

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST BARNABAS C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Worcester

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116858

Headteacher: Mrs A. D. Deakin

Reporting inspector: Mr Michael Raven  
3961

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> March – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 192475

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Coley
Date of previous inspection:	10/03/1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Michael Raven	Registered inspector	Physical Education Religious Education	What sort of school is it?  School's results and pupils' achievements.  How well are pupils' and students taught?
Mr John Brasier	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and attendance.  How well does school care for its pupils?  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Ms Christina Morgan	Team inspector	Mathematics  Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?  How well does the school provide for pupils with special educational needs?
Mr Wallis Hart	Team inspector	Science  Information and Communication Technology  Design and Technology	
Ms Jane Pinney	Team inspector	Geography  Music	How well does the school provide for Under-Fives?
Mr Michael Duggan	Team inspector	English  History	How well does the school provide for equal opportunities?  How well does the school provide for pupils learning English as an additional language?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Barnabas is a large Voluntary Controlled Church of England primary school catering for boys and girls aged from four to eleven years. There are 416 pupils on roll and there are slightly more boys than girls. Almost all pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage and there are few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Only six pupils are learning English as an additional language and none of these is at an early stage of the acquisition of English. Seventy-eight pupils have special educational needs, covering a wide range of learning, physical and behavioural difficulties. This proportion is similar to that usually found in primary schools, although only three pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is low. Children start school at the age of four with levels of personal development, language development and mathematical development which are generally below average for their age.

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

This is an effective school which is well led and managed by its headteacher. It has made good improvement since its last inspection. The teaching is good, so that standards have risen well this year. They are now generally in line with national averages, even though the children start in the Reception classes with below average skills. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The headteacher leads and manages the school well
- The teaching is good
- There is a positive climate for learning, and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good
- The school offers a very wide range of activities outside lessons, especially sport and music
- It has established a good partnership with parents and carers, and there are very good links with other schools, playgroups and local businesses

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

- Checks on the quality of teaching, to ensure that it all matches the best
- The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs
- The school's use of assessment information to track the attainment and progress of all the different groups of pupils

*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 1997. It has made good progress in improving since then. Standards achieved by the oldest pupils have been steadily rising, in line with the national trend in improvement. Although there was a dip in standards in 2001, the generally upward trend has been restored this year. Teaching and the management of pupils' behaviour are now much better. However, the management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs remains weak.



## 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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	D	E
mathematics	C	B	E	E
science	D	C	C	C

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

The inspection found that standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 are better than they were in the 2001 national tests. They remain average in science. Results in the national tests in English and mathematics dipped last year due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that year group. Standards had been improving in line with the national trend over the last five years and this year they have picked up again. Pupils appear to be doing much less well in English and mathematics than do pupils in similar schools. However, comparisons with similar schools are misleading. These are based on the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals. Figures on this are unreliable, as there are no cooked meals provided on the premises at St Barnabas. Although standards in all the other subjects are average in Year 6, there is a particular strength in music, where standards are above average. In Year 2, standards are better than they were in the 2001 national tests and teachers' assessments in reading and mathematics, so that they are now similar to the national average. Overall, achieve well in response to the good quality teaching they receive. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for pupils to reach in English and mathematics in this year's national tests. The inspection shows that pupils are on course to meet these targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work and there is much involvement in the wide range of activities offered outside lessons
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respect one another and get along very harmoniously
Attendance	Satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Taking the school as a whole, teaching in about seven in ten lessons seen was good or better. The proportion of good or better teaching was similar in the Reception classes and for pupils aged from seven to eleven. About half the teaching in Years 1 and 2 was good or better. English and mathematics are taught well, with teachers making effective use of national guidance on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The needs of boys and girls are met equally well, so that they make similar progress in their learning. The few pupils learning English as an additional language receive appropriate teaching and support to help them learn, including some time each week with a specialist teacher. However, the needs of pupils with special educational needs are not always met as well as they could be. Although there is some very good quality teaching and support for these pupils, this is unevenly distributed, so that not all pupils receive the help they need to make progress with their learning. The teaching in Year 2 varies a lot between the two classes. In one it is very good, whereas in the other it is satisfactory, with both strengths and weaknesses. The weaknesses in one class are due to shortcomings in the organisation of pupils' learning and management of their behaviour. Because the teaching is not as good in one class as in the other, pupils in Year 2 do not all receive an equally good education.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets all legal requirements to teach the National Curriculum and religious education, and a very good range of activities is offered outside lessons
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. There is some very high quality teaching and support for these pupils, but in some cases they are not given all the help they need to make progress in their learning
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils receive good teaching and support, which helps them to make good progress in their learning
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Particular strengths are found in the school's promotion of pupils' moral and social development
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There are suitable procedures for child protection and to ensure pupils' welfare

The school has established a good partnership with parents and carers, who think well of the school. Opportunities to learn a wide range of musical instruments and to sing in the choir enrich the curriculum very well, as do the many sporting activities offered. The school makes too little use of data on pupils' attainment and progress to check on how different groups of pupils are getting on.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher shares with senior staff a clear and convincing commitment to school improvement and this is reflected in better teaching and rising standards. However, the management of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body keeps in close touch with the school and understands the main challenges which it faces. Governors' role in evaluating the cost-effectiveness of their spending decisions is not sufficiently well developed.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Too few checks are made on the quality of teaching and there is not enough analysis of how different groups of pupils are getting on in their learning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. The spending on teaching assistants has a positive effect on pupils' achievement, but their time could be better used to support pupils who have special educational needs.

Although the headteacher provides good leadership and has ensured good improvement since the last inspection, she does not do enough to check on the quality of teaching, ensuring that all of it reaches the high standards of the best. There are adequate numbers of teaching and support staff to meet pupils' needs and teach the full curriculum. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, with four good new classrooms for the oldest pupils. Learning resources are satisfactory in quantity and quality. The governing body takes good care to secure value for money in obtaining goods and services.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• Teachers expect their children to work hard and do their best</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• Their children make good progress at school</li> <li>• Their children like school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information they receive about how their children are getting on</li> <li>• The range of activities offered outside lessons</li> <li>• The school's working partnership with parents</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with all the parents' positive views of the school. It finds that, in fact, parents receive good information about pupils' progress and that there is a satisfactory working partnership between parents and the school. A good range of activities is offered outside lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The inspection shows that standards are average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. They are also average in Year 2. The only exception is in music, where standards are above average in Year 6. This is because of the particularly strong contribution to the teaching of music made by the music co-ordinator and the many musical opportunities offered to pupils. Standards are better than they were when Year 6 pupils took national tests in English and mathematics last year, except that they are similar in science. Standards are also better in reading and mathematics in Year 2 than they were in the 2001 national tests and assessments for seven year olds. The higher standards to be found in Year 6 at present are consistent with the generally rising trend of improvement at the school which has been similar to the national trend over the last five years. Standards are continuing to rise because pupils are taught well and they have very good attitudes to school, so that they work hard and achieve well.
2. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The needs of those few pupils learning English as an additional language are well met, including by some specialist teaching, so that they achieve well. However, teaching and support for pupils who have special educational needs is too unevenly spread. This results in some of these pupils achieving very well and making very good progress, while others, who are left without the teaching and support they need, do less well than they could.
3. The good teaching, and the very good attitudes and high level of enthusiasm which the school encourages mean that the children in the Reception classes achieve well. As a result, although both boys and girls start school with levels of personal and social development, language development and mathematical development which are lower than those usually found nationally at this age, they soon catch up. Most are on course to reach average standards in the areas of learning for children of this age by the time they leave the Reception classes, except that their skills in communication, language and literacy remain below average. This is because of weaknesses in the teaching of communication skills. The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory because the children are given too few opportunities to write independently. Teachers do not take good enough advantage of opportunities to develop the children's speaking and listening skills, for example through role play.
4. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. It varies with the quality of teaching. In particular, there are differences in the quality of teaching between the two Year 2 classes. The weaker class management and organisation in one class mean that pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. This was seen, for example, in an English lesson on words with opposite meanings. Because class management was weak, pupils worked too noisily and spent too much time not concentrating. This slowed their learning. Standards would be better if the teaching consistently encouraged pupils to achieve more.

5. Standards in English are average in Year 6. Most pupils use appropriate vocabulary and grammar as they write stories, developing a clear and logical plot. They make good use of metaphors and adjectives to help bring their writing to life. They write book reviews and biographies and most produce some persuasive writing, for example producing a balanced argument on subjects such as *Why school?* By the end of Year 2 most pupils form their letters neatly and of a consistent shape and size. They write clear instructions, for example, how to make a pizza. They know that a good story has a clear beginning, a middle and an end. They use descriptive words effectively in their story writing and also write some poetry. They mostly spell simple words accurately.
6. Standards in mathematics are average in Years 2 and 6. In Year 6, most pupils can multiply decimal numbers by ten and 100. They can also divide by ten and 100 and they understand that multiplication and division are related. They can sort and analyse data they collect and represent it graphically, for example in a pie chart. Pupils know about angles and can construct and find the area of a triangle. In Year 2 most pupils can measure in centimetres. They can add and subtract sums of money to £1. They know some of the properties of common two-dimensional shapes, such as a pentagon and an octagon. Most pupils know the points of the compass. They can identify odd and even numbers and they have a simple understanding of fractions, for example as they divide shapes into two halves.
7. Standards in science are average in Year 6. Most pupils have a good understanding of the processes of pollination, dispersal and germination of flowering plants. They know, for example, that the anther and filament make up the stamen. More able pupils start to understand the plant life cycle. In Year 2, most pupils know what an electrical circuit is and are able to make a simple electrical circuit of their own, wiring in a switch and a motor. They understand the connection between the number of lamps in a circuit and their brightness.
8. The school has set appropriate targets for pupils in Year 6 to reach in national tests in English and mathematics this year and most pupils are on course to meet these.
9. Standards in most of the other subjects are average, both in Year 2 and in Year 6. The only exception is in music, where standards are above average in Year 6, as a result of the many good musical opportunities offered to pupils and the enthusiasm and expertise which the music co-ordinator brings to the subject.

