and role-play opportunities contribute also to the sound cultural development of pupils.

35. Pupils with special educational needs follow the National Curriculum in the same way as all other pupils in the school. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs are good. In particular, the support for teaching in English is carefully planned, and makes use of ongoing individual assessment to plan the next steps in learning. Many of the pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans. These plans are reviewed termly, and targets are changed as progress takes place. Pupils' individual targets are very specific and form clear learning objectives which guide the teaching and learning process well. This is an important improvement compared with the findings of the school's last inspection which stated that there were major weaknesses in the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs.

36. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils with English as an additional language are good. They follow the National Curriculum, but with the pace adapted as necessary for individual needs, together with specialist support and input which is aimed at accelerating their acquisition of English. This mostly allows them to take a full part in all lessons. Specialist support for pupils with English as an additional language is thorough and careful.

37. Personal development is an area of importance in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, and the school makes every effort to promote and maintain good relationships and positive attitudes. Where pupils' special educational needs are problems of attention or behaviour, rather than being essentially learning needs, increased attention is given to the monitoring of these aspects of personal development and their objectives are couched in these terms. Support is caring and sensitive, and good attention is paid to establishing and building self-esteem and social skills, with considerable success.

38. The personal development of pupils with English as an additional language is monitored, and every effort is made to instil confidence and to provide appropriate support. The cultural backgrounds of pupils with English as an additional language are celebrated and receive both interest and a sense of respect. Ethnic origins and different mother tongues are signalled with pride in a "round the world" display in the school hall, and other projects, topics, and displays bear witness to this enjoyment of diversity. A good example is a fascinating art display in a main corridor, exploring a range of skin colours, with a mirror inviting passers-by to match their own face to one of the paint-mixed shades. Drama groups and a visiting poet from

relevant cultures have recently been to the school to create workshops with pupils, enhancing the multi-ethnic context of the school. In addition, the school is starting to build a selection of books, not only about different cultures, but of books either in mother tongue languages, or in dual languages, so that pupils may use these to read in their own language as well as in English.

39. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health development is unsatisfactory. Various aspects are taught through the main subjects of the curriculum. For example, healthy eating and safety awareness feature in the teaching of subjects such as science, physical education and design and technology. Pupils have a road safety week during the year and visitors such as the police and fire brigade covers some aspects of citizenship and safety. Assemblies include discussion on friendships and attitudes and the teachers timetable one lesson during the week. Nevertheless, the school has not produced a detailed programme of the various areas that need to be covered. In addition, there is no provision for the teaching of drugs awareness. Despite being a key issue at the time of the previous inspection, there is no clear statement concerning sex education. The prospectus states that it is not taught although the governors intend that it will be for Year 6 pupils.

40. The limited links with the wider community provide few opportunities to contribute to pupils' learning. Connections with the adjacent church result in the pupils attending masses during the year and the priest leads assemblies each term. The pupils benefit from many visits to places of interest in London and beyond such as art galleries and museums. Collections for charity increase pupils' awareness of the needs of people in society. However, the lack of sporting activities, for example, reduce the occasions when pupils are able to meet pupils from other schools. There are no links with businesses. Links with other educational institutions are also very limited. The wide area from which the school draws its pupils creates difficulties in developing connections with playgroups, mother and toddler groups, nurseries or secondary schools. The lack of contacts with other primary schools reduces opportunities for staff to discuss curricular matters and for pupils to share festivals and other events.

41. The school's provision for pupils' moral and cultural development is very good and it makes good provision for their spiritual and social development. This is a strength of the school and is an improvement on the findings at the time of the previous inspection.

42. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness are good. They are underpinned by the school's Catholic ethos and heritage. The reverent atmosphere in school assemblies helps pupils to develop an understanding of their faith. In the classroom, pupils in a Year 2 history lesson showed their wonder when they realised the extent of the Great Fire of London. They gain insights into the values of others when they explore the life and work of famous people such as Martin Luther King or Picasso. Nevertheless, the school does not always plan opportunities within lessons to enable pupils to appreciate fully the exciting nature of the world around them or to reflect upon their own feelings.

43. The school's approach to pupils' moral development is very good. The school stands for clear values and there are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct to which the pupils respond. These standards lead to the pupils having a good awareness of right from wrong. The pupils have completed a questionnaire to involve them in deciding on codes of behaviour for the classroom. Pupils are self disciplined and this makes for an orderly school. The staff are good role models and the overall positive approach of the school to encouraging pupils' moral development is evident in the way that all adults deal with pupils. The teachers are consistent in their approach and, on the rare occasions when it is necessary, remind pupils not to call out or that they must show they are listening to instructions.

44. The provision for encouraging the social development of the pupils is good. The school values its members and encourages pupils to integrate well both at work and at play. One assembly during the inspection highlighted the problems with people being stereotyped. In the classroom, there are many opportunities to work together in pairs or groups. The teachers use physical education lessons, in particular, to develop co-operation and teamwork. Pupils are encouraged, and are willing, to undertake various tasks appropriate for their age such as getting equipment and tidying up at the end of the session. Older pupils

have duties around the school such as the delivery and collection of registers, preparing the hall for assembly and helping younger pupils at lunchtime.

45. The provision for cultural development is very good. Pupils are starting to appreciate their own cultural background from work in the classroom such as studying a Jamaican painter in art, looking at life in Nigeria and St Lucia. Visitors include a West Indian poet. One world week resulted in pupils bringing in food from their own cultures and all sharing it. Western culture is reinforced through the use of nursery rhymes, the study of the Greeks and Tudors and visits to art galleries and museums and the theatre. Painting and music help the development of aesthetic awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. Staff show appropriate concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage their development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory.

47. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. The Headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and the school follows local procedures. The staff generally have received guidance on how to deal with any situations that may arise and know who to report to in the school if necessary. The provision for first aid is good with two fully qualified staff, others having emergency training, records kept of any treatment and letters home to parents as appropriate. Following the key issue from the previous inspection, a health and safety policy is now in place. The premises officer checks the site both in his day-to-day work and during a more formal tour of the building. Records are kept of any problems identified by other members of staff. The governors are actively involved in touring the school to identify any potential hazards. Outside contractors are used to check regularly the fire extinguishers, electrical items and physical education equipment. The teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology. Nevertheless the school has not carried out a full health and safety risk assessment which is a statutory requirement.

48. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development make a satisfactory contribution to raising pupils' achievement. Nevertheless the arrangements for using the assessment information to guide the planning of the curriculum are unsatisfactory. The school now has good procedures for assessment and an informative assessment policy. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when it was a key issue. Informal tests occur regularly, for example, in mathematics on a half-termly basis, and optional standardised tests, in English and mathematics (in addition to the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests) take place in the summer term for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. There are plans in place to extend testing to Year 1 pupils too. Pupils have individual targets for development, which are set in the autumn term and discussed with parents. These are reviewed in the spring term and their overall progress is reported in the end-of-year annual report. This information, along with their results from tests and assessments made by teachers in the core subjects, is kept on individual record sheets together with notes of particular strengths or concerns that teachers have about each pupil. Some very good and useful analysis of data has taken place and the assessment co-ordinator provides each teacher with valuable information about their class, such as their overall ability, particular support that is required for groups of pupils and sometimes specific details about the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils.

49. The school is less successful in the accurate and consistent use of assessment information to guide curricular planning and this aspect, overall, is unsatisfactory. This was noted in the last inspection report. The good quality procedures and global overviews of each year group are in place but are not consistently followed through to the curricular planning although there are pockets of good quality practice. Weaknesses include limitations in the curricular planning, previously mentioned, for non-core subjects and the lack of a consistent, simple approach to recording pupils' progress. This is particularly so with the non-core subjects, but also, for example, in mathematics. Although most pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress in numeracy lessons, the needs of more able pupils are not properly met because on-going assessment information is insufficiently used to provide work of a suitable challenge for them.

50. The monitoring of progress of pupils' personal development is less structured but the teachers and other staff have a good understanding of individual pupils. The pupils' strengths and weaknesses are assessed each term and reviewed by the teachers and parents at the termly meetings to discuss the children's progress. Very good pastoral support is provided by the well-trained home-school liaison officer who not only supports some pupils in school but also provides guidance and assistance to families when necessary. The pupils' personal qualities are enhanced by the various tasks they have around the school. The school encourages pupils to recognise the value of good work with the award of certificates and stickers.

51. Children in the Reception year feel safe and secure and relationships between adults and children are good. Pastoral care of children is good. Supportive and caring skills are employed as necessary, while at the same time encouraging independence. The programme for teaching and learning is adequately planned to meet the varying needs of young children. Individual targets are set for pupils, and these are reviewed half-termly and discussed with parents on a termly basis. Assessment and monitoring of progress follows the formats used for the rest of the school and focuses mainly on English and mathematics. Assessment does not follow the pattern of the nationally recommended steps towards the Early Learning Goals as the school is in the early stages of implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum. Induction procedures are appropriate and ease the children's settling in at the start of their schooling. Both the educational and personal support provided in the Reception year are sensitive, caring and informed.

52. The monitoring of academic performance and of aspects of personal development for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is careful and thorough, and is used to plan the next steps of learning for each pupil. The procedures used for assessing the attainment and progress of these pupils are good, and are varied according to need. Individual education plans are appropriately specific, with regularly updated targets.

53. The work and progress of pupils with English as an additional language are carefully monitored, including their levels of fluency in English as these change and develop. Academic progress is individually tracked, and results are carefully analysed by ethnic groups as well as by gender. Their personal development is also closely watched, and emphasis is placed on developing confidence and providing support. Teaching and support staff take great care of these pupils. In particular, they ensure that those pupils at the early stages of the acquisition of English are helped to make their needs known and to understand what is going on around them. They make sure that these pupils are not isolated but can make friends and can feel comfortable and secure. While all staff contribute to this, the support provided by specialist staff in the classroom is particularly valuable from the personal point of view, enabling trusting bonds to be forged between adult and child.

54. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. Pupils have behaviour books which outline what is expected of them. A questionnaire has been completed by the pupils to involve them in deciding what the class rules should be. These are reinforced in assembly and in the classroom. During the inspection, all teachers adopted a consistent approach in reminding pupils, when necessary, of how to behave. Good behaviour is rewarded with positive comments by the staff. Any persistent unsatisfactory behaviour leads to the school developing a behaviour management profile in conjunction with parents and outside agencies if appropriate. Any instances of bullying or aggression are rare and the school takes appropriate action if any occurs. This can include support from the home-school liaison officer for groups of pupils.

55. Overall, the procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are good. The registers are monitored regularly by the administrative staff who telephone home or send letters to parents for any unexplained absences. The home-school liaison officer is involved to support any families where there is a particular concern and referrals are made to the education welfare service or the social services department if necessary. This year, following guidance from the Local Education Authority, the school does not normally authorise holiday absences. Nevertheless, some parents still do not appreciate the need to avoid taking their children out of school in term time. The keenness of the pupils to come to school and the good relationships with parents result in little lateness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are generally pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports all of their positive comments. Parents say that the school is well led and the teaching is good. Their children like coming to school and make progress from the level of support they receive. The school expects them to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions. These reactions are similar to the comments made at the time of the previous inspection. Some doubts were expressed about the amount of homework but the inspectors concluded that the homework set is appropriate, both during the school term and over holidays. A few parents also feel they are not well informed about the progress of their children though the great majority of them are satisfied with the amount of information provided. The inspectors conclude that the school provides very good opportunities for parents to meet teachers. Some parents are concerned about the range of activities outside lessons and the inspection team agrees that the provision of clubs and activities at lunchtime, and at other times, is less than that provided by most schools of this size.

57. The school has established good links with the parents and these contacts are effective. The headteacher sends newsletters home regularly outlining the various activities that the pupils are involved in as well providing general administrative information. Other letters refer to more specific matters. At the beginning of each school year, teachers hold class meetings with copies of the written information sent home to those parents who cannot attend. A series of workshops are held for parents of children in the Reception class. These meetings enable all parents throughout the school to understand what their children will be taught and how they can help at home. The prospectus and Annual Report to parents are attractively produced but omit a few of the details required by law. The end of the school day provides a very good opportunity for parents to see the teachers who are in the playground when parents are collecting their children. The inspectors saw several conversations taking place and it is very apparent that parents feel very welcome to come into the school. In addition, all teachers formally meet parents every term to discuss the progress of the pupils and to review targets for improvement. The annual report on progress is provided in the summer term. Some examples were seen of excellent summaries of what the pupils know and can do for all subjects. However, for some classes, reports are brief and concentrate only on the work covered or attitudes of the pupils. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the setting and review of their individual education plans.

58. Parents' involvement with the school makes a good contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. Pupils are happy in school and work hard and are keen to learn. These attitudes reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect the school and education process. The whole class meetings at the beginning of each year are well attended and usually all parents come to the termly meetings with the teachers to discuss their children's progress. The teachers encourage parents to help in the school and a few do come in regularly. More are able to help on trips out. The Friends' Association is not currently active, although the parent governors are planning to rebuild it. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning, for example, through the support they give them with their homework.

59. When children are ready to start school, parents receive invitations to visit with their children, and while the parents meet the headteacher, the parish priest and the school's home-school liaison officer, children enjoy activities in the classroom with their teacher. Links with pre-school play-groups are not very strong, owing to the diversity of these from which children come. Most have had pre-school experience, however, but about a fifth of the children have not. Children with autumn birthdays start in September, and those born in spring and summer start in January. A number of parents help in school. The baseline assessments made soon after entry are discussed individually with parents, and targets generated from these, and from the teacher's experience of the children, are also discussed. The teacher meets parents each term to discuss new targets for learning, on an individual basis.

60. The school makes good links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, and is in touch with them at, or before, identification of problems and onwards. Where pupils have specific individual education plans, parents are aware of the objectives provided in these plans, and they are able to attend

annual reviews and to obtain information about them. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the class teachers are available to parents by appointment if they require an update or some discussion about any anxieties, but staff meet parents each term to discuss progress.

61. The school has sound links with the parents of pupils with English as an additional language. The school is able to find interpreters if they are needed for informing parents about their children's progress, for instance at consultation evenings, through the service provided by the local education authority. Currently no interpretation is needed, and there has not been a need for school documentation in first languages.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The headteacher gives the school very good leadership. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the school's last inspection which judged that there were "major shortcomings in some aspects of her leadership". The major weakness cited was "that she has yet to set a clear educational direction for the school" and improving leadership was a key issue for action. This has been very well addressed and the findings of the present inspection are that the school has a very clear sense of direction. The headteacher, who is well supported by the staff, particularly the deputy headteacher, has established a strong team spirit that ensures that its aims are well implemented and that its ethos fully reflects its Catholic nature. There is a strong and effective commitment to improvement and to developing all aspects of the education provided for the pupils which gives the school a very good capacity to continue to improve.

63. The effectiveness of the leadership of the school is shown in the good improvement it has made since it was last inspected in 1997. For example, in 1997, there were "major shortcomings in the quality of teaching" and 38.5 per cent of the teaching was judged to be less than satisfactory. During this inspection, 16 per cent of the teaching was very good or better, 94 per cent was satisfactory or better and 6 per cent (three lessons) were unsatisfactory or worse. The improvement in teaching has led to standards in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests rising at a faster rate than the national trend in the tests for 11 year olds. Additionally, at the time of the previous inspection, support for pupils with English as an additional language was not appropriately targeted. The school has made good improvement in this area of its work, and the service provided for pupils with English as an additional language is well focused and well organised. The school has also improved well in its attention to the celebration of different cultures, drawing attention to their richness and diversity. Since the school's last inspection, there has also been a great improvement in the quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and all of the key issues for action resulting from that inspection have been addressed in at least a satisfactory manner.

64. However, although management is satisfactory, there are still weaknesses in the way the school is managed. Although the headteacher and the deputy headteacher discuss the running of the school regularly, there is no established senior management team. The roles of co-ordinators are not evenly distributed and some members of staff carry a very heavy load. The effectiveness of co-ordinators is variable. Some roles are carried out well, but in some cases because of their workload, and, in others, because they are inexperienced in the role, co-ordinators are not fully effective. There is no co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage. The monitoring of teaching and learning does not sufficiently focus on the standards attained by the pupils or the way in which assessment information is used to plan their work. This results, too often, in pupils, particularly the more able, being given work which does not maximise their progress. The school does not have a policy for the identification and development of gifted and talented pupils. These are the only significant weaknesses in the school's good provision for equality of opportunity. The school development plan is an all embracing plan which contains all of the expected elements. Its weaknesses are that its developments are not prioritised, its action plans are too general and the criteria to judge how successfully priorities are implemented are not sharp enough. It does not focus on how to raise standards although this is, to some extent, implicit. The plan is virtually complete and there is no evidence that it has been extended since it was put in place in 1998. It is supported by useful class development plans which focus on organisation and resources issues but which lack costings, timings, success criteria etc. These factors limit the usefulness of development planning as a management tool.

65. The governors carry out their duties in a satisfactory manner. They work closely with the school, use their individual skills to help it, are very committed to its continued development and support the

headteacher fully. The governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They gain this understanding, for example, from reports from the headteacher, meetings of the governing body and their committee structure. The governors have been particularly concerned to achieve improvements to the environment of the school and the morale of the staff since the last inspection. They make frequent informal visits to the school and some governors have responsibility for areas of the curriculum such as literacy and special educational needs. However, the governors do not make regular structured formal visits, for example, related to aspects of the school development plan.

66. Resources are well used in this school. The school's performance is carefully monitored. Assessment data are analysed very carefully, including by gender and ethnicity, to set targets for pupils and teaching and learning are monitored using a number of suitable strategies. The pupils benefit well from the way money is spent. They enter it at below average standards and leave it at average standards thanks to the way resources are deployed to support them. Additional funds, for example, from the Excellence in Cities initiative is well used, for example, to support pupils who have been excluded and those who are affected by their behaviour. Financial control is good and spending is suitably linked to the school development plan. However, spending and development planning are not forecast far enough ahead. The governors are keen to ensure that they get good value for the money which is spent. The school has a clear awareness of the need to judge cost effectiveness, for example, in relation to the money recently spent on developing information and communication technology. However, weaknesses in the criteria used to judge the success of the implementation of the priorities identified in the school development plan mean that this is not sufficiently effective or formalised. At about nine per cent, the school's financial reserves are above recommended levels and there is no clear plan for the use of these reserves.

67. The provision for special educational needs is well organised by the co-ordinator, who has very good knowledge of special educational needs, and is efficient in managing the support. There are three specialist teacher assistants who are well experienced and well qualified, and who mainly support those pupils with the greatest need. The total number of hours worked by these assistants together is 91 per week. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who has four half-day sessions a week for her co-ordination and special educational needs tutoring duties, supervises the work of these assistants. There is good use of specialist agencies, when required. Although documentation for pupils' individual education plans and their records of assessment are good, the policy for special educational needs is out-of-date. However, the school is aware of this and it is scheduled for attention in the near future. The funding allocated for the provision for pupils with special educational needs is well used to provide good levels of support.

68. The support for pupils with English as an additional language is well managed by both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. There is a specialist teacher for four half-day sessions a week, who gives specific input to those pupils at early stages of the acquisition of English, and there are four specialist teaching assistants who support and tutor the pupils with English as an additional language across the school in all year groups. All the teacher assistants are very well trained and qualified. All teaching staff and assistant staff have attended recent in-service training about the teaching and support of pupils with English as an additional language. There is a senior teacher assistant who manages the team of teacher assistants. There is an action plan for the development of the support for pupils with English as an additional language. Specific funding is provided for the school in respect of these pupils and this is well used. A part-time specialist teacher, the four specialist teacher assistants, including the senior teacher assistant, and some expenditure on special resources of books and teaching equipment are provided by these funds.