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

10. Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good, a considerable improvement compared with the time of the last inspection.
11. Pupils very much enjoy school. They are enthusiastic in lessons. They are welcoming to visitors and enjoy talking to them. Once in class they get down to work very well and show a genuine interest in their work. This was particularly evident, for example, in an English lesson in which pupils had to explore the possibilities for making their stories more interesting, a task they took to with great interest and found some good solutions. These positive

attitudes are due to the very good relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils, to the enthusiasm of teachers and their generally very good classroom management.

12. Behaviour is very good overall. It is very good in most classes, but occasionally it is less good when classroom management skills are not as good as the school expects, and consequently the pace of lessons suffers. On the playground, behaviour is very good and very well supervised. There is immaculate behaviour in assemblies. Around the school and at lunchtime in the dining hall the behaviour is also very good. School property is treated well and pupils are appreciative of the attractive environment in which they work. There were few temporary exclusions in the past school year, a stark contrast with the period after the present headteacher arrived at the school, when behaviour boundaries had to be established. There have been no racist incidents. There is only one record of bullying this year.
13. Relationships are very good. This is a very happy school. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and enjoy working with them. Pupils are confident in speaking to members of staff about problems. Pupils help each other and give support. For instance in a religious education lesson, where pupils had to write playlets illustrating the difference made in a variety of situations when Jesus' teaching is followed, the level of collaboration was very good and some very pertinent examples were produced. A recently appointed teacher spoke of the welcome he had had on joining the school and the readiness of all other staff to spend time with him. In a personal and social education lesson, where pupils had to find out about each other's interests outside school and then tell the group about their partner's interests, the level of eager participation was very good. This was a task that was also effective at improving their speaking and listening skills.
14. Personal development is good. Pupils have opportunities to take on positions of responsibility or use their initiative, which they do with alacrity. There are limited opportunities for pupils to work independently in their lessons. The class representative system provides good opportunities for pupils to seek the views of their peers and present them to their regular meetings.
15. Attendance is satisfactory, as it was at the last inspection, although the actual figures show an improvement of 0.8 per cent. Unauthorised absence has declined to zero. The school day starts on time and there is good timekeeping throughout the day. The registration system is efficient.

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

16. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is much better than it was at the time of the last inspection. This is because the school has adopted the national guidance on teaching literacy and numeracy and there has also been a lot of training for teachers, enabling them to improve their subject knowledge and skills. In all, teaching in seven out of every ten lessons observed was good or better. Only two lessons were unsatisfactory. The proportion of good or better teaching is higher than that usually found nationally when primary schools are inspected and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is lower. Although the teaching is good in the Reception classes and for pupils aged from seven to eleven, the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is

satisfactory overall. There are weaknesses as well as strengths. The weaknesses lie mainly in one of the Year 2 classes. The teaching in the other Year 2 class is very good.

17. The skills of reading and the use of number are taught well throughout the school. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress in reading and number work. Even though they start school with skills which are not as good as those usually found at the age of four, they catch up, so that by the time they move into Year 1 most pupils have average reading and number skills. The teaching of writing in the Reception classes is unsatisfactory, although it is good in the rest of the school. This is because the children in Reception are not given enough opportunities to write independently. As a result, the standards they achieve in writing are below those expected when they transfer to Year 1. In mathematics, a weakness of the otherwise good teaching in Years 1 to 6 is that pupils have too few opportunities to apply their skills in practical settings, to investigate and solve problems.
18. The quality of teaching in the other subjects is mostly good. The only exceptions are in religious education, where it is satisfactory, and in physical education, where it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, although good in the rest of the school. No judgements are made about the quality of teaching in geography or music in Years 1 and 2, because too little evidence was gathered.
19. Teaching meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs satisfactorily overall, including those pupils who have statements of special educational needs. However, the provision for these pupils is not well enough organised. Some pupils receive very good quality support in lessons, from the skilled teaching assistants as well as their teachers. This enables them to take a full part in lessons and achieve very well. However, in other lessons pupils with special educational needs are not given the teaching and support they require, so that their learning is not as good as it could be. Individual education plans for pupils who have special educational needs are of variable quality. Some give good guidance to staff on how to meet pupils' particular needs but others are too general to be of much practical use.
20. The learning needs of those few pupils who have English as an additional language are well met, so that they are able to make good progress in their learning. These pupils are all at an advanced stage of learning English. The specialist teaching which they receive individually each week helps them develop the fluency they need to play a full part in lessons.
21. Staff are good at meeting the needs of boys and girls equally well, so that there are no differences in their learning or the standards they achieve.
22. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This means that they can explain and demonstrate things clearly, so that pupils easily understand. This was seen, for example, in a Year 6 higher ability mathematics lesson on algebra. The teacher devoted almost half the lesson to a clear explanation and demonstration of how to solve and construct simple equations. As a result, when the pupils moved on to work on some equations of their own in small groups, they could all solve and construct a simple equation and a few were ready to go on to more complex work, such as using combined operations, for example subtraction as well as addition, in the same equation. The good balance between

whole class teaching and group or individual work seen in this lesson is achieved in most classes. Teachers make good use of plenty of clear whole-class teaching, followed by appropriate opportunities for pupils to work individually or in small groups to practise and apply what they have learned. Teachers give pupils some good opportunities to show the others what they can do. This promotes their self confidence and encourages the others to think about their own work and try harder to improve. Good examples of this were seen in dance lessons in Years 1 and 6, where teachers asked pupils to demonstrate their movement sequences to the class.

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

23. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are fully implemented and sufficient teaching time is given to all other subjects. National guidelines for planning teaching and learning have been adopted in most subjects and these have been adapted to meet the particular needs and interests of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good across the school. Planning for teaching is appropriately matched to the learning needs of all pupils and builds systematically on what they already know and can do.
24. Boys and girls enjoy equal access to the full curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is satisfactory. The quality of individual education plans is variable, as the targets set for improvement are not always sufficiently specific to the individual pupil and do not always reflect pupils' needs well enough. They are now regularly reviewed and pupils and parents are involved. Pupils with statements of special educational needs get very good support so that they can have access to the full curriculum. Pupils on other stages of the register of special educational needs receive some excellent support from support staff in order to address their specific learning difficulties and also to enable them to access the same curriculum as the rest of the class. However, when there is no extra support, they make far less progress.
25. Subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and pupils' work to check that knowledge, skills and understanding develop smoothly as pupils move through the school. Teachers in the same year group plan together to ensure parity of provision. Good use is made of some specialist teaching, particularly in Year 5, in order to make best use of teacher's strengths. Lesson plans are appropriately detailed and teachers regularly modify these in light of their assessments of pupils' attainment and progress.
26. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and effectively encompasses sex and drugs education. In the junior classes, personal, social and health education is given a regular time-tabled slot but it is embedded in the whole curriculum in the infants. Personal development is promoted on a daily basis through the very good care and attention that all staff give to pupils. Overall, the curriculum successfully promotes the school's caring ethos and the intellectual, physical and personal development of the pupils. It



prepares pupils appropriately for the next stage of their education and the very good links with partner institutions ensure the smooth transfer of pupils into the Reception classes and at the end of Year 6, when most pupils transfer to the neighbouring secondary school. Pupils use the facilities of the secondary school on a regular basis. Drama productions are performed in their hall and their design and technology facilities are used to enable pupils to use machines to which they would not normally have access. The school has a mutually beneficial link with a local special school, whereby a few of their pupils are integrated on a part-time basis into mainstream schooling.

27. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. A wide range of sports clubs are very well attended and utilise the professional skills of local rugby players and cricketers. A thriving computer club supports the existing good provision for information and communication technology. The good music provision is extended by individual instrumental tuition from visiting music teachers, recorder groups and a choir. Additional funding is appropriately earmarked for initiatives to further support the school's teaching of art and music.
28. A wide range of local visits supports the curriculum and enhances pupils' learning in history and geography. This includes a residential visit to the Malvern Hills.
29. Community links with the school are good. There are good links with the local church and local businesses. For example, pupils design packaging which is produced by a local firm. A picture framing company comes in and frames one piece of art-work for every child. Examples of this greatly enhance the appearance of the school. Pupils visit the church to celebrate various festivals in the church's year, such as Christmas and Easter.
30. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good and is a strength of the school.
31. The provision for spiritual development is good. The school provides an environment where all pupils are valued. Stories and discussions reinforce the importance of appreciation for each other's values and beliefs. The result is that pupils treat each other with sensitivity and respect. The daily act of collective worship makes a powerful contribution to pupils' spiritual development through well chosen themes that encourage pupils to explore their own feelings and to understand those of others. Pupils report that they value the opportunity of coming together for collective worship. Religious education contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual development, for example as pupils learn about some of the beliefs and values of various world religions, including Islam and Sikhism.
32. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. It is very strongly promoted through the caring ethos of the school that is built upon respect for others. Staff unfailingly treat pupils with courtesy and sensitivity, and pupils behave in a similar fashion towards each other. The staff understand the importance of raising self esteem through rewards rather than sanctions and as a result pupils are prepared to have a go at most things during lessons without fear of failure. Through the behaviour policy all staff are aware of the code of discipline and it is consistently applied, supported effectively by the use of certificates and team points, which the pupils are keen to acquire. Moral development is strengthened

through religious education. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson on forgiveness, for example, where pupils were writing plays concerning moral dilemmas over the issue of forgiveness. It was clear that, in solving the dilemmas, Jesus' teaching was taken into account. Regular opportunities for pupils to talk about things that concern them (circle time) provide an opportunity for pupils to share views and attitudes.

33. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school provides many well planned opportunities to develop pupils' social skills. Pupils of all ages, including those in the Reception classes, take on responsibility in varying degrees according to their age. A particular strength of the provision for social development is the opportunity for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to develop their social skills by becoming a class representative. Pupils welcome the opportunity to give a short presentation to the class on their suitability for election and are proud of their role in helping to improve school conditions. In all levels of school life, pupils are given frequent opportunities to work together and participate as part of a group, as when older pupils worked in small groups to compose lyrics and melody in music. Older pupils frequently organise and run charity events and this effectively develops pupils' awareness of the need of others, both in this country and abroad. The wide range of extra curricular activities and school trips makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.
34. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Knowledge and understanding of pupils' own rich heritage is well promoted through English, geography, history, art and music. This is further enhanced by the provision of frequent opportunities for visitors to the school and by visits to local areas of interest. Since the previous inspection the school has endeavoured to improve the development of understanding of the beliefs and traditions of other cultures and in this it has been most successful. For example, in last year's "World Week" pupils learned about the clothes, customs and food of Japan, and practised African, Asian and Spanish dance routines. Religious education lessons also contribute to pupils' cultural development, as they learn about some of the beliefs and customs of a range of different religions. The school has recently established email and pen pan links with pupils in Italy, Spain and Germany. However, there are missed opportunities to fully reflect the richness and diversity of cultures within the United Kingdom.

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

35. Members of staff know pupils very well and because of this a good quality of care pervades the school. This is a substantial improvement compared with the last inspection. The school is a safe environment with all the expected safety measures in place and safety inspections recorded. Child protection procedures are good. The nominated person has recently been appointed and has had extensive training. The training programme has not yet been extended to all staff, however, particularly midday superintendents and newly appointed staff. Pupils with poor or changing home circumstances are carefully monitored by teaching assistants. Welfare facilities are good and pupils with health problems are identified to those who need to know. There are eight trained first-aiders, which is a sufficient number.

36. Procedures for the promotion of attendance are good. The school makes telephone calls to all parents on the first day of absence if no notification has been received. Letters are sent home requesting reasons for absence if none has been provided. The impact of poor attendance on a pupil's education is stressed to parents at meetings and interviews. The school works well with the education welfare officer in improving attendance.
37. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good. The emphasis is on creating an environment where attention is directed at the good things that happen, where praise is well used, and where all adults are excellent models of good behaviour. Where unsuitable behaviour occurs the consequences are clear and are uniformly applied, so that pupils have a clear choice between good behaviour and sanctions. The most common sanction is the loss of 'golden time'. This is a much appreciated period of free choice at the end of the week, and pupils can lose golden time if they do not meet the school's expectations. This is a strong incentive to behave well. Most staff are skilled in classroom management and these skills make a valuable contribution to good behaviour. Embedded in these procedures are the very good relationships within the school, because these caring attitudes pervade all that goes on and isolate any pupil who wishes to dissent from established behaviour norms. Counselling is provided for pupils who have difficulties in controlling their reactions, and last year a drama therapist was instrumental in helping some of the older pupils to refine their behaviour. There are good procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour, through assemblies, circle time and adults making a point of listening to pupils to hear their concerns and experiences.
38. There are very good procedures for supporting pupils' personal development. Mostly, the support comes from teachers' close observation of the progress of pupils and their interest in seeing them develop into mature and sensible people. Teachers talk in an understanding and caring way about their pupils, especially any who are causing concern.
39. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the standards pupils are expected to reach at different ages, especially in Years 2 and 6. They make good use of National Curriculum and other national guidance to assess how well pupils are doing. The management of assessment information has been simplified since the last inspection, when it was too unwieldy. Assessments are made of the pupils' attainments when they first start school, focusing appropriately on their personal, social and emotional skills and their language development. In addition to national tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 6, the school uses optional national tests in English and mathematics to assess standards achieved at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers satisfactorily use the information they gather, for example to set targets for pupils' future attainment and to group pupils according to ability in some subjects, such as English and mathematics. However, too little use is made of the data collected to track the progress of different groups of pupils and compare the standards they reach. For example, the school does not hold assessment data in a form which would allow it to compare the standards achieved by pupils who have had all their education at St Barnabas with those who joined at a later stage of their schooling. Nor is it in position to compare how pupils from the different language and minority ethnic groups do.

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

40. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. There have been appropriate improvements since the last inspection. Parents have favourable views of the school. In the questionnaires returned there is a considerably higher proportion of 'strongly agree' comments than there was at the last inspection. Parents appreciate the good teaching, feel that the school is approachable and know that their children are expected to work hard. They think that the school is well managed and the teachers have high expectations. The highest area of discontent was from one sixth of the parents answering the questionnaire who thought that they were not well informed about their child's progress. The inspection team agrees with the positive comments and finds that the information about progress is on a par with other schools and is satisfactory. This issue frequently occurs nationwide as a concern of a minority of parents who answer the questionnaire.
41. Information about what pupils are learning is regularly provided, as are newsletters. The prospectus is well presented and informative. The annual report by the governors could be more informative about the school's achievements. School reports contain good detailed descriptions about what has been done and what pupils can do. However, there are too few clear targets for improvement. The school believes that most parents would appreciate a simpler form of report and is considering a version that would clearly identify targets. Most parents attend the three consultation evenings at which their child's progress is discussed. Parents are provided with clear information on what the school is planning to teach and have been invited to attend numeracy and literacy demonstrations, although attendance was poor. The school participates in a family literacy and numeracy project called SHARE in which parents are trained to help their children at home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to come to a meeting once a term at which the pupils' individual education plans are discussed and many do so. Parents experiencing behaviour problems with their child at home are directed towards local courses that may help.
42. The school is very approachable, teachers being available informally at the end of the school day. Parents are made to feel welcome when they come into school.
43. The contribution of parents to their child's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. Parents support class assemblies and sports activity days. They help in the classroom, for example in food technology, and many parents have gone on to become teaching assistants. There is a very active Friends of St Barnabas Group that provides valuable finance for the school and helps to make school fun by arranging events such as discos. Many parents support reading and other homework activities. The school helpfully consults parents on their views of the school, for example through distributing questionnaires. Parents are invited into school to discuss their child's behaviour and attendance problems and, where appropriate, draw up plans for improvement.

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

44. The headteacher provides good leadership and sets a good example to her staff through her own good teaching, which she undertakes on a regular daily basis. She manages the school efficiently, with strong support from the administrative staff. She has a clear and appropriate vision for school improvement, which is focused on the development of pupils' self-confidence and good attitudes to school, coupled with the achievement of their full potential. Senior staff, such as the co-ordinators for different age groups and for subjects, share the headteacher's commitment to school improvement. However, the management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory as there are a number of weaknesses. The special needs co-ordinator does not have a good enough grasp of the requirements of the new national Code of Practice on special educational needs and so is not well placed to see that it is fully implemented, as expected, by the beginning of the next school year. The additional support for these pupils is too unevenly spread, so that some of them receive very good support from teaching assistants, but some receive none. Targets in pupils' individual education plans are of variable quality. They are not consistently useful in giving teachers and support staff guidance on what to do to meet these pupils' needs.
45. Although the headteacher and senior staff have carried out some checks on teaching, mainly in literacy and numeracy lessons, there has been too little of this and it has not been closely enough focused on what teachers need to do to improve their teaching. For example, the weaknesses in class management and organisation in a Year 2 class have gone unchecked so far this year and this is having a detrimental effect on pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour.
46. Although the school analyses the results of national and other tests to identify trends and strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and the standards they achieve, this process does not go far enough. There is too little analysis of the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils which would enable the school to check that it is meeting the needs of all pupils equally well – and to take action if it is not. For example, the school is not yet in a position to compare the results in national tests of those pupils who started at the school at the age of four with those who joined later, or compare the performance of pupils who are learning English as an additional language with those whose first language is English.
47. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. Governors are very supportive of the school and many make regular visits to classes and assemblies. Individual governors keep themselves well informed about the work of the school, there being particular links with literacy, numeracy and the Reception classes. A number of governors have undertaken appropriate training to help them understand and fulfil their responsibilities. For example, the governor with links to the special educational needs work of the school has attended training on educational inclusion and meetings concerning the introduction of the new special educational needs Code of Practice. Governors have kept a close watch on the recent building programme, which provided the school with four new classrooms. The governing body keeps a careful eye on progress towards the targets identified in the school development plan. Care is taken to see that the budget is set to take account of priorities for educational development as well as fixed costs, such as staff salaries.
48. Educational priorities are well supported by the school's financial planning. The headteacher and the governors manage the school's budget well and aim to use the surplus at the end of

the financial year to fund improvements that have been made possible by the installation of the four new classrooms. Specific grant is used for the specified purpose and special educational needs funding is topped up by the school. The day-to-day financial control and administration are efficient. Best value for use of the school's budget is achieved well. Options for expenditure are carefully evaluated, for example in examining the best way to incorporate a ramp between the offices and the classrooms. Competitive quotations are sought, taking care not to compromise quality. Comparisons are made where appropriate data are available and parents, staff and others are consulted where they have an input to make.