69. There is a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. All staff have suitable job descriptions and an appropriate system for the appraisal of teachers is in place. Staff are deployed appropriately and the match of staff to co-ordinating roles maximises their experience and expertise although some have a heavy workload and are inexperienced. The teaching assistants are very well qualified. The provision of technical support for the computer work enhances the teaching of information and communication technology. Since the last inspection, the school has ensured that it has good procedures for the recruitment and retention of teaching staff. In particular, staff more recently appointed have received appropriate support with good induction arrangements. Staff development is linked to the school development plan but also takes account of the individuals' needs.

Training for the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy has been successful in providing a structured and effective programme of learning which has a positive impact on both the quality of teaching and learning. However, training needs for some staff exist in design and technology, information and communication technology, art and physical education.

70. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory and is appropriate for the implementation of the curriculum and the learning of the pupils. The classrooms have sufficient space and have attractive displays of pupils' work and information. The playgrounds are well used during play and lunch times and for outdoor games. The space is limited and the school lacks easy access to a field but the proposed expansion of the site is intended to ease these problems. Pupils and staff make efficient and effective use of the facilities available and there is very good support from the premises manager in ensuring a clean and well-maintained environment. Nevertheless, there are some limitations. The hall is in a separate building and is used for assemblies, physical education and lunches. This is inconvenient in cold or wet weather and movement to and from the main building reduces teaching time. In addition, pupils have to use the road and, although adults and pupils take considerable care, this can be potentially hazardous especially at the beginning and end of the day when parents are manoeuvring their cars. Other weaknesses are the lack of a medical room in the main building, a library that is too small and no dedicated outside play area for children aged under five. These problems are closely related to limitations in the school's accommodation.

71. The provision of resources is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Those for information and communication technology are good and good use is made of educational visits. Whilst the overall provision for English is satisfactory, the number of books in the library is poor, especially for a school the size of Guardian Angels. This weakness prevents pupils from using the library and limits their ability to acquire library and research skills. The school plans to increase the number of books available. For music, the school has insufficient tuned percussion instruments and only a few instruments from different cultures although resources have been increased and there is a clear plan to continue this process. There are too few wheeled toys and insufficient climbing apparatus for children in the Foundation Stage. There are some shortages of resources in art and the school plans to develop its stock of artefacts in history.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to continue to raise standards and to improve the quality of education offered to the pupils the headteacher, governors and staff should:

(1) ***Ensure that pupils, particularly those of high ability and in writing, reach their full potential by:**

- using the school's assessment information in English, mathematics and science effectively to provide pupils with work which is challenging but attainable;
- being certain that schemes of work in all subjects are implemented in a way which fully promotes the pupils' progress;
- improving the effectiveness of lesson planning;
- making sure that all subjects receive an appropriate amount of teaching time;
- ensuring that class timetables are constructed in a way which promotes effective use of the time available;
- providing further training in information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education and art;
- developing assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage and in subjects where they do not already exist.

(Paragraphs 1, 3, 7, 21,26, 29, 30, 31, 49, 51, 64, 69, 74, 88, 89, 90, 94, 95, 96, 99, 102, 103, 106,107, 110, 112, 113, 116, 117, 119, 121, 123, 124, 128, 129, 142)

(2) **Improve the quality of management through:**

- establishing an effective and appropriate senior management team;
- re-examining the distribution of curricular responsibilities and the way in which these are carried out;
- improving the way in which the school development plan supports the management of the school;
- ensuring that the monitoring of teaching and learning concentrates on the standards reached by pupils and how successfully assessment information is used to plan their work;
- instituting a formal programme of regular focused visits by governors.

(Paragraphs 64, 65, 66)

(3) ***Raise standards in information and communication technology through continuing to implement the strategies already identified by the school.**

(Paragraphs 3, 5, 7, 130-133)

(4) ***Improve curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage by providing easier access to play equipment especially wheeled toys and agility apparatus.**

(Paragraphs 1, 33, 70, 71, 64, 75, 85)

*Already identified as areas for improvement by the school.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

1. Ensuring that the statutory information provided for parents fully meets requirements. (Paragraph 57)
2. Providing a greater range of extracurricular activities, particularly at Key Stage 1. (Paragraph 32)
3. Improving the contribution which links with the community make to the pupils' learning. (Paragraph 40, 56)
4. Improving provision for the pupils' personal and social education. (Paragraph 39)
5. Ensuring that a full health and safety risk assessment is carried out. (Paragraph 47)

6. Developing a policy for the identification and development of gifted and talented pupils. (Paragraph 21)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	14	38	40	4	2	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	Year YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		197
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		88

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	91

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	15	14	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	27	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (79)	90 (71)	93 (79)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	27	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (75)	93 (71)	97 (75)
	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	14	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	15
	Girls	11	7	13
	Total	24	21	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (61)	72 (57)	97 (87)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	14	14
	Girls	9	8	10
	Total	19	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (75)	76 (52)	83 (88)
	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	34
Black – African heritage	27
Black – other	18
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	88
Any other minority ethnic group	25

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	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)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.45
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YEAR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	151

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
Total income	504403
Total expenditure	474373
Expenditure per pupil	2337
Balance brought forward from previous year	14093
Balance carried forward to next year	44123

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	150
Number of questionnaires returned	34

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	38	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	24	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	24	0	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	62	26	12	0	0
The teaching is good.	68	32	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	29	9	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	15	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	15	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	47	50	0	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	29	0	3	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	44	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	44	19	9	9

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

73. Children enter the Reception year in two phases: those born in the autumn commence in the September, and the spring and summer-born children start in January. Most children have attended some form of pre-school provision, although about a fifth of them come to school without having any pre-school educational experience. There are several feeder play-groups or nurseries, and there are not very strong links with the local pre-school provision because of this diversity.

74. The curriculum provided for the children is structured within the nationally recommended areas of learning and development, based upon a scheme of work produced locally by the education service. However, the school's policy for the Foundation Stage is not up-to-date and does not yet fully reflect the recent nationally recommended initiatives for the Foundation curriculum. The school is aware of this, and these needs are part of a Foundation Stage action plan to be tackled in the near future. Formal, recorded assessment is not made under the designated six areas of learning, and does not take account of the stages known as Stepping Stones. However, careful assessment does take place and work is usually well matched to the capabilities of the children. However, there are times when the more able are insufficiently challenged, for instance, in mathematical activities. Children reach below average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage taking all the six areas of development into account. Children enter the school at below average levels of attainment. They make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional development and creative development and are on course to reach average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Progress is satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development although the children are on course to reach standards that are still below average by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are enthusiastic and eager to learn, are keen to engage in all lessons and activities, and enjoy working and playing together. They feel safe in the caring atmosphere of their classroom, and have the confidence to explore the opportunities provided to the best of their abilities.

75. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, although it ranges from satisfactory to good. It is satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and physical development. In knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and expressive development and personal and social development, teaching and learning are good. Organisation of activities is a particular strength, and good attention is paid to the development of personal and social attributes. These standards cannot be compared fully with those found in the last inspection, since in that report there was insufficient information about children aged under five. Physical development is somewhat hampered by the lack of suitable outdoor play provision where clambering and use of wheeled toys can take place freely and regularly.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. From a below average start at the beginning of the year, children have made good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. This aspect of development is well promoted in the classroom, and the teaching and learning in this area are good. This includes provision for play, imaginative activities, and collaborative tasks, as well as in direct teaching strategies. Children are learning to work and play together well. Few, if any, individuals prefer to play alone. Most enjoy the company of other children and like to play alongside each other, sharing conversation. Many are already able to involve themselves in fully co-operative games and pretend play, showing good levels of social ability for their age. Examples of this were seen in the home corner play, and in the collaborative use of construction toys. Children are able to dress and undress themselves, know where things are in their classroom, and help to tidy up.

77. Classroom procedures are well established and children are aware of these routines and respond confidently to them. Behaviour is very good for the age of the children, and attitudes to work are also very

good. Children are able to persevere with activities for long periods when their interests are engaged. They have a positive attitude towards each other, and like to help.

78. The teacher has created a safe and secure environment within the classroom, in which children are valued as individuals. Her management of pupils is very good and good relationships create a pleasant atmosphere. Her outgoing manner engenders enthusiasm among her pupils. The children are interested in exploring new learning and have confidence in themselves.

Communication, language and literacy

79. The children's standards in speech and language on entry to school are below average. Standards found during the inspection show that despite making satisfactory progress from this low starting point, they are on course to remain at below average standards by the completion of the Reception year. Children listen well, with good attention, and they speak confidently. They are able to speak with appropriate length for their age, and to talk about things which have happened to them, express their needs, and show their interests. They enjoy talking to each other and to the adult staff, who make efforts to promote and encourage the development of speaking and listening. Children are able to enjoy stories, poems and rhymes. They enjoy sharing a Big Book with the teachers, and many are able to offer simple predictions for "over the page" when they are studying a text. The idea that print carries meaning is understood by the children, and although most have a good knowledge of letters of the alphabet, a few have not yet arrived at a sound working knowledge of them all. Despite this, the teacher uses appropriate terms in her teaching of the children, and they understand what is meant by these very specific words for letters, sounds and sounds represented by more than one letter. Most of the children can read simple books and stories. A few children are still at the stage of developing the ability to discuss illustrations in their books, and recognise occasional words or letters. Overall, reading is satisfactory, with some readers at good levels for their age. More able children are beginning to put letters together to make easy words and, by this means, to express some simple ideas of their own or attempt to recount parts of familiar happenings or stories. The majority, however, although some of them can write letters and make a few simple words, find writing difficult and only attempt short phrases or captions of a few words. Some are not yet able to write anything recognisable and legible independently. The majority show uneven writing, and letter formation is not yet firm and clear. Writing is substantially below average for this age.