49. Priorities for development are well represented in the school budget. The school development plan appropriately identifies priorities for school improvement over the coming year, although there is too little planning for development in the longer term.
50. New technology is used very well in the management and administration of the school.
51. The school is satisfactorily staffed, with a good spread of qualifications. Some of the teaching assistants are seeking qualifications and all have attended a course in developing reading skills. Staff development is appropriately linked to priorities identified in the school development plan, with secondary input from individuals' agreed development needs. Performance management has completed satisfactorily its second round, and the appraisal of non-teaching staff is about to start for the second year. This is good practice. There are very good arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school. Staff are highly committed and there is excellent collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants, which greatly benefits pupils.
52. Accommodation is satisfactory. The new classrooms are a great benefit, although the acoustics require attention. There is very good accommodation for science and design and technology, but there is a need for a larger outside play area for the youngest children.
53. Resources are satisfactory overall. In mathematics, science, music and ICT they are good.

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

54. In order to improve the quality of education offered and raise standards, the governing body, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) Increase the amount and improve the quality of the systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, in order to raise the quality of teaching overall to match the best. (Paragraphs 45, 89, 104).
- (2) Improve the management of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs, by developing the knowledge, understanding and expertise of the special educational needs co-ordinator, and ensure that all those pupils who need extra support are identified and receive the teaching and support they require. (Paragraph 44).
- (3) Make better use of assessment information to track and evaluate the attainment and progress of the different groups of pupils present in the school. (Paragraphs 39, 46).

## **MINOR WEAKNESSES**

The school should also plan to attend to the following minor weaknesses:

- (1) Provide more opportunities for pupils to investigate, solve problems and find things out for themselves in mathematics. (Paragraph 96).
- (2) Extend school development planning so that it does not only identify priorities for the present year but also for the next few years. (Paragraph 49).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20	49	28	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) font changes here	n/a	416
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	78

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	27	33	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	24
	Girls	27	31	30
	Total	49	54	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (88)	90 (85)	90 (83)
	National	83 (84)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	24	22
	Girls	26	28	28
	Total	48	52	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (83)	87 (85)	83 (77)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	28	32	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	24
	Girls	23	22	28
	Total	40	39	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (77)	65 (73)	87 (85)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	20	22
	Girls	24	28	30
	Total	37	48	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (63)	80 (70)	87 (73)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	349
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	2	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: Y R – Y 6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5: 1
Average class size	29.7

#### **Education support staff: Y R – Y 6**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	673084
Total expenditure	719110
Expenditure per pupil	1733
Balance brought forward from previous year	51610
Balance carried forward to next year	46026

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	416
Number of questionnaires returned	145

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

### **changes in font in numbers**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	39	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	47	3	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	48	9	1	1
The teaching is good.	63	33	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	41	12	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	33	3	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	35	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	41	47	8	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	59	37	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	41	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	43	10	1	5

## **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**

55. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Children in the Reception classes make good progress in their learning as a result of the good teaching they receive. The teachers and support staff work closely together as a most effective team, and children are made to feel secure and happy and settle well into school routines.
56. The teaching is mostly good. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and children are provided with rich and varied experiences. Teachers are improving their use of information about what children know, understand and can do to see that the work set matches the children's needs. Specific strengths and weaknesses of individual children's progress are regularly checked and these are used to plan the next week's work.
57. There are very good links with the local play groups, which most children attend. As a result, children quickly settle into their new environment and teachers effectively build on previous learning.
58. The accommodation is satisfactory. Resources for the use of the outdoor play area have been improved since the previous inspection but because of limited space and a small covered area it cannot be used fully as an effective resource to enhance children's learning.
59. Many children enter the Reception classes with poorly developed skills in speaking and listening, knowledge of number and personal independence. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the majority of children have made good progress and achieve well. They attain the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, mathematical, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, standards in communication, language and literacy remain below average overall.

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

60. By the time they leave the Reception classes, nearly all children are achieving expected levels. This shows good progress and reflects the skilful teaching in both classes, where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. Children develop positive attitudes to learning and to each other. They understand what is right and wrong in a variety of situations, for example in taking turns in group activities. They learn to become independent and develop confidence, for example in choosing activities and dressing and undressing for physical activity sessions.

61. Children learn to discuss their feelings with adults and there are many examples of them taking the initiative in choosing activities, offering ideas and helping each other. For example, one child was observed selecting the cotton reel that showed he was playing in the sand. He proceeded to help his classmate by holding a beaker steady for her to pour sand into. Children persist in seeing activities through to their, or their teacher's, satisfaction, as when building a wall with sticks for the *Three Little Pigs* or making puppets of the pigs. Interesting resources captivate the children's interest and they show wonder as, for example, they watched enthralled when the teacher brought different building materials out of her bag.
62. Teaching in this area is good. All staff skilfully establish very good relationships with the children and, as a team, provide a good role model. Teachers plan effectively a variety of interesting tasks and activities. They ensure there are good levels of support for the activities set during the day to develop co-operation and concentration amongst the children. The focus of teaching helps the children to become more independent and self reliant. A good range of activities encourages them to make choices and decisions for themselves and to take the initiative in some situations. Children work and play very well together, supporting each other and sharing resources. Friendships are developing and all children are happy and secure in school.

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

63. A significant number of children, both boys and girls, begin school with skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing that are well below average. By the end of their time in Reception, children's skills in communication, language and literacy remain below average overall, although they are better than when they start school.
64. Most children listen well by the time they go up to Year 1. They listen carefully as the teacher explains the activities for the day. When children were told they would be looking at some poetry, one child responded enthusiastically, "Oh good, I love poetry". Children's powers of self-expression in speaking are variable. While more able children express themselves most articulately, a significant minority of children do not speak clearly and demonstrate a limited vocabulary. For example, when discussing the suitability of different building materials, one child explained in a well constructed sentence that, "If I had a house made of sticks the wind might blow it down," while a less able child was unable to explain clearly how he had made a straw house.
65. In reading, children enjoy sharing books with adults. They handle books correctly and show interest in the story, retelling it in simple terms. They re-read a familiar text correctly, demonstrating understanding that print conveys meaning and is read from left to right in English. Most children can identify letter sounds, and about one third have begun to recognise a few familiar words. Children are encouraged to improve their reading by taking books home to share with their parents. In writing, average and higher attaining children copy below adults' writing, while a few write some simple words independently, but there is not as much independent writing as is usual at this stage.

66. Teaching is satisfactory overall. All adults frequently engage individual children in conversation to positive effect and are good, active listeners. They allow the children time to formulate their responses and show that they value their efforts at communicating. However, there are missed opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills through role-play. In reading a good understanding is developed of the sounds of letters and words and how they fit together. However, the children are given too few opportunities to write things for themselves.

### **Mathematical Development**

67. During their time in Reception, children are given many opportunities to become confident and competent in their mathematical learning, including the use of appropriate computer programs. These include activities and teaching of counting, sorting, matching, working with numbers, shapes and a variety of measures. As a result, children learn the key skills and begin to use them confidently. For example, all the children can count to 20 and beyond.
68. There is a wide variation in children's mathematical ability but teachers plan work very well to suit individual needs and all children make good progress in their learning, including those with special educational needs. More able children can record simple addition and subtraction to 20 and one very able child can add three numbers together with confidence. Mentally, some more able children can make simple calculations, such as 12, count on 4, while one less able child was observed having difficulty when asked to construct a tower of 6 cubes. Most children show an interest in shape and space and are beginning to use mathematical language to accurately describe heavy, light, long and short.
69. Teaching is good, providing rich opportunities for learning and good understanding of this area of learning. Good planning ensures that understanding is developed through stories, action songs and rhymes, games and imaginative play. In one lesson where teaching was very good children made very good progress because of probing questions that extended their learning and interesting practical activities that were very appropriate to their needs, so that they all worked with enthusiasm and were suitably challenged. The use of a commercial programme for developing thinking skills is having a positive impact on mathematical development. For example, in one session, as a group of children began working with the teacher they enthusiastically explained to the inspector that it is important that they listen and think very carefully. They closely followed the teacher's instructions and each member of the group successfully established which was the longest and shortest of a row of sticks and correctly placed them in order of size. Some children realised that all the sticks need to be in the same place in order to make a fair comparison of length. Overall, there is a good balance between teaching and allowing the children to explore and develop their mathematical understanding through well-structured play.

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

70. Children of all groups make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world through many well-planned activities, which are usually linked to a topic or theme. For example, during the inspection activities were linked to the topic of homes. Through the story

of *The Three Pigs*, children were investigating the suitability of building materials. As they investigated the properties of straw, sticks and bricks they came to understand that bricks are used for building because they are strong. Children plant seeds and know from their observations that light and water are necessary for healthy plant growth. Children use tools and materials well. This was evident as they enthusiastically made stick puppets of the three little pigs. Most children were totally absorbed and worked very well independently as they competently cut around templates of the pigs and used sticky tape and glue effectively to join the sticks to the back of the cardboard cut-outs. Children are provided with good opportunities to use ICT to support their learning. For example, while one group worked with one teacher to produce a block graph of the colour of their front doors, another group was working with the other teacher as they learned to program a moveable robot. Children bring their knowledge of their own families and backgrounds to their imaginative play. They are developing an interest in the world in which they live as they paint pictures identifying natural and man-made features they have seen on a walk around the school grounds. They begin to develop an awareness of their own and other's feelings as they paint pictures of "what makes us happy". Prayers before lunch and at the end of the school day are successfully reinforcing the Christian ethos of the school. Children achieve well and are on target to achieve average standards by the end of the Reception year. This provides a good foundation on which to build the later subjects of science, religious education, design and technology, ICT, geography and history.

71. Teaching is good. Children are provided with a wide range of materials and experiences and encouraged to talk about or to paint and draw what they see. Teachers have established very good relationships with the children, who are managed well to ensure effective learning. As with other areas of learning, the support staff make an important contribution to the good progress that is made. They are well briefed and when working with groups of children they intervene very appropriately to support their learning.

### **Physical Development**

72. Before each morning and afternoon session, children enthusiastically participate in short "Brain Warm Up" physical exercises, which are effectively developing thinking and physical skills. They continue to develop their physical skills effectively during sessions in the hall. They have a good understanding of the need for exercise as they feel their heartbeats at the end of the warm up at the start of the lesson and explain that it is exercise that has made their heart beat faster. Children listen well and show good awareness of space as they respond to instructions to jog, hop, and jump around the hall. They demonstrate good co-ordination and balance as they move on apparatus and choose a type of roll with which to finish their movement.
73. Teaching is at least good and sometimes is very good. Children achieve well in this area of learning and by the time they are ready to start Year 1, most have reached the expected standards. Lessons are well planned to promote new skills and children work hard, enjoying the praise and encouragement they receive. In a lesson where teaching was very good, the teacher demonstrated very high expectations. Pupils were managed very well, with good consideration of safe practice on the apparatus. The lesson contributed very well to

children's social development as team leaders were appointed to help supervise the organisation of equipment. The children responded very well, working together in groups to carry mats sensibly and sitting quietly beside each piece of apparatus as they awaited instructions. Although children achieve well, progress is limited through the lack of appropriate apparatus for their age group.

## **Creative development**

74. Within the rich learning environment, children have good opportunities to develop creatively and expressively through music, imaginative play, art and dance. They have a good range of activities, allowing them to respond using their senses. Progress in this area is good and the children are on target to achieve average standards by the end of the Reception year, except in music where standards are above average.
75. They develop their creative and artistic skills by exploring colour and texture, using a variety of materials. For example, children are given good opportunities to use paint as they engage in a variety of printing, from finger painting and leaf printing to bubble prints. Samples of children's earlier work demonstrate good progress in the use of colour and observational skills. For example, in paintings of nocturnal animals children used the appropriate colours, while observational paintings of spring bulbs show a developing eye for detail. Children make collages using a variety of textures and shapes and make large and small models in two and three dimensions. They greatly value the models they make and are proud to write their name and place it beside the finished product. In music, standards are above average. Children sing a good range of songs from memory. They identify and name a variety of percussion instruments and know how to play them to achieve the best sound. They keep a steady beat and play together in accompaniment to songs.
76. Teaching is good. The whole staff team understands this area of learning well and provides a good range of opportunities for children to participate fully in a wide range of experiences and choose and work independently.

## **ENGLISH**

77. Inspection findings show that standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are close to the national average for pupils presently near the end of Years 2 and 6. Similar standards were reported during the last inspection, with the exception of writing, which was below the national average by the end of Year 6.
78. In the 2001 national tests for seven year olds, standards in reading were below average compared to all schools nationally and also compared to similar schools. In writing, standards were average compared to all schools, but below average compared to similar schools. In Year 6 standards in English were below average in the 2001 national tests and well below average compared to similar schools. The main reason why standards were lower last year is that there was a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs. Since 1997, the trend in standards in Year 6 has been broadly in line with the nationally improving trend. During this period there have been no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.



79. Throughout the school there is no significant difference in attainment or progress between boys and girls, or between pupils from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, achieve well in lessons and over time due to the good teaching and a willingness on the behalf of pupils to learn.

### **Speaking and Listening**

80. Pupils start in Year 1 with skills in communication, language and literacy, which are below average for their age. Most pupils develop as confident communicators as they get older. By the age of seven, for example, the most able pupils demonstrated good listening skills when responding quickly to the teacher's questions about the plot in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Less able pupils explained their work satisfactorily, as observed in a Year 2 lesson on story writing based on the text of Jill Murphy's, *Whatever Next*. They re-tell stories they have heard or read, give reasons for the school rules and enjoy reciting rhymes. During lessons they read aloud and explain their work while others listen, which enhances their confidence and self-esteem as well as their speaking and listening skills.
81. By the age of 11, standards in speaking and listening are similar to those usually found nationally at this age. The majority of pupils are attentive and eager to take part in discussion. Teachers encourage this, especially at the beginning and end of lessons. Many pupils, including some with special educational needs, are articulate and venture opinions about the text they are studying. A good example of this was noted in a Year 4 lesson where pupils eagerly contributed to a discussion about the use of connecting words in joining simple phrases. Similarly in a Year 6 lesson, pupils confidently expressed their preferences for characters while studying a text *The Strange History of Doubloon Isle*. In some classes, although pupils are usually keen to contribute their ideas, the rule about signalling their intention to speak is not always firmly established and pupils do not listen consistently well to each other.

### **Reading**

82. Reading is promoted strongly. All pupils are particularly well supported by a high quality system for reading at home and the use of the Better Reading Programme in school. By the end of Year 2, pupils read at a level close to that of most pupils of this age. They read a selection of literature, express opinions about stories that they have read and use a range of skills, such as knowledge of letter sounds, prediction and the context of the story to establish meaning. Most pupils are enthusiastic about books and enjoy reading simple narratives such as *Hansel and Gretel*, observed in a Year 2 lesson. They show curiosity about features of non-fiction text such as glossary, and more able pupils are keen to explore the use of antonyms.
83. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils read fluently, using expression which reflects the meaning of the text. Most use their knowledge of letter sounds and blends to tackle unfamiliar words, as noted, for example, while listening to a Year 6 pupil reading *Lord of the Rings*. Whilst the most able pupils use the context of the story to help them figure out

unfamiliar words, the less able find this more difficult, as seen during a Year 3 reading session. Most pupils locate books in the library with ease. During many lessons they use a thesaurus and dictionary well to enhance vocabulary skills. The majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 understand how increasing vocabulary adds to their enjoyment of reading and writing. For example, Year 5 pupils chose vibrant lines from Casey Jones' poem *The Highway Man*, such as "The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees. The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas", to illustrate the use of metaphors. They read a range of literature that includes modern poets, for instance Robert Nash, Roger McGough, female authors, such as Eleanor Farjeon and poems from other cultures, for example, Debjani Chatterjee's *My Sari*. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 select challenging books, including such classics as *Oliver Twist*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Fellowship of the Rings*. All pupils benefit from group reading sessions. Many pupils are able to discuss plot and characterisation confidently, as, for example, a Year 6 pupil did while expressing her enjoyment of *Lord of the Rings*.

## Writing

84. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to write in a number of different forms, such as lists of clothes they wear and accounts of stories and poems. In Years 1 and 2, most pupils rearrange words to make a sensible sentence and the most able set out sentences so that they follow a sequence or tell a story. Year 1 pupils write simple stories, re-telling features of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. In their independent writing they express likes and dislikes, for example, "I like to play in my garden". Pupils in Year 2 use imaginative vocabulary while plotting a story based on Jill Murphy's, *Whatever Next*. Pupils have some good opportunities to use their literacy skills, for example as they write at length in history and religious education lessons. Spelling skills are similar to those usually found at this age. Although pupils' writing is usually neat and well formed, few consistently use joined script in their everyday work. By the time they are seven, pupils' punctuation is becoming more accurate and words are often chosen carefully, especially by the most able, as observed in a Year 2 lesson using opposite words in sentences.
85. By the age of 11, most pupils write for a range of purposes, for example play scripts, instruction reports, biographies and book reviews, as well as creative and descriptive stories. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 understand the use of tenses, adjectives, similes and metaphors. The skills of dialogue and paragraphing are developed steadily in Years 5 and 6. Pupils improve their work by drafting, editing, proof-reading and then presenting the final form. The quality of creative and extended writing is improving and for many pupils it reflects a good depth of reading experience. This was especially noticeable in story plots drawing on features from the texts *Babe* and *The Strange History of Doubloon Isle* as they used language such as, "Only the trees swayed and shivered as the object shuffled along," to convey tension and mystery. In Year 5, pupils studying the text, *The Highway Man* learn about characterisation and figurative language and begin to use these features. Such interpretation and pupils' own subsequent written work reinforce the importance of language as a means of communication. In Year 3, writing based on *Stanley in California* contains colourful analyses of characters and sensitive and thoughtful writing from another person's viewpoint.