80. The teacher and her assistant both use questioning skilfully to encourage children's thinking and their oral responses, and this was evident in the text study and plenary phases of a well taught literacy hour lesson, where children's learning was good as a result. The teacher assistant is well briefed and is used effectively in small groups when activities are involved, particularly so in discussion groups and in the role-play situation to stimulate and maintain conversation. The programme for communication, language and literacy is well planned and is appropriately linked to the National Literacy Strategy framework, as recommended for the Foundation Stage towards the end of their Reception year. There is a sound emphasis on the development of language and literacy within the Reception class curriculum, which is implemented with good organisation and the use of topics to interest the children. Taking the evidence from looking at children's work and hearing them read, as well as lesson observations, teaching and learning are satisfactory.

Mathematics

81. Children are on course to complete the Reception year at levels of attainment below the average for their age, particularly the more able children. Progress is, however, satisfactory from a below average starting point. Most children know numbers from one to ten, in terms of the figures and the ideas they represent, and they can do simple addition up to ten in practical situations and using counting on techniques. Most can record this addition in their books. A substantial minority, however, are still learning their numbers, and some are not yet accurate in ordering numbers one to ten. Some more able pupils are able to begin subtracting small numbers from numbers up to six, and they are starting to learn to order figures for numbers to 20. In oral work using number paddles, children are quick to respond, and enjoy the games played. Play with sand and water forms an experience base for later work on volume and capacity. Space for these

activities is limited in the classroom but they can be arranged in the adjacent activity area or outside when weather permits. Access to the outside is not easy and has to be specifically timetabled.

82. The teaching and learning of mathematics are satisfactory, and good attention is paid to the teaching of specific mathematical vocabulary. The teacher organises the work well, and provides practical experiences to aid understanding and reinforce learning. Planning is generally sound, but lacks a tight relationship between assessment and planning on an ongoing basis, particularly noticeable in the work for the more able pupils. Tasks are generally appropriate and in line with the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. On entry to school, children's knowledge of the world around them is below the average for age. Progress in this area is good and is promoted by good teaching and a well-planned programme. The children are on course to reach average standards in the knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of the Foundation Stage. Recently, children have been exploring differences between man-made and natural materials, and sorting items into the two categories. They are able to record their sorting pictorially on their own sheets, and to begin to describe the properties of the different materials. They have experienced walks in the immediate environment, including a trip to the park, and have been able to notice growing things and plants as well as features made by man such as paths and bridges. Animals and living things have formed another focus, whilst they have also watched the process of seeds growing. The children have explored floating and sinking objects, and making bubbles in water, and know that, when it freezes, water turns to ice. They have talked about their birthdays and about themselves growing, and are able to use vocabulary relating to time such as yesterday, tomorrow, and once, or long ago. The children make things using junk items for their models, and have each designed and made a little purse for holding a few coins, using fabric. They are learning to use the computer and can enjoy simple matching and story programs, as well as beginning to use the mouse.

84. Teaching and learning in this area of learning are good. The teacher organises a good range of activities which start from the children's own experiences. Children are enabled to expand their experiences and their knowledge of the world around them well.

Physical development

85. Teaching and learning in physical development are satisfactory. Attainment in this area of development is below average although children make satisfactory progress from their starting point. Children use their hands well to make and fit things together, as in jigsaw puzzles and the use of construction toys. However, their control in drawing, writing and colouring is below average. Colouring and drawing are often immature for age, and the majority of children are still showing considerable irregularity and unevenness in their attempts to write. There are a few who are still at the "play writing" stage. In painting, children showed better control when using a large paint brush. In play and physical education lessons, the children are able to run and move with average levels of co-ordination and control, but in a game in a physical education lesson, they found it difficult to follow the curve of a circle. Provision for frequent clambering and the use of wheeled toys is very limited due to the accommodation, although there are plans to remedy this.

Creative development

86. Teaching and learning in this area of development are good and promote good progress. Children in the Reception class attain standards which are average for their age in their creative and expressive work. Although drawing is rather immature for age, and colouring often uncontrolled, painting is better, as control on a larger scale is encouraged. In free painting, children make interesting compositions and patterns, and use a variety of colours. Many free-choice and directed activities are provided to encourage and develop the children's creative and expressive skills. Children are introduced to the use of paint, crayons, collage, junk modelling, fabric work, and the use of malleable materials such as clay and play dough. Role-play is supported by the provision of the domestic play corner, and by a range of dressing up items. In music,

children enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes and learning new ones, and they have a good sense of rhythm for age, clapping or playing a pulse in time with a simple song. They are learning the names of different percussion instruments and the varied timbres that belong to them in the sounds they make. They show their enjoyment of music by enthusiastic responses, and make good progress in this subject. Their attainment in music is good. Good provision is made for the arts, and children are able to enjoy expressing themselves in movement, sound and in art.

ENGLISH

87. Overall, standards in English are typical for seven and 11 year olds but those in writing are below average. This represents a decline in writing from the standards reported at the last inspection in 1997 when all aspects of English were judged to be average.

88. Overall, standards in English are average in Year 2. The picture is still very similar to that of the last inspection: standards are average overall but lower in writing and more able pupils are not always stretched. In the end of Key Stage 1 tests in 2000, compared with all schools, standards in reading were well below average and, in writing, they were below average. Compared with similar schools, standards were average in reading and above average in writing. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys at Key Stage 1. The higher standards found by the inspection in reading compared with the 2000 test results are due, for example, to the school's successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Trends in recent years in the end of key stage tests, compared with all schools, show attainment in reading to be well below average, and writing to have varied between average and below average since 1997. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress and do well for their capabilities and their previous learning. All pupils achieve soundly in speaking and listening, and in reading, but in writing, achievement is below average. More able pupils are insufficiently challenged in their writing.

89. Standards in English are average in Year 6. As in the previous inspection, standards are average overall, but lower in writing and the more able are insufficiently challenged. In the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2000, compared with all schools, standards were average in English. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in English. The trend in standards is upward at faster rate than the national trend. Attainment at Level 5 and above is below average. Girls perform significantly less well than boys in these tests although no significant differences in the standards reached by boys and girls were observed during the inspection. The school exceeded its targets for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in English in 2000 and has increased these targets suitably for 2001.

90. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress and do well for their capabilities and their previous learning. All pupils achieve soundly in speaking and listening and generally in reading, but achievement in writing remains below average. More able pupils are insufficiently challenged in their writing and in some aspects of their reading.

91. In Year 2, overall standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of spoken language, and although improved, are still below average on entry to Key Stage 1. However, in Year 2, their speaking and listening skills are average. Listening skills are good and pupils enjoy stories, rhymes and poems. They listen attentively, learn to take turns in speaking, and value the contributions of others. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils from all groups were able to report back to the class with examples of their written work. They generally spoke confidently and clearly, although a less able pupil showed a little hesitation, which was soon overcome with help from the teacher. In Year 1, in a lesson where pupils were sharing a Big Book with the teacher, most of them were able to respond clearly and well with ideas for the contents of speech bubbles for the characters on the page. Although pupils speak confidently and at appropriate length, weaknesses occur in the range of pupils' vocabulary and in the construction of more complex sentences.

92. In Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Pupils are careful and responsive listeners; they are able to appreciate and respect the contributions of others, and to reflect thoughtfully on instructions and information. In Year 6, speaking is confident and generally clear, and pupils are able to

express their ideas fluently, make suggestions or ask for further explanations. More able pupils respond precisely to the point being made, and use a well-developed vocabulary and complex sentences. Average pupils are able to describe and convey opinions clearly, and even less able pupils are keen to express their ideas. All pupils are used to paired or small group discussion, and do this easily, keeping well focused on the object of the task. This was illustrated well by paired discussions about written plans for developing characterisation and setting for a suspense story in a Year 6 lesson, following a text study of an excerpt from Alan Garner's "The Weirdstone of Brisingamen". In a Year 5 lesson, many pupils expressed their own feelings clearly in a discussion about racial prejudice in biased media reporting. Drama and opportunities for pupils to speak more formally, such as speeches and debates, are insufficiently developed.

93. Standards in reading are average in Year 2. All pupils enjoy reading, handle books confidently and practise their reading regularly at home. They also enjoy shared reading in the literacy hour, and pupils in Year 2 delight in the text they are currently using: "My Naughty Little Sister". In Year 1, pupils enjoyed their text study, "Classroom Quarrel" and were able to relate their understanding of the story to their own experience. Pupils generally read accurately. More able pupils read with good expression and fluency, and both average and less able pupils read carefully and accurately at an appropriate level for their age.

94. In Year 6, standards in reading are average. Pupils' interest in, and enthusiasm for, books develops well through the key stage. Year 6 pupils of all abilities are able to read with fluency and expression, but the less able sometimes have texts, which are too hard for them. All pupils are generally able to give a concise summary of what they have read and talk about favourite authors. Some can suggest simple predictions of possible outcomes. However, as in the last report, the more able pupils are reading an insufficiently challenging range of books. They find it difficult to discuss or compare genres and styles, and do not give relevant references to text. Pupils in Year 6 can use indexes appropriately, but they do not have appropriate library skills and are unable to use the classification system for finding non-fiction topics. Independent research skills are relatively undeveloped.

95. Standards in writing in Year 2 are below average generally. Average and more able pupils have a growing awareness of the structure of a story, and most can write or recount a simple story or make a short description or report of an event. Spelling is generally good, and reflects careful phonics teaching, and punctuation is satisfactory. However, there is little or no use of complex sentence construction, even in the writing of the more able. More able pupils use an appropriately broad vocabulary, but less able pupils use a narrower range of words, and their stories are not always fluent or coherent. In Year 1, more able and average pupils are able to put several sentences together to make a simple short story, and spelling is sound. In a literacy lesson, they were able to produce sentences written as questions, following a discussion of the possible contents of speech bubbles in their Big Book picture. Less able pupils in this year group are not yet able to write as much, but some can attempt to make a simple sentence or two, with rather erratic spelling.