86. In all classes literacy is being improved through other subjects, for example, as pupils write up science investigations accurately and read and act out historical scenes for assemblies.
87. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and in seven out of ten lessons teaching was good or better. Staff have worked hard to improve strategies for teaching literacy. A particularly good example was seen in a shared reading activity when Year 6 pupils discussed the use of imaginative and descriptive language to generate interest and hold the reader's attention. In the same lesson questioning was used effectively to promote and assess pupils' understanding.
88. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and value their contributions to discussions, seen to good effect in a Class 3 lesson on instructional writing based on the route from Little Red Riding Hood's home to Granny's house. In English lessons, all teachers have established good routines and created a purposeful working atmosphere. This contributes well to the positive attitude of pupils, who generally work hard with enthusiasm and interest to complete their work successfully, exemplified well in a Year 4 lesson studying the process of explanatory writing. Relationships are good and pupils support each other well, giving help and encouragement to anyone who has a problem. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 2 lesson on descriptive and imaginative writing, when some less able pupils included words such as *gleaming*, *glittering*, and *sparkling* in their sentences. Teachers' close co-operation with teaching assistants has a positive impact on the quality of learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Occasionally, lesson introductions are too long, resulting in some pupils losing interest as well as restricting time for written and independent work. In the good and very good lessons, planning is focused clearly on practising and improving key skills for pupils of all abilities. For example, in a Year 4 lesson the teacher provided pupils with good examples from a text which reflected the importance of words for ordering time, such as *first*, *next*, *after*, and *finally*, to establish meaning. This very good teaching enabled pupils to re-order a group of statements successfully. The ends of lessons are used well to reinforce key learning points and offer effective feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve. The quality of marking is mostly consistent. At best it is positive, evaluative and sets clear targets and suggestions to help pupils improve.
89. The co-ordinators manage the subject well. They have carried out an extensive review of provision and, together with other staff, updated the policy and scheme of work. There is some appropriate checking of teachers' planning to see that national guidance is being followed and that pupils' learning progresses smoothly as they go through the school. However, there is not enough checking on the quality of teaching. A check is kept on standards, through statutory tests in Years 2 and 6, as well as regular testing in Years 3, 4 and 5. Test results are analysed and challenging targets are set for all Year 6 pupils. Both the co-ordinator and her assistant have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and the priorities for improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. Evidence from the inspection, including observation of lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work, indicates that pupils across the school, including those presently in Years 2 and 6, are reaching average standards in numeracy and all areas of mathematics, including data handling, algebra and shape, space and measures. The results of national tests in 2001 showed that standards in mathematics were below the national average and well below those achieved in other schools with a similar intake. However, evidence from the current inspection shows that the trend since 1997 of improving standards is continuing and that the 2001 results were an exception in a gradually improving picture, due to unusually high levels of special educational needs that year.
91. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when given additional support in class, but only satisfactory progress without additional adult support. Although poor numeracy skills are identified as a cause for concern on the individual education plans for several pupils, targets for numeracy do not figure on most plans. However, the setting by ability of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is proving successful in raising standards for all pupils in those year groups, particularly with the provision of a 'booster' group in Year 6. The use of additional funding, including local educational action zone money to provide extra support in the junior classes, is effective in helping to raise standards. Training for support staff enables them to work effectively alongside class teachers in numeracy lessons. When there is no additional support in lessons, pupils make markedly less progress.
92. By the age of seven, pupils are able to collect, sort and organise data into a variety of forms, such as block graphs and tally charts. Although their number skills are average, a significant number of pupils struggle to solve problems in a word format and cannot always interpret precisely what the graphs show. Most pupils have a good understanding of place value up to 100, and use a variety of methods to add and subtract numbers to 100.
93. By the age of 11, the most able pupils confidently use a range of different mental strategies for solving number problems. They can identify number sequences and patterns and apply their knowledge in other areas of mathematics. For example, they can devise and solve simple equations in algebra. Most pupils have a basic understanding of fractions and their relationship to decimals and percentages. They can link this to measurement of length, capacity and weight, and work out simple number problems. Although basic number skills are average, when presented with word problems, pupils struggle to identify which number processes to use and do not make connections between different aspects of mathematical learning.
94. The quality of teaching in two thirds of the lessons observed was good or better, with no significant difference between the infant and junior classes. However, in some year groups, such as Year 2, there is a difference in the quality of teaching in parallel classes. In the majority of classes, teachers manage their pupils well, class routines are well established and pupils work purposefully even when not directly supervised. Most lessons proceed at a good pace and no time is wasted.

95. Teachers are confident with the structure of the national numeracy strategy and it is being used effectively. The learning intentions for lessons are communicated to pupils in ways they can understand, and meaningful links are made between different parts of the lesson. As a result most lessons have an overall cohesion which helps pupils make connections between different aspects of learning. For example, in Year 1 pupils start the lesson by counting orally on or back in steps from a given number, then the lesson moves seamlessly into activities that require pupils to compare and order numbers from smallest to largest. Teachers plan their lessons in detail and throughout the inspection there were good examples of teachers changing their lesson plans in the light of their assessments of what pupils had learned. Different tasks are planned to meet the learning needs of the range of abilities in all classes. Support staff report back to class teachers on how well their groups completed their tasks and this information is used to inform planning of the next lesson.
96. In the less effective lessons, the work is not set in a context of pupils' prior learning. In some lessons pupils spend too long listening to the teacher and too little time is allowed for written work. An analysis of pupils' books shows that teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to investigate, find things out for themselves and solve problems. Where opportunities are provided, they do not do enough to encourage pupils to make connections between different aspects of mathematical learning. The most successful lessons are where teachers have the confidence to challenge pupils' thinking without always providing a "safety net". This encourages independence and enables pupils to learn from their mistakes as well as their success. For example, in a Year 3 lesson pupils had to decide on the most appropriate scale for the vertical axis of a bar graph when the volume of data increased.
97. Mathematics is led by two knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinators, both of whom provide a good example through the quality of their own teaching. They have monitored the teaching in other classes and used this to identify areas for improvement, such as strategies for developing pupils' mental number skills. This has been followed up by helpful demonstration lessons. In addition, they have provided training for support staff and have run workshops in basic number skills for parents. They provide mathematics booklets of games and activities which parents can use to support learning in school.
98. The co-ordinators give regular feedback on new initiatives through staff training days. They are active in constantly modifying and re-evaluating what is already good practice and committed to improving standards. In this they receive good support from the previous co-ordinator who is now a local authority mathematics consultant. The school has made good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection.
99. Very tight procedures are in place for improving standards. The co-ordinators analyse the results of national tests and identify areas for each year group to focus on. Planning is checked to ensure that these areas are being addressed and pupils' books analysed to check that the work reflects the planning. The assessment procedures are clear and manageable and well used to help teachers plan their next steps in teaching. For example, when topics are revisited, teachers use assessment information from previous lessons to determine the starting point for the new work.

## **SCIENCE**

100. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 in the 2001 national tests and teachers' assessments were in line with the national average, and also in line with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. However, teachers assessed standards in Year 2 to be well below the national average.
101. The inspection shows that standards are now average in both years. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials and living things are similar to those usually found at the ages of seven and eleven. They are much better than most pupils at collecting and recording evidence. They have above average understanding when making predictions and collecting evidence about them. This was seen, for example, as pupils in Year 2 collected data to show that sugar dissolved faster in warmer water than in cold water. Pupils aged seven also have an above average understanding of forces and movement, but do not yet expect all moving things to stop sooner or later. They are beginning to use computers to make tables for their data and bar charts to show patterns. Older pupils display a good understanding of the special language of science. They make good connections between things they observe. For example, pupils in Year 5 realised that a longer ruler made a lower note when vibrated than a shorter one. Pupils write well about what they have done and found out. In Year 6, for instance, pupils write clear explanations about the way flowers produce seeds but they do not yet take sufficient responsibility for writing their own plans for investigations. There are some good opportunities for pupils to use some of their mathematical skills, for example as they work out the average values of objects they have measured as part of their investigations.
102. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress when they are supported in lessons by the very skilled teaching assistants. Otherwise, their progress is generally satisfactory. Pupils learning English as an additional language are also helped to make good progress in their learning. There are no differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls.
103. The teaching is good overall. In a Year 2 lesson, some very good teaching made the pupils enthusiastic, confident and determined to succeed. The teacher had motivated them very well and then made them think carefully before investigating which balls would travel furthest along the carpet. Teachers make science alive and meaningful to pupils. Attractive displays in classrooms link science with the real world and as a result pupils find the subject more interesting. Throughout the school pupils benefit from a well-planned sequence of exciting and interesting activities. The best learning seen during the inspection was in Year 6, where pupils had been given the confidence to explain their answers aloud to the whole class and to engage in discussion.
104. The subject is well led and managed, overall. However, there is too little systematic checking on the quality of teaching. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **ART**

105. Standards in art are broadly average across the school, reflecting the situation at the time of the last inspection. This judgement is based primarily on looking at pupils' previous work and displays around the school as only three art lessons were observed during the inspection. There are no differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls, those who have special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language.
106. Standards of observational drawing are good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 1, for example, have used their knowledge of line and tone to produce drawings of apples which have real depth. By Year 2, pupils are confident with a wide range of media. Collages of fruit use a variety of materials and relate effectively to the work of Kandinski. A large-scale group weaving project stems from individual pupils' paintings, all in response to listening to *Spring* from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. All demonstrate a good appreciation of colour and composition.
107. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build effectively on these early skills in the key areas of painting, observational drawing, printing, textiles and clay work. Much of the work is rooted in other subjects, such as history, but there is an appropriate emphasis on the progressive development of specifically art skills. A particularly strong element is the development of pupils' understanding of different cultural traditions and skills. In Year 3, African fabrics form the basis of work on pattern. In Year 4, tie-dye techniques and batik work are linked to a study of an Indian village, and artefacts from the local museum are the focus for observational drawing. In Year 5, a history topic on the Victorians led to an investigation of pattern in the work of William Morris, involving the pupils in observational drawing using viewfinders, lino-cuts and printing. In Year 6, a geography topic on Padstow as a contrasting community provided appropriate opportunities for pupils to draw local buildings and objects such as a lobster creel. Using charcoal, pupils produced carefully observed drawings demonstrating a good understanding of line, texture and tone. The good observational drawing throughout the school is reinforced by regular opportunities for pupils to use sketch books.
108. In the three lessons observed, the teaching varied widely between good and unsatisfactory but, taking into account the evidence from pupils' work, teaching is judged to be good overall. In the better lessons teachers gave clear demonstrations of what they wanted pupils to achieve and had high expectations of achievement. In these lessons the emphasis was on the development of pupils' skills, and appropriate links were made with other subject areas. Lessons proceeded at a brisk pace and pupils were quickly engaged in practical activities. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils spent too long listening to the teacher, which left insufficient time for them to work on the task set. The task was undemanding, did not develop pupils' skills and was primarily accomplished by copying from a history text-book.
109. The art co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and provides good support for colleagues. She has been instrumental in developing staff confidence and expertise. She has written a good scheme of work, which ensures coverage of all the different elements in all year groups and includes useful elements from national guidelines. It provides for the smooth development of pupils' skills as they move through the school and makes appropriate links to different subjects. Good use is made of local art galleries and visiting artists to broaden the