96. In Year 6, standards in writing are below average. Years 5 and 6 pupils are able to write in a good range of forms, including scene settings, characters studies and persuasive writing, and can adapt their work to appropriate styles. This is an improvement from the school's last inspection, where little poetry or script writing was seen. In Year 6, the writing of the more able shows a good sense of style and command of structure. However, even the more able in Year 6 do not have the skill, confidence or opportunities to tackle fully extended pieces of writing. As a result, the more able do not have the chance to develop their talents fully. The analysis of work showed little or no evidence of work done at length and redrafted and refined. However, there were some sensitive and evocative pieces of work such as the poetry written by pupils after studying the verse of William Blake. Their Eucharist prayers also showed sensitivity and appropriate use of vocabulary and style, whilst the "Seaworld" blurbs showed good examples of persuasive writing. Year 5 work on myths and legends is well presented in an attractive display, and shows a good contrast in writing style from the work of the same class on writing instructions. Through the key stage, spelling is sound, handwriting develops well, and work is neatly and attractively presented.

97. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in English at Key Stage 1 is good. The quality of teaching was not reported in the last inspection. Progress is good. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were learning to write sentences in question form, using question marks, and this was imaginatively combined with the idea

of an interview about a character in a familiar story. In speaking and listening, there is skilled use of open-ended questioning, to promote thinking and to develop pupils' own speech, but there is little evidence of opportunities for speaking more formally. Teachers have generally good subject knowledge and use appropriate terms to pupils, for example, the use of the words "phoneme" and "digraph" in a Year 1 lesson, where pupils were learning to spell words containing the sound "sh". Teachers manage the literacy hour confidently, showing a good sense of pace, and a lively choice of texts to interest pupils, as in "My Naughty Little Sister" in Year 2.

98. The quality of teaching and learning in English at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in the subject, and lessons ranged from satisfactory to good. The quality of teaching was not reported in the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the key stage. Spelling and grammar are carefully taught so that pupils' spelling is generally good and punctuation and sentence formation are used correctly. An excellent strategy was seen in a Year 4 lesson on different forms of sentences, where word order changes for questions, commands and so on. Pupils held up cards for the words and punctuation signs, so that the changes could easily be seen and learning was very effective. In their choices of study texts, teachers successfully capture the interest of pupils and increase motivation. This was obvious in the exciting and doom-laden excerpt from Alan Garner's "The Weirstone of Brisingamen" in a Year 6 lesson, where pupil' responses were thoughtful and perceptive and in the work of Year 6 pupils on William Blake's poems. Teachers pay good attention to pupils' skills in reading aloud, and to understanding what is read, but pupils' critical skills are insufficiently developed. However, there is little evidence of teachers focusing on formal contexts such as short speeches or mini-debates to improve aspects of speaking and listening.

99. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well and is securely established in the school. Throughout the school, standards in literacy are average. The use of literacy skills across the curriculum is varied: in some classes, they are used well, in others, they are limited in scope, and this reduces the range of opportunities for extending pupils' experience in writing, and presents little challenge for the more able. Some use is made of information and communication technology for word processing written work for presentation. In a Year 2 lesson, early note-making skills were used in geography, where pupils had to select the most important features of three different environments, and ignore any characteristics common to all three. Another good example of literacy used across the curriculum, again in geography, comes from the holiday brochures prepared by Year 5 for St. Lucia, when they imaginatively combine persuasive writing with their factual knowledge of the area, and present it excitingly in well designed formats.

100. There is a good language policy, with separate sections for all three strands of the subject, including speaking and listening. The National Literacy Strategy framework is used as a major scheme of work, but former schemes of work are to be updated to encompass areas of English not specifically focused in the Strategy, such as speaking and listening and extended writing. There is a clear subject action plan. Assessment is thorough: standardised testing in reading for every pupil on a regular basis each term, records of phonic work, and the evaluation and levelling of a piece of writing for each pupil every term. Individual targets are set and re-set with pupils every half term in reading and writing. In Years 3, 4 and 5, the optional national end-of-year tests are carried out in English, and these results are recorded. The results and assessments of pupils are individually tracked as they pass through the school. Test results are carefully analysed against gender and ethnicity. However, assessment information is not always well used to plan the pupils' work, particularly the more able.

101. The English co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, and has a clear sense of leadership for the staff team in her subject. She has a good grasp of what is needed next in terms of priorities for staff development. All staff have recently had relevant in-service training on the new national initiative of "Grammar for Writing". The coordinator has all the termly and half termly plans, and sees all weekly plans in the subject. She also monitors lessons in rotation at the rate of one per term, providing feedback to the teacher, and samples work once a term, from a different class. Teachers' planning has improved as a result although there are still weaknesses. The curriculum is enriched by book weeks, drama groups and visiting poets or authors. During the inspection, a poet was "in residence", taking groups from Year 5 in rotation to create their own poetry. Resources in the subject are generally good, except in terms of the library stock.

The library is too small, and is not centrally situated, although staff have done their best by making use of book boxes. The quality and range of books are good, and they are appropriately categorised. The subject contributes well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils through story and poetry, and through the topics studied in the media and for writing. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

102. Most pupils in Year 2, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress and attain above average standards in mathematics, including numeracy. This finding is similar to the results of the national end of key stage tests in 2000 and is a good improvement on the previous inspection when standards were judged to be average. Trends over the last three years show that girls' performance is better than that of boys at Key Stage 1 but not as good as boys at Key Stage 2. The school's analysis of this anomaly has not shown anything of significance and, during the inspection, there were no particular features within lessons that could be attributed to these differences. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language make good progress to reach suitable standards at both key stages but the needs of those who are gifted or talented in this subject are not adequately met by the school.

103. In Year 6, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress and attain average standards which, in some respects, is an improvement on the last inspection when it was judged to be 'just about satisfactory' and progress was slow in the older classes. The results of the national end of key stage tests in 2000 show that, compared with all schools, standards were below average but above average compared with similar schools. Attainment at Level 5 and above is below average. Although standards at this key stage have remained below those found nationally, analysis of the school's results has shown continued improvement since 1996 faster than that found nationally. The teaching is consistently satisfactory, or better, and this together with the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive effect on raising standards. Last year, the school exceeded its numeracy targets and because of this has increased them for the current year. However, more able pupils do not always have sufficiently challenging work provided for them, which is a similar judgement to the previous inspection when more able pupils did not reach higher standards.

104. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is good and gives rise to good progress for most pupils. A clear judgement was not made about teaching in the last inspection except that it varied from good to unsatisfactory. During this inspection, good quality teaching, or better, was consistently evident. In Year 1, the well-established routine results in pupils being attentive and settling quickly to their work. They recognise and use simple number patterns, counting on in fives and twos (with both odd and even numbers) and use simple counting on methods to find the difference between two numbers. In Year 2, when doing mental calculations, pupils progress to adding ten as the first step for finding a solution to plus nine or plus eleven and give reasons for their answers. Most Year 2 pupils are working appropriately within Level 2 of the mathematics curriculum, except for a minority of below average pupils and pupils with special educational needs who find some aspects of this work too difficult. Most pupils can use mental recall of the addition and subtraction facts to ten and write three digit numbers correctly. Good challenge was provided for more able pupils when their teacher moved on to numbers in the thousands. Resources are used well to help pupils understand rules and deepen their understanding. For example, a class-sized number grid helped them to round numbers to the nearest ten. Pupils are developing an understanding of measurement and shape - they use centimetres to measure length, can name two-dimensional shapes and are using simple tables and block graphs to record results graphically. They sustain their concentration well, listen attentively to explanations and show eagerness to offer answers. Learning support assistants provide good help and guidance to individuals and groups, by quietly re-phrasing and explaining different ideas, when work is in progress. Teachers have good subject expertise, are well organised and mostly set a good pace to lessons. Control is maintained with a friendly but firm approach, which ensures that pupils maintain good levels of application and interest.

105. At Key Stage 2, the overall quality of teaching, learning and pupils' progress is satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Satisfactory and good teaching is exemplified by teachers having a sound understanding of the skills to be taught, good control, effective use of classroom staff to support pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language and a good relationship with the pupils. For example, in Year 3, in an enjoyable activity, pupils were eager to answer multiplication facts against an opponent. They had been taught number bonds to ten well and used them to order and pair numbers to find the total of a set of numbers more easily. In Year 4, careful discussion and exploration of the lesson's objective ensured that pupils had a good understanding of place value. They could add three digit numbers (a few pupils were challenged to extend this to thousands) and most were able to use doubling strategies effectively and to explain their methods. By Year 5, they are able to find multiplication and division facts of a given number, such as 72. Pupils also use their knowledge of rounding numbers up or down in more complex situations to find approximate answers. In Year 6 pupils make satisfactory progress and are beginning to compare different fractions and place them in order of their size. They use calculators to convert them into decimals and a few more able pupils apply their knowledge of rounding to fractions, with recurring numbers, to compare and order them accurately. Most pupils in Year 6 present their work well and organise results clearly. They have a sound understanding of number but find difficulty with multiplication of decimals and recognising equivalence between fractions, decimals and percentages other than at the simplest level. Most pupils are still not secure with simple strategies to find approximate answers. During discussion with a group of pupils, none was able to suggest a suitable approximate answer for three lots of 297. In work on shape, space and measures, most can draw common two-dimensional shapes on grids and find their perimeter in centimetres but work on three-dimensional shape is limited. They can construct simple line graphs and more able pupils use straight-line graphs to convert weight from metric to imperial measures. Shortcomings, in otherwise satisfactory lessons at Key Stage 2, are because some teachers talk too long, the pace slows down, pupils have insufficient time for independent work and some begin to queue when needing to know what to do next.