curriculum. For example, a puppeteer has worked in all classes helping pupils to make different kinds of puppets. There has been satisfactory improvement in art since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has not been released from her own classes to observe teaching but checks on standards through examining pupils' work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110. Standards are average in Years 2 and 6. There are no differences in standards between boys and girls, those learning English as an additional language or those who have special educational needs. By the age of seven, pupils are able to design and make good quality products, such as a range of different wheeled vehicles. They have lots of good ideas to make the models more suitable for their intended purpose. For example, rescue vehicles have ladders and logos. However, the pupils do not yet think things through beforehand, for example, by making picture sequences to show what they plan to do. Pupils are already confidently using computers to improve their design work.
111. By the age of 11, pupils are able to mark out cut and fix a wide range of materials, including copper sheet, fabric and wood. They also use computers well to add pictures to text and to create logos for plastic bags and toy vehicles. Through good links with local firms they also develop a good understanding, when designing and making, of the need to please the customer. They are also learning to take products to pieces to learn how to improve the way they are made. They do this well with sandwiches, for example. They also improve the appearance of fabric products by using well-taught skills such as tie-dye. They are able also to carefully use a range of both hand and power tools. However, despite some product research and the use of paper templates, they have had too little opportunity to make their own design decisions and work from their own plans.
112. The pupils achieve soundly as they move through the school. They are enthusiastic because the teachers organize exciting competitions and visits and practical work in proper workshops. Nevertheless, progress does vary between lessons and between classes and sometimes work is done at the same level by both younger and older pupils. The two important aspects of the subject, that is designing and making, are too often taught separately. However, overall teaching is good. It has some very good features, especially in Year 2, where the teacher used models carefully made previously by the pupils, good design posters and very good subject knowledge to motivate and challenge the pupils very well. Because of this approach the pupils set enthusiastically about the task of improving their models and looking ahead with more confidence to design and make even better ones to please particular people. Good features, reflecting effective teaching, are apparent in the work produced throughout Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, as well Years 1 and 2. Teachers effectively use methods developed in other subjects, for example English, when teaching pupils how to produce good quality booklets or writing tie dye instructions and producing better celebration cards. In Years 5 and 6, teachers and pupils share an enthusiasm for the work done when describing photographs and products recently completed. Teachers also work effectively in a supporting role during workshops for the older pupils which are held at the neighbouring secondary school. Teachers currently lack confidence in some aspects of the subject, such as computer aided design.



113. Subject management is satisfactory overall. However, there is not enough regular checking on the quality of teaching. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory

## **GEOGRAPHY**

114. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, because geography was not the focus of the half term. Judgements are supported by evidence from pupils' work, display, discussions with teachers and pupils and teachers' planning and records.
115. The last time the school was inspected, standards in geography were average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Since then, they have stayed similar in Year 2 and improved in Year 6. Improvements are due to better teaching and planning.
116. In Year 1, pupils learn about the local area from walks, locating specific physical and human features such as parks and shops. They look at maps and photographs to examine the influence of people on the environment, before drawing a map of the busy road beside their school. They express their views on the dangers of this road in well considered letters asking for improvements to safety, such as a zebra crossing. In Year 2, pupils recognise the difference between their local area and a contrasting place from their study of a Scottish island, based around a story book character, Katie Morag. They develop their geographical skills effectively as they use maps and globes to locate the island and make comparisons between the island and their local town. Geographical vocabulary and knowledge are effectively extended as they identify natural and made features, including the beach, mountain, shop and fishing boats. In the coming term, the class bear, "Barnaby", will be off on his visits around the world in the company of other pupils or friends of the school. This is a good technique for helping to familiarise pupils with the major countries of the world and find them on maps.
117. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well in lessons, due to good teaching that effectively challenges and motivates them, so they are interested and concentrate well on the given task. In one lesson, for example, pupils in Year 4 extended their knowledge well as they compared the life of a woman in rural India with that of a woman in their own family. The teacher built well on previous learning as she briefly recapped what pupils already knew about the topic, before she made the learning intentions for the current lesson clear to the class. Pupils were well motivated from the beginning through good resources and probing questions which extended their understanding effectively. They were very well managed and a stimulating pace was maintained. As a result, pupils concentrated on the given task and behaved well, so that they made good progress. By the end of the lesson, most pupils had a good understanding of the basic conditions of village life, including the climate, types of houses, food and crops. They can identify India on the globe and are able to pinpoint the position of the village on maps.
118. By the end of Year 6, pupils' map skills are well developed. They use atlases and maps of various scales, progressing from local street maps to maps of Britain and the world. They have a sound knowledge of ordnance survey symbols and locate key features such as

mountain ranges, major cities and rivers and recognise different climate types. In their own maps, they use symbols effectively to identify main features. Pupils use data on climates competently to compare different countries. For example, they interpret a line graph to show the difference in rainfall between Kathmandu and Keswick.

119. Pupils' knowledge of people and places beyond the United Kingdom has improved since the previous inspection, largely due to the school's commitment to improving multi-cultural awareness. For example, all pupils participated in "World Week", during which time each pupil participated in a week of planned activities incorporating a wide number of countries and cultures world wide. A large "World Balloon " was erected in the school grounds for the week and pupils gained considerably in their knowledge and understanding through the different activities that were provided alongside the balloon. For example, they studied the major land masses and oceans of the world and became aware of the small proportion of the world's water that is fresh water.
120. Throughout the school, boys and girls make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding and in the application of geographical skills. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs are given appropriate work and support which enables them to make the same progress as other pupils. More able pupils are given suitably challenging work to enable them to make sound progress. All pupils benefit from the good use of resources and are efficient in searching for information from a variety of sources, including the use of ICT.
121. Planning for lessons has improved since the last inspection. National guidelines have been suitably adapted to meet the needs of the school. There is a good emphasis on developing literacy skills through geography, and numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily. There are no formal procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in order to assist in the planning of future work. The subject is satisfactorily managed.

## **HISTORY**

122. It was only possible to observe a small number of lessons during the inspection, none of which were in the Years 3 to 6. Judgements are therefore based on an analysis of pupils' work and discussion with them and with their teachers. Evidence indicates that by the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are average. Taking account of progress and the work covered over time, pupils' achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, is satisfactory.
123. Pupils begin to build their sense of chronology from an early stage. When pupils in Year 1 compare old and new household items and record differences and similarities, they demonstrate effectively their understanding of past and present. Good practical experiences, such as looking at the different buildings in the area, help to bring alive the stories of how people lived in the past. This is developed further when parents and grandparents talk about life styles when they were young. Pupils in Year 2 associate Guy Fawkes with a man who lived a long time ago, when they study the reason for Bonfire Night, and the Gunpowder Plot. Some of the more able pupils recall accurately events in the lives of famous people, such as

Florence Nightingale and James 1. By the time they are seven, pupils use photographs to compare the dress style, vehicles and buildings of former times with those of the present.

124. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the periods they have studied such as the Romans, Celts, Vikings and ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Tudors and Victorians. In their study of ancient Egypt pupils gain an insight into the different cultures and beliefs of people in the past. They begin to learn how democracy works when they study the different systems of government in Sparta and Athens. They learn that bravery, loyalty and sportsmanship were characteristics associated with these ancient peoples.
125. In Year 3, pupils become aware of the influences Roman occupation had on road building and their choice of settlements in Britain. They recognise from their knowledge of Latin words that Chester, Chichester and Bath were originally Roman towns. Visiting historical groups role play events from these periods to help pupils to understand why people behaved as they did. Pupils in Year 4 write with interest and an appropriate level of understanding about Henry VIII and his six wives. However, their knowledge of how these events in the past shaped the world we live in is limited, for example how the Church of England originated during the reign of Henry VIII. Visits to sites such as The Black Country Museum for Year 5 pupils studying The Victorians help pupils' understanding of the past and how it often influences the future, and they are aware of the importance of such social reformers as William Morris.
126. In the lessons observed pupils applied themselves diligently due to the effective and stimulating teaching. As a result of well organised lessons all pupils work together productively, best exemplified in a Year 1 class referring to life in the past while studying a wide range of old household items. Review of work from previous lessons ensures that knowledge and understanding are consolidated. Such an example was noted in a Year 2 lesson learning about the life of Florence Nightingale. All the teaching seen throughout the school was either good or very good – about half of each. Introductions to lessons were prepared well and provided many relevant facts to keep pupils interested. In some cases pupils are given opportunities in follow-up lessons to contribute useful additional information from their own learning, for example, bringing in artefacts or old photographs from home.
127. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. So far, he has not had the opportunity to observe classroom practice and check on the quality of teaching. He ensures that the resources, which are adequate, are maintained well, stored safely and easily accessible to pupils and teachers.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

128. Standards are average by the time pupils reach the ages of seven and eleven. The pupils are using computers reasonably independently to help them to solve problems and to improve their work. In Year 2, pupils use the computer to help them make sense of the numbers they have collected, for example in mathematics lessons on data handling. They also use computers to improve their writing skills and start to give programmed instructions to a robot

toy. In Year 6, pupils are confidently able to send and receive email messages and obtain information from the Internet and from CD Roms.