106. Teachers in both key stages are confident with the National Numeracy Strategy and use it appropriately to plan pupils' work. It is evident, however, that the effectiveness of strategies for teaching numeracy skills is making more impact at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. This is related to the overall quality of teaching at each key stage and, when both key stages are compared, the rate of progress at Key Stage 1 is better than at Key Stage 2. Infants have suitable opportunities to use mathematics across other curricular areas. For example, in geography, they have used odd and even numbering for a row of houses and in Year 2, they undertook a simple survey about what makes them happy or sad. In Key Stage 2, information and communication technology is used to handle data, simple co-ordinates are used in geography and symmetry has been used in art but the evidence of mathematics being used widely to deepen understanding is limited. In addition, the use of on going assessment information is not used effectively enough by all of the teachers in the juniors. From analysis of work and discussion with pupils, it is evident that less able pupils do not always have work that is accurately matched to their needs and more able pupils are not consistently and suitably challenged.

107. The school has made a good improvement since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 1 but also at Key Stage 2 where standards are rising and, in view of this, the school has increased the targets for the test results in 2001. There are good procedures in place, in addition to national testing, to assess pupils on a regular basis. This is carefully analysed and monitored and the head teacher, who co-ordinates the school's assessment, has a very clear understanding of the issues that impinge on attainment and progress in each class. The mathematics co-ordinator appropriately monitors subject planning, teaching and pupils' books and plans to implement another assessment procedure in Year 1. She has a good understanding of the subject and the progress in Key Stage 1 but is less familiar with the strengths and weaknesses in Key Stage 2 which is unsatisfactory. Timetables are not checked sufficiently and it is evident that there is some inconsistency about the daily mathematics lesson and the time of day when some take place. However, the key issue for action from the school's last inspection has been addressed in terms of providing sufficient time for the teaching of mathematics. On-going assessment information is not used sufficiently to plan for different pupils' needs. More often, it relates to having work that is not challenging enough for more able

pupils but, occasionally, less able pupils do not get work accurately matched to their needs. Learning support assistants give them help and much praise but progress on these occasions is slower and learning is superficial. The mathematics policy does not have sufficient guidance about these shortcomings. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

SCIENCE

108. The findings of the inspection are that standards in science are above average in Year 2. The assessments made by teachers in science at Key Stage 1 in 2000 were average. They were above average at Level 2B and above and average at Level 3 and above. The findings of the last inspection were that standards at Key Stage 1 were sound. The difference is explained by the successful effort that the school has put into raising standards to help pupils reach higher levels. At this key stage, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress.

109. The findings of the inspection are that standards are average in Year 6 which is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection. In the end of Key Stage 2 tests 2000 in science, standards were average compared with all schools and well above average compared with similar schools. The trend in standards in these tests in science has been upward at faster rate than national trend, although attainment in this subject at Level 5 plus was below average in the 2000 tests. Girls have performed significantly less well than boys in this subject over the past three years but no evidence of differing attainment was seen during the inspection. All pupils make satisfactory progress at this key stage.

110. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is good. The two lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory but the analysis of the pupils' work indicated that teaching and learning are good overall. There was no clear judgement of teaching in the school's last inspection report but the indications are that teaching has improved since then as different teachers are involved. The analysis of work and teachers' planning shows that all aspects of the curriculum are covered appropriately. The good expectations of the teachers are shown by work that is well presented and developed sequentially. Although the pupils are often set similar work the work that they produce is commonly individual and different although it is not always sufficiently challenging for the more able. Good use has been made of the school's environmental area to identify and record living animals and plants, things that have never been alive and dead animals and plants. The work has been extended by the teachers into a good consideration of the needs of living things and into classification according to similarities and differences using mathematical diagrams. Experimental work has successfully been linked to a consideration of the effects of friction and gravity on a car which was tested on differing slopes and surfaces. This work has also enabled the pupils to consider some of the properties of the different surfaces that the car was tested on.

111. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. There was no specific judgement about the quality of teaching in the school's last report but the indications are that a similar quality of teaching was observed. In a satisfactory science lesson about electrical circuits in Year 3, the teacher gave a sound demonstration of the learning intention of the lesson. Varied items were added to a circuit to see if the bulb continued to light and to decide if the materials inserted conducted or did not conduct electricity. The pupils watched attentively and fully understood the concept. However, opportunities to reinforce their scientific vocabulary by using words such as "predict" and to extend their scientific understanding by considering why some materials reduced the brightness of the bulb, were missed. Pupils with special educational needs were given effective support by a teaching assistant and all pupils enjoyed the activity of finding and testing materials for conductivity. In Year 6, the pupils undertake investigative work into other aspects of the subject, for example, the best conditions for plants to grow in and filtration. They have a sound knowledge of forces such as air resistance. However, their investigative and recording work is too directed by the teacher and they do not sufficiently devise their own experiments or record their work freely often enough.

112. General strengths in the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school in science are the ways in which the teachers share the learning intentions of the lessons with the pupils and the way in which the teachers control and manage the pupils. Common weaknesses are over direction of investigative activities and the way these are recorded. These weaknesses were also noted by the school's last inspection. The lack of sufficient detail in lesson planning and the way the good assessment information

available in science is not well used to make sure that all pupils receive sufficiently challenging work are other frequent weaknesses.

113. There has been a good improvement in the subject since the school was last inspected. This is indicated by improved standards, particularly at Key Stage 1 and by the improved teaching and learning at that key stage. Assessment procedures have also been well developed. Additionally, the co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning and has examined the pupils' work. However, this work has not sufficiently concentrated on how well assessment information is used to set work for the pupils or on the effectiveness of the school's scheme of work in promoting smooth progress in the subject. Information and communication technology is insufficiently used to support the teaching of science. There is a suitable action plan for the development of science and a good level of learning resources. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, as they show interest in the life cycle and development of tadpoles.

ART AND DESIGN

114. Most pupils attain average standards in art and make satisfactory progress at both key stages. This includes pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. This judgement is similar to the last inspection. However, pupils' knowledge of other artists has improved, although their three-dimensional work remains limited. During the inspection it was not possible to observe art lessons in Key Stage 1 but evidence in books and on display was taken into account. Work seen showed a suitable range of experiences and included the use of information and communication technology. This indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. For example, pupils in Year 1 have done self-portraits using paint and colour mixing to obtain suitable tones for face and hair colour. Paper folding techniques have been incorporated into pictures of a potted flower to give a simple three-dimensional effect and pupils have painted sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh. To promote the use of mixing paint a restricted range of colours was provided. In Year 2 pupils have used the computer well to create a picture of 'Scapman'. Their work showed good use of the different effects available and enabled them to produce some pleasing results of an appropriate standard.

115. Three lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 as well as pupils' work in books and on display around the school. Most pupils in Year 6 attain average levels. They explore ideas such as different skin tones linked to people from different racial origins and learn about the work of Picasso. In both cases pastels were used effectively to portray their observations. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory at this key stage, although there is some variation in the quality. Satisfactory teaching is demonstrated by suitable planning and preparation, good support for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English and careful oversight of work in progress. Pupils are able to explore ideas and show appropriate observational powers to represent a pose or illustrate work in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in Year 3, drawings of artefacts seen on a visit to a toy museum were clear and supported their work effectively. Pupils in Year 3 also have an opportunity for work in three dimensions when attending the pottery club. They have made attractive figures, by shaping slab clay. In Year 5 pupils have explored a different medium and made models from wire. They have also produced some interesting effects using pen and ink. Occasionally, and as a direct result of good quality teaching, pupils make good progress and attainment is above average. For example, in Year 4, where the standard of work is above average, pupils are able to explore ideas in pictures and demonstrate that they have good interpretative skills and artistic vocabulary. They can talk about and compare different approaches, for example, they recognise when two pictures are by the same artist, citing the style as being the same in both. They know when the medium is paint but, because of the depth of colour, pose the possibility that pastel may have been used and are beginning to draw out symbolism, such as Adam, Eve and the Devil, in pictures. When there are weaknesses in teaching, there are several elements that slow down the pupils' progress. The short term planning is too brief and tasks lack sufficient challenge for pupils to achieve standards of which they are capable. Unsatisfactory organisation slows down the pace,

resources are unsuitable for the medium in which pupils are working and discussion is uninspired and overlong. This leaves too little time for pupils to work and make progress.

116. A good start has been made by the new co-ordinator. She is knowledgeable, proactive and has a clear view of how and where the subject needs improvement. In a period covering half a term she has made an audit of the situation, improved resources and provided some in-service training in the form of a practical workshop for teaching staff. The subject is without an art policy and the scheme of work, by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, has only recently been implemented. The school lacks a suitable approach to short term planning and the assessment of the work in the scheme. In addition, there is a lack of clarity as to which subject is being taught from one week to the next because of the differing ways that teachers use the allocated time. Art has been without a co-ordinator for a long time. The expertise of the staff has improved since the previous inspection but training needs are still evident, for example, in three-dimensional work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. Only one lesson was observed during the course of the inspection. This lesson was in Key Stage 2. Discussions took place and scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display. However, the limited evidence prevents a definitive judgement about teaching, learning and standards being made, although the indications are that all are variable. Some work lacks sufficient challenge and, at times, there is insufficient freedom for pupils to explore and investigate.

118. In Year 1 pupils have decorated cartons to make street houses as part of some work in geography and in Year 2, pupils have made 'insects' that move. Appropriate methods have been taught to combine components and propel them forward but there is little use of finishing techniques to improve their appearance or opportunities for individual exploration when making things. Work involving design has included designing a poster, a sandwich, a container for it and a toy for a younger child. Sound progress was evident in this work as the later examples showed average and higher attaining pupils were beginning to label their pictures. By the time pupils are in Year 5 and 6, they understand that their designs have to meet a variety of needs. For example, Year 6 pupils had designed raffle tickets with prizes that should appeal to encourage others to enter for a weekly draw. In Year 5, they have made designs for robots and posters, highlighting the attractions of St. Lucia. The finished robots, made from recycled materials, were of good quality and compared well with their original designs, in particular, the home robot and a dog of the future, called the 'Terra Pooch'. Pupils had clearly thought ahead and had chosen suitably shaped containers and methods of decoration to achieve their intentions. They had shaped the materials and assembled them well so that they were sturdy.

119. There is a co-ordinator in place and she has many other responsibilities. There is an old policy in place but the school has set a date for its review. The scheme of work is new this term so teachers are at an early stage of implementing it. An appropriate time is allocated to teaching but, like other foundation subjects, not within a consistent school approach. Short term planning is brief and not adequate for less experienced teachers or those who are lacking in expertise. The subject does not have a school record to provide a clear picture of individual and class progress and plan accordingly for them. Training needs exist in this subject for some teachers.

GEOGRAPHY

120. Standards in geography in Year 2 are average and are similar to the standards found in the previous inspection. Achievement is generally satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress against their capabilities and their previous learning.

121. Standards in geography in Year 6 are average as in the previous inspection. Achievement is generally satisfactory, although the more able pupils are insufficiently stretched in some tasks. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress against their capabilities and their previous learning. There were no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls at both key stages

122. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In the previous report, teaching was said to be sound, although variable from year to year. Progress is satisfactory. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were engaged in a brainstorming discussion about the characteristic features of the seaside as an environment. Teaching and learning were good in this lesson, and they came up with a large number of features. Following this, they took notes to sort and select a few definite features for three different environments, which they had previously “brainstormed”. Pupils’ geographical understanding was average for their age, as was their written work. In a Year 1 lesson, different types of housing around the world were discussed. Skilful questioning by the teacher, and good links with design and technology promoted pupils’ thinking effectively about why certain types of home were suited to different environments such as hot, cold or wet climates, and the desert. Pupils responded with interest to these questions, and understood the reasons for different structures. Teaching, learning and attainment in this lesson were satisfactory. The analysis of work showed satisfactory understanding in geography for pupils’ ages.

123. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. As they move through the key stage, pupils’ progress is also satisfactory. In the last inspection, teaching was reported as sound, but with inconsistent standards between year groups. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were transferring their knowledge and understanding of the water cycle to the context of rivers. They understood that water finds its own level, and eventually, usually, joins the sea. Sound use was made by the teacher of previous learning in opening up a new topic of rivers in general. Working in pairs, pupils had to find four major world rivers, Ganges, Danube, Amazon and Thames, in their atlases, to see where they were, and what types of climate zones they were situated in. Opportunities to extend pupils’ mathematical knowledge by using four or six-figure co-ordinates were lost. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils collected factual evidence about the school’s local environment for a study of the effect people have on the environment and the way they can use and improve it. Groups of pupils were able to survey different types of traffic in a specified time, with a teacher assistant, from the school’s roof balcony, where there was a good view of the Mile End Road. One group also went to try out the “green man” crossing device, and found it only signalled safe crossing for 20 seconds, which they thought was too slow for some people, such as mothers with pushchairs and toddlers, and old people, to cross four lanes of traffic. Teaching and learning were active, focused, and well prepared, and pupils attained good standards. The analysis of work showed average standards through the key stage, but in Year 6, the frequency and amount of work were small, and, therefore unsatisfactory. There was not much difference between the work of all abilities showing a lack of challenge for some pupils.

124. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. There is a policy for the subject, but it is out of date and due for review, which is listed in the school’s development plan. The school has adopted the national model for its scheme of work. There is no specific short term lesson planning, and lessons are merely taken from brief headings which form separate parts of the scheme for the term or half-term. This means that the planning for lessons is very brief indeed. There is no whole school approach to assessment in the subject either, and teachers are left to make their own notes. This lack of structure is reflected in the variable pattern of teaching and learning, particularly at Key Stage 2, where the subject does not have sufficient breadth, and is a major weakness in the subject. There is currently no coordinator for the subject, and the head teacher is temporarily holding the brief. Since she has many other responsibilities, there is a lack of planning, monitoring and evaluation in the subject. Resources have improved since the last report, when some maps and atlases were found to be inadequate, but there are still areas where there is insufficient equipment and books. Year 6 have a residential visit annually to Wales, for fieldwork and orienteering, and other year groups use the local environment or go on trips farther afield. The subject contributes satisfactorily to the cultural development of pupils, but the example of the holiday brochures for St. Lucia done by Year 5 is a contribution of good quality.

HISTORY

125. Standards in Year 2 are above average. This is an improvement on the findings of the school’s last inspection when standards were judged to be sound. This improvement is due to the teachers’ skill and enthusiasm in teaching the subject. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress at this key stage. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

126. Standards in Year 6 are average which is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress at this key stage.

127. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is good. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection when teaching was judged to be "generally sound". In a good lesson in Year 2 about the Fire of London, the teacher initially revised work from a previous lesson with the class. The pupils showed a good understanding of the Great Plague, its causes and the social conditions of the time. The teacher's speedy and confident presentation gained and retained the pupils' interest and they listened intently, concentrated very well and behaved very well. The lesson contained a careful analysis and discussion of the causes of the Fire of London to which the pupils contributed fully. They described the probable feelings of the people involved in the fire well and were surprised to learn that the King had helped to put the fire out. The teacher's descriptions of the fire were very effective and the pupils showed utter astonishment at the thought of the entire City of London being on fire. All pupils made good progress in this lesson which also made a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The analysis of the pupils' work shows good application of their literacy skills and a good ability to communicate their historical knowledge. There is evidence of sound use of numeracy skills in their work on chronology, for example, in sequencing events in the correct order. In their work on Florence Nightingale, there was some evidence that the pupils had undertaken their own research. However, there was no sign that historical interpretation had been considered.

128. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. In the lessons seen during the inspection, it was good but the analysis of pupils' work indicated that it is satisfactory overall. In a good lesson in Year 6, the pupils used photographic evidence to draw conclusions about the 1970's. The pupils showed great interest in this work and could fully explain what they were required to do. The pupils were very well motivated by the teacher's careful choice of pictures. They recognised that hair dryers are much the same to-day as they were in the 1970s, knew that some cars from that decade are still on the road and could see, for example, differences in clothes, dancing styles and the appearance of the Queen. They also identified Martin Luther King and discussed his importance in the Civil Rights Movement. The pupils, including those with special educational needs who were well supported by a teaching assistant, made good progress in this lesson. The analysis of the pupils' work at this key stage shows that they have a good understanding of a range of historical events including aspects of the Victorians, the Tudors, World War II and Ancient Egypt. Their work is generally carefully presented. However, too often the work produced is too similar to challenge more able pupils. The examination of teachers' planning showed that a lack of detail in lesson plans makes some contribution to this fact as does the lack of assessment procedures in the subject. Additionally, independent research is not sufficiently developed and there is too little evidence of the use of information and communication technology in history.

129. The subject has improved well since the school's last inspection. Standards have improved at Key Stage 1, a scheme of work is now in place and the headteacher is acting as co-ordinator for the subject. Teachers' expectations of the pupils have also improved as have facilities for research work. Resources are adequate, and are supplemented by loan services and trips to places such as a toy museum. The school plans to appoint a permanent co-ordinator for the subject and is keen to develop further its stock of historical artefacts and to record the experiences of local people as a historical resource. There is a sound action plan for the subject. The school recognises that the organisation and implementation of the scheme of work do not promote smooth progress in the pupils' learning particularly at Key Stage 2. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

130. Judgements are based on the lessons observed, discussions with pupils and the analysis of work on display. Taking account of all the available evidence indications are that standards are below average at both key stages. At both key stages, the range of work is limited although curricular planning clearly covers the required elements. For example, there was too little evidence of pupils using control technology, monitoring events, making use of simulations and models or using information and communication technology to find and

record information. This judgement is similar to the previous inspection's findings except that progress is now satisfactory. This is because the quality of teaching and learning at both stages is satisfactory due to the school's recent acquisition of an information and communication technology suite. This facility is enabling the teachers to teach the subject in a way which promotes satisfactory progress for pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The pupils now receive sufficient hands on experience of computers to benefit fully from the teaching they receive. Before the school had its suite, this did not happen and the pupils made insufficient progress. The recent introduction of the suite explains the apparent anomaly of satisfactory teaching, learning and progress promoting below average standards.

131. Taking account of all of the evidence, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 which is an improvement since the last inspection. A good lesson was seen in Year 2 where the pupils used one program to create a story and another for mathematical work. The teacher introduced this lesson well, showed a good knowledge of the subject and the pupils fully understood what they had to do. All of the pupils were confident in inserting a CD-ROM, using the mouse to start the program and in dragging. Basic skills were well taught and the pupils used terms such as "square" and "rectangle" to describe shapes correctly. The lesson proceeded at a good pace and the teacher continually monitored the pupils' work to make sure that they understood and were making progress. At the end of the lesson, there was a good discussion of the merits of a particular program. Several pupils were able to close their computers. Throughout the lesson, the pupils behaved very well, worked hard and made good progress. They coped well with the facts that, in a few cases, there were two pupils to a seat and that two computers were not in use.

132. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection. In Year 4, very good teaching ensures that skills are competently taught. In the lesson observed, the teacher had a good understanding of the software being used, clear objectives for the lesson, attainable but challenging work and very good organisational skills which promoted learning and progress effectively. There was a relaxed atmosphere even though pupils and staff were tightly packed in the computer suite. The teacher and support staff were all gainfully employed helping pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Considerable freedom was given to pupils to explore and experiment with their ideas on screen. They rearranged text and graphics, trying out various possibilities before deciding which one they liked best. Behaviour and attitudes were very good and most pupils were learning effectively for much of the time. They understood what they are doing and collaborated very well, demonstrating the very good relationships that exist. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are learning how to use spreadsheets. They show good attitudes and behaviour and are interested in their work. Organisation is good and learning objectives are well shared with pupils so that they fully understand. Good control is maintained but the pace is slow, either because the introduction is too long or because pupils wait to print their work. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but pupils have insufficient time or the freedom to explore further to gain confidence, and to make and learn from their mistakes. Standards in this aspect of the subject are below average. In Year 6, average standards were evident in pupils' work on display. For example, word-processed posters for geography demonstrated an awareness of audience. Work had variety, interest (with banner headlines or shading), colour, pictures and suitable information about Austria.

133. There is a new and useful policy in place and a clear overview of the curricular units to be covered each term by different year groups. Teaching meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme has been implemented. However, there has been insufficient time since its introduction for it to have an impact and raise standards in all the elements to be taught or for it to be applied fully in all aspects of the curriculum. The expenditure on information and communication technology has been well targeted on the computer suite and upgrading classroom computers. There is a very favourable ratio of computers to pupils and this is raising standards in aspects such as word-processing, use of graphics, desk-top publishing and modelling ideas on screen. Information and communication technology has been without a co-ordinator since the beginning of the year. The subject lacks the necessary direction, guidance and expertise from someone who has this responsibility. Rigorous monitoring has not taken place and there is no policy to guide teachers when using the Internet. It is evident that members of staff are more confident and their knowledge is satisfactory for some aspects of the

curriculum. However there are limitations in staff proficiency that the school is aware of and there is a staff training programme already in place. Classroom based computers are still under-used.

MUSIC

134. Standards music in Year 2 are good. This is a significant improvement from the standards found in the previous inspection, which were reported as below average. Since the last inspection, the school has employed a music specialist to take a music lesson with each class once a week. Class teachers attend all music lessons with their classes, joining in and assisting with group work. Pupils of all abilities do well in music, and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language also do well, and make good progress against their capabilities and their previous learning.

135. In Year 6, standards in music are also good, and again there is a strong improvement from the standards found in the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities do well in music, and those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language also do well, making good progress against their capabilities and their previous learning. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls in this subject at both key stages.

136. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is good, and this promotes good progress through the key stage. In the last inspection, teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to satisfactory as class teachers lacked confidence in teaching the subject. In a very good Year 2 lesson, using “water” words to make a word composition, pupils were enthusiastic and contributed their own ideas for suitable words, and how they might be combined or repeated to make a sequence for a composition. They were building on previous work when they class had enjoyed a story about a rainy day. The musical elements were imaginatively woven around the use of the words, using dynamics, tempo, and rhythm. Pupils’ ideas helped to form the shape of the composition using the central idea of a rainstorm. Some instruments were introduced, thus forming a composition with different layers of sound so that pupils reached high levels of attainment. In a well-taught Year 1 lesson, where rhythmic sequences of body percussion provided a pulse accompanying a favourite song, a selection of untuned percussion instruments was introduced to join in with the rhythm. Pupils were introduced to the idea of the orchestration of a performance by means of pictorial signals on cards. This reading and obeying of signs were in advance of what would be expected for the age group, and contributed to their achievement of above average standards in the lesson. Planning for music is good, and there is good breadth and balance in the programme that pupils receive.

137. The quality of teaching and learning in music in Key Stage 2 is very good. In the previous inspection, teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. In fact, all the teaching seen at Key Stage 2 was at least very good, and one lesson was excellent. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils were adding to a song learned in a previous lesson, by making an ostinato for its accompaniment. They were using a score with conventional notation for their singing, and in a subsequent lesson would be adding part-singing in harmony, and also making the ostinato harmonious by using tuned percussion. In this lesson, musical elements of pitch, dynamics, pulse, rhythm, duration, and phrasing were included. Pupils were aware of the conventional notation, and how phrases were musically constructed through the cadences they could hear. This led the pupils to above average standards of attainment for age. This was achieved through the very good teaching and learning, planning for this level of competence and producing it in the lesson in a lively way. The excellent lesson took place in Year 4, and was a masterly and highly imaginative lesson combining elements from the art and the English curriculum. In this lesson, in groups of five, pupils discussed a large reproduction of a painting allocated to the group and reported words and phrases representing the mood of the painting, or feelings it evoked. Groups were asked to reflect upon the relevant timbres, which would well represent the mood they wished to represent in their music. Throughout the lesson, pupils behaved maturely and had a good knowledge of instruments. In this lesson imaginative planning, high expectations, and the gradual building up of pupils’ musical knowledge and understanding over a period led to stylish teaching, active learning and high standards. All the lessons observed incorporated elements of the four basic strands of the subject. This is an improvement from the situation reported in the previous inspection where there was too little attention to composition and appraisal of music. These are now well done. Planning is very good in music, and this is also a great improvement from that reported in the last inspection where it was weak.

138. The subject policy is out-of-date and due for review under the school's development plan. The school has adopted the national model as a scheme of work, but the music specialist and class teachers adapt the medium term plans provided by this well in using it as a basis for more detailed lesson planning. There is no whole school approach to assessment, and teachers make their own notes, but they have some opportunities within the lessons taken by the specialist to note pupils' achievements and reactions. There is no music co-ordinator and the head teacher holds the temporary brief, but the music specialist does all the planning throughout the school and so has a good view of the development of the subject through different age groups. Her knowledge and understanding of music are excellent, and she also understands very well the National Curriculum in the subject. There are opportunities for pupils to learn the flute. At present, eight pupils do so and the costs of tuition are subsidised by the school. All pupils in Key Stage 2 have the chance to learn the recorder, and a specialist teacher visits the school, with each class in the key stage having half a term's tuition in rotation. Recorder and flute players perform in school concerts from time to time. The subject is also enhanced by visiting musicians performing to pupils or running special music workshops and recently, pupils have enjoyed listening to a recorder consort. Resources in the subject have been improved, but are still only barely adequate. There is an insufficient supply of tuned percussion instruments, although there are plenty of untuned ones, and there are few instruments from different cultural traditions. Tapes and CDs for listening music are adequate, but again, these lack a broad range of music including that from different cultural traditions. This reflects a finding in the last inspection, but resources in general have been improved, and the school is aware of what else is required.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139. During the inspection, gymnastics was observed at both key stages, dance was also seen at Key Stage 1 as was swimming at Key Stage 2. The evidence shows that standards are average in Years 2 and 6. This is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection at Key Stage 2 but it is an improvement at Key Stage 1. This difference is due to an improvement in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 and to an increase in the amount of time devoted to physical education at Key Stage 1 compared with the last inspection. Standards in swimming are above average as about half of the pupils in Year 4 can already swim 25 metres safely and unaided. At both key stages, pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress and reach appropriate standards. There are no differences in the standards reached by boys and girls.

140. At both key stages, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although it varies from satisfactory to very good. This is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection at Key Stage 2 but it is an improvement at Key Stage 1 where weaknesses in teaching were directly linked with low attainment. At Key Stage 1, a gymnastics lesson in Year 1 exemplified the satisfactory nature of the teaching. The teacher had a quiet, effective approach to which the pupils responded well. Instructions were given clearly and confidently, for example, when the pupils responded appropriately to varied beats on a chime bar by walking, jogging or skipping and combining these movements into sequences. This work was appropriately extended to link with the class work in science as the pupils moved suitably as butterflies and ants. The pace of the lesson slowed down as the apparatus was put out and the teacher demonstrated how to use it. Great care was taken to ensure the pupils' safety. The pupils showed average co-ordination and control and some imaginative movements while travelling on benches and mats in varied ways and when performing forward rolls. Good use was made of demonstrations by the pupils but there was no consideration of the effects of exercise on the body. In Year 2, most pupils perform dance sequences rhythmically in time with music but they are not sufficiently aware of why they need to warm up before undertaking exercise.

141. A good gymnastics lesson in Year 5 started with the teacher asking the pupils to check their pulse rate. They then undertook some warm up exercises and checked their pulses again. The increased rate and heavier breathing in order to supply muscles with oxygen were discussed. Structured stretching of different parts of the body then took place and the need for safety in physical education was firmly emphasised. The teacher had very good control which resulted in the pupils behaving very well and working hard. A useful link was made with mathematics as the teacher discussed symmetrical and asymmetrical movements with the pupils. The pupils' movements on mats and floor were satisfactory but lacked grace. The teacher's

good expectations were apparent in an insistence on more thought about these aspects of the pupils' work. This was the first gymnastics lesson the teacher had taken with the class and the lack of whole school assessment records of their attainment made it difficult for her to judge the level at which to pitch the pupils' work. In Year 6, the pupils showed good levels of co-ordination during exercises on mats and benches but their movements were not fluent and their evaluative skills were not sufficiently developed.

142. The improvement in the subject since the last inspection is satisfactory in that teaching and standards have risen at Key Stage 1 and curricular planning has improved. The recently designated co-ordinator has considerable expertise in the subject and is very enthusiastic. He has already audited its resources and ordered additional stock. The co-ordinator has also identified the need for training in gymnastics for some staff and weaknesses, such as hand and eye co-ordination, in the pupils' work. There is an appropriate action plan for the development of the subject. The scheme of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has been allocated to different year groups but this is not sufficiently well implemented to ensure that the pupils' progression in the subject is smooth. Additionally, the relationship between the scheme of work and teachers' lesson planning is not effective. There has been no direct observation of teaching and learning in physical education although some guidance in the subject has been given at staff meetings. The limited amount of hard surfaced area available to the pupils and the difficulty in gaining access to a field – although this should soon be rectified – slow down progress in this subject. The hall is in a separate building which is inconvenient in bad weather and movement to and from the main building reduces teaching time. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they show sporting behaviour and work together in complete racial harmony.