129. There are sound opportunities for pupils to use computers in English, mathematics and science. Pupils take it in turn to use the modern computers in all classrooms, for example to improve their spelling and writing. Pupils have some good opportunities to use ICT to support their learning in a range of other subjects. For example, they compose simple tunes for music in Year 3, investigate most popular film choices in Year 4, do calculations in Year 5 and investigate geographical locations and cultural traditions in Year 6. In Year 2, pupils use the computers very successfully to design the scenery for *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and in Year 5 pupils have designed logos for plastic bags, which a local firm then manufactured for them.
130. The teaching of ICT is good. Pupils are given very clear instructions to help them easily understand what to do. Work becomes progressively more demanding as pupils gain in both skills and confidence. Pupils in Year 5 confidently compared the use of computers with other methods of doing calculations, having been carefully supported in investigating the advantages and disadvantages of different methods.
131. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The teaching has improved and the school has maintained average standards well in the face of rising national standards. The computers have been updated and there are more of them than at the time of the previous inspection. All of the teaching assistants have been trained and the teachers themselves are confident with the equipment and the software. Three new teachers with good skills have been appointed and there is a good development plan in place. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Teaching and standards are checked by the co-ordinator, who provides helpful support and advice for teachers.

## MUSIC

132. Standards in music in Year 2 have remained the same since the previous inspection and are average. There has been considerable improvement in standards in Year 6 since the last inspection and they now above average. Improvements are largely due to teachers' improved subject knowledge and lesson planning, resulting in good teaching. A strength of music in Years 3 to 6 is the quality of singing, which is very good. Pupils are ably supported in their performance by the large school choir of approximately forty pupils aged from seven to eleven. The pupils who play musical instruments attain good standards in their ability to read and play music. In spite of the good standards achieved, a weakness in provision is the limited opportunity for pupils to use ICT to support their learning.
133. By the age of seven, pupils sing as well as most pupils of this age, with appropriate attention to pitch, duration and dynamics as they learn to control their voices. They play a wide variety of untuned percussion instruments, which they are beginning to identify by name. Most pupils can copy the beat of simple clapping rhythms and can maintain a steady pulse. They understand the difference between beat and pulse.

134. By the age of 11, pupils sing very well. This is evident in the weekly singing practice taken by the subject co-ordinator, where pupils learn to sing by heart a wide repertoire of songs. Pupils take turns lead the choir in the warm up session, where techniques to improve performance are successfully reinforced. Most pupils have a very good understanding of musical vocabulary and can identify which elements are being emphasised in a particular phrase. Pupils hold notes very evenly and with volume and can sing a two-part round. The school choir confidently maintains a four-part round. Pupils learn to compose percussion parts to songs and compose simple melodies to accompany their lyrics. They frequently record their performances in order to listen to, assess and improve what they have done. Music is used effectively to enhance learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 have produced musical compositions which effectively reflect the nature of the work of the artist Jackson Pollock.
135. Too few lessons were observed to be able to make a judgement on the overall quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2, but in the one lesson seen the teaching was satisfactory.
136. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching is consistently good or better and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress in their learning. This was evident, for example, in one very good lesson in Year 4, where pupils were preparing an orchestral performance using tuned and untuned percussion. The lesson was very well planned to allow pupils good opportunities to develop their skills. The teacher demonstrated very high expectations, and because he transmitted his own enthusiasm for the subject to the pupils they rose well to the challenge. His very good management of pupils ensured that they worked hard throughout the lesson. They handled the instruments sensibly as they worked collaboratively in a mature manner to practice their elements of the performance. They enthusiastically taped the final performance, which they listened to as a class, before making very constructive suggestions for improvement.
137. The school places high priority on the development of musical skills, and pupils' learning is enhanced well through the frequent opportunities provided for musical performance. For example, the school choir recently sang on local radio.
138. The subject is very well managed by knowledgeable and committed co-ordinators who have been influential in initiating changes that have led to the improvements in standards. These include giving demonstration lessons and assisting teachers with their lesson plans. National guidance is in the process of being adapted to meet the particular need of the school and this is also assisting teachers in their increased confidence and skills in teaching music. .

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

139. Standards in physical education are average in Years 2 and 6. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls, or between pupils who have special educational needs or English as an additional language. The school makes a particular point of providing many good sporting activities and this makes a strong contribution to pupils' physical education. Good use is made of expert coaching, such as that provided in rugby by the local sports development unit and in cricket by the county club. Although it was not possible to see the full range of activities

taking place during the inspection, the whole physical education curriculum is provided, including swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities.

140. In gymnastics, pupils in both Year 2 classes travel around the hall, on the floor and on the apparatus, using the space safely and include a jump in their movements. The standards achieved, as well as pupils' learning and behaviour, vary a lot from one Year 2 class to the other. This is because the teaching is much better in one class than in the other. Where the teaching is very good, the teacher has very secure class control and pupils respond well to this. They are attentive, alert and keen to be active, join in and learn. In the other class, weaker class control results in less positive attitudes and behaviour, so that pupils do not learn as much or achieve such high standards. Whereas in one class pupils safely and sensibly co-operate in setting out and putting away the apparatus, in the other there is some silly behaviour over this activity and the teacher fails to intervene, for example as boys tussle with girls as they set out the mats. There are other significant differences between the teaching in the two classes. For example, in one class the teacher takes very good care to ensure that pupils understand what they are to do on the apparatus, so that they can get straight on and work with confidence, enjoyment and increasing skill. They produce movement sequences which are at least as good as those usually found at this age and many do better. The best teaching gives pupils good opportunities to demonstrate their work to the class. This encourages the others to think about what they do, try harder and improve their own performance.
141. In dance, pupils in Year 6 developed a sequence of movements based on the flow of a river from its source. The good teaching established good class control from the outset, so that pupils listened carefully to the teacher's explanations and then worked sensibly together to refine and develop their dance sequences. Although they work mostly in single gender groups, there are some good examples of boys and girls working sensibly together, with the boys working as hard and doing as well as the girls. The less physically skilled are fully involved in lessons, try hard and do their best and are fully accepted by the class. There is very little of the self-consciousness about movement which can often be a feature at this age. Pupils are very thoughtful about what they do and there is a lot of good quality debate about how best to develop their dance sequence to represent the course of a river. Teachers give pupils plenty of good opportunities to perform as a group for the whole class, which encourages them all to try harder to produce a polished performance. There are good opportunities for pupils to evaluate one another's performance, which they do positively, making perceptive comments, showing that they have been watching carefully and thinking about what they see. Standards in dance are average. Pupils are able to develop and perform dance routines, responding to music with appropriate skill and co-ordination.
142. Pupils practise swimming in Years 3, 4 and 5, but not in Year 6. The fact that they do not swim in Year 6, together with the fact that many pupils do not go swimming outside school, means that not all pupils are able to swim the nationally expected 25 metres by the time they leave the school.
143. The subject co-ordinator has appropriate expertise and experience and manages the subject satisfactorily. Although she checks teachers' planning to see that the full physical education programme is being taught and that there is a smooth progression in pupils' learning as they go through the school, she has not yet had the opportunity to check on the quality of teaching. There has been satisfactory improvement in physical education since the last inspection.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

144. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average and meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, especially in Years 3 to 6, where it was poor. It is now satisfactory overall, so that pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in their learning. There are no differences in the learning or the standards achieved by boys and girls. The best teaching, seen for example in a Year 2 lesson on Palm Sunday, is lively, with a good balance of whole class discussion and explanation and group or individual activities. A good variety of teaching methods keeps pupils interested, paying close attention, and leads to good learning. Weaker teaching features less secure class management, so that some pupils spend much of their time not concentrating on the lesson, but wasting time, so that they do not learn as much as they should.
145. Pupils in Year 2 are familiar with some of the best known Bible stories. They know some of the stories about Jesus, His life and some of the miracles. They recall stories about Jesus healing people, such as a blind man, and about the raising from the dead of Jairus's daughter. They know that on Palm Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and that the people welcomed Him and cast palms in His path. A minority of pupils know that the Crucifixion followed Palm Sunday and that Christians believe that Jesus rose from the dead at Easter. In Year 6, pupils know about some of the other world religions, such as Islam and Sikhism, as well as Christianity. They know about the New and Old Testaments of the Bible and that John Wycliffe produced the first complete Bible in English. They know that Sikhism is a religion which started in India, in the Punjab. They know about the ten gurus of Sikhism and especially about the boyhood and life of Guru Nanak. Pupils understand some of the important differences between the practice of the Sikh and Christian religions, for example how prayer customs differ. Pupils' learning about some of the customs and beliefs of a range of religions makes a positive contribution to their cultural and spiritual development.
146. The subject co-ordinator is very experienced and brings particular expertise to her role, having been involved with the local education authority in developing the locally agreed syllabus. She is therefore able to offer good advice and guidance to teachers as necessary, but no longer has a role in checking on the quality of teaching, due to time constraints.