

# INSPECTION REPORT

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

Leamington Spa

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125715

Headteacher: Mrs V Jessamine

Reporting inspector: Mrs Gloria Hitchcock  
2535

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> January – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 192488

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cashmore Avenue Leamington Spa Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV31 3EU
Telephone number:	01926 425958
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Gallagher
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2535	Gloria Hitchcock	Registered inspector	Science History	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17454	Brian Aldridge	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18143	Bernice Magson	Team inspector	English Art Geography Music The foundation stage Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is located in an economically deprived area of south Leamington Spa. Most of the pupils come from the locality and their economic background is mostly well below average. There are 162 pupils, (86 boys and 76 girls) which is much smaller than most primary schools and smaller than at the time of the last inspection when there were 210 pupils in the school. They are taught in seven classes, with one age group in each class. Children start school in the reception class in September of the year they are five and leave at the end of Year 6 when they are eleven. Very few pupils have had the benefit of nursery education and less than half have had any pre-school experience. Consequently, children's attainments are poor when they start school. Twelve children were in the reception class at the time of the inspection. There are approved plans to open a nursery in the school in September 2001. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. Forty-seven per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is well above the national average and 1.2 per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need, which is average. The main areas of special educational need are emotional and behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties. Just over four per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and just over two per cent speak English as an additional language, which is higher than most schools, but they were born in England and have no external support to learn English. There are eight teachers, two of whom were temporary during the inspection.

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

The school achieves standards that are well below average but pupils make satisfactory progress from the time they start to the time they leave, given the low attainments of the pupils when they start school. Almost all teaching during the inspection was at least satisfactory, almost half was good and pupils are learning satisfactorily. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. The drive to raise standards has been hampered by a series of staff changes as well as an increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs but the governors, headteacher and senior management team have a clear view of what needs to be done to improve further. It is inclusive in its policies and practices and is led in a cost-effective way, providing satisfactory value for money.

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

- The care provided for pupils is good.
- The good provision for pupils' moral and social development, which has a positive effect on attitudes and personal development.
- The headteacher's new management structure and recently developed monitoring of teaching which are having a positive impact on standards
- Governors' have a good understanding of what the school needs to do to move forward.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- The frequency and regularity with which basic skills of reading, writing and number are taught in the infants.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in the infants.
- The use of time within lessons and within the school day.
- The rate of pupils' attendance.

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

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

When the school was last inspected in January 1997 almost a third of the teaching was unsatisfactory and in the infants two-thirds of the teaching was unsatisfactory. There was no overall judgement on the quality of leadership but the report identified a lack of policies and any management structure. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, especially in the quality of teaching and leadership and management. All the issues identified for improvement have been tackled satisfactorily and in particular good improvements have been made in the monitoring of teaching. The headteacher has worked closely and effectively with the local authority to raise the quality of teaching and the headteacher, senior management team and governing body now have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what it needs to do

to improve further. Standards are still low, partly due to the number of staff changes, which has disrupted pupils' learning and partly due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	E	D
Mathematics	E	D	E	E
Science	E	E	E	E

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

Children come into the reception class with very low skills of speaking and listening and make satisfactory progress but by the beginning of Year 1 their standards in the areas of learning are still very low. They make satisfactory progress through the rest of their time in school but standards in English, mathematics and science are well below average at the end of the infants when pupils are aged seven and are still not high enough by the age of eleven, when pupils leave school with standards that are well below average. This is reflected in the well below average test results for seven and eleven-year-olds over the last three year in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools. The inspection judgement is that pupils' achieve satisfactorily given their low attainment when they start school and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Since 1996 the trend in the school's average points score in National Curriculum tests for English, mathematics and science has improved broadly in line with the national trend.

One of the factors causing the low standards is that pupils' poor speaking and listening skills impede their progress in all subjects. Standards of reading and number are also not high enough, mainly because pupils in the infants are not sufficiently skilled in sounding out letters to make sense of words, knowing their tables and being able to add and take away. The test results are largely confirmed by the work seen during the inspection, but there is evidence in the juniors that the improved teaching is beginning to have a positive impact on what pupils can achieve, although with almost two-thirds of pupils in some classes having special educational needs, it is difficult to achieve national standards. During the inspection teaching was almost always satisfactory and often good but is not yet able to compensate sufficiently for the low starting point. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies is beginning to have a positive effect. Except for physical education in which standards are average, attainment in all other subjects, including information and communication technology is below average. The large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils of ethnic minority heritage who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls, although boys achieve slightly better than girls. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for 2001 and is on course to achieve them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy their time in school and participate in the life of the school well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils' behaviour is good but a minority are disruptive. However, they respond well to their teachers' good management.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships with adults are good and pupils often help each other out in class.
Attendance	Below the national average.



Pupils enjoy their time in school and have good attitudes to learning. They are interested and involved in activities. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and many of them take responsibilities, such as acting as monitors and ensuring that dinner registers are safely returned to the office. Attendance is below average and this has a negative effect of the progress of some pupils.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Most of the teaching is at least satisfactory and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. In the lessons seen, forty-two per cent of teaching was good and four per cent was very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in four per cent of lessons seen and this was in the infants. There were particular strengths in Year 4. It was also consistently good in Year 1, which was taught by a temporary teacher standing in for a member of staff who was ill. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are used satisfactorily overall. However, because the pupils' attainments are so low when they start school, too little attention is paid in the infants to the teaching of reading and numeracy, especially the basic skills of learning letter sounds, tables, adding up and taking away. Strengths in the teaching include good management of pupils in most classes, so that teachers use a good variety of strategies to ensure that those who find it difficult to behave disrupt others as little as possible. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour but the expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always sufficiently high, especially in the infants. In most classes a good range of methods is used to match the needs of all pupils although there are some inconsistencies in marking and the use of assessment to plan work, which inhibits learning in some lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are supported effectively by teachers and the classroom assistants, which has a positive impact on their progress.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All the legal requirements are in place and there is a sound range of experiences, including drama.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils receive appropriate help according to their individual needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There are strengths in the teaching of moral education especially in teaching right from wrong and in social education, which has a positive effect on pupils' personal development as they move through the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare.

The school provides parents with a good range of information about the life and work of the school and supplements this by offering a weekly 'surgery' for parents to come and talk about any issues or concerns. Parents' views of the school are positive. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of educational visits to broaden pupils' experience. Pupils are valued equally, regardless of their race, background or gender. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils know right from wrong and there is constant emphasis on consideration for others. The care for the pupils is one of the things that the school does well.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher and senior management team have worked effectively to improve the school since the last inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The relatively new governors meet their legal requirements and perform their duties satisfactorily. They have good plans for further improvement and are active and well informed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher has worked closely with the local authority to devise an effective programme of checking on classroom practice, which has improved the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school spends the money available to it according to the educational priorities that have been identified in its improvement plan.

The management team has made improvements in the quality of teaching, through its systematic checking of teachers' planning and their work in classrooms. The headteacher, senior management team and governing body have a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. They are committed to raising standards further but have been adversely affected by problems caused by staff changes and recruitment difficulties. The school satisfactorily seeks 'best value' in its spending decisions especially in relation to the purchase of goods and services. The level of staffing and accommodation is adequate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Their children like school and they make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children become mature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about how their child is getting on.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• The range of activities provided.</li> <li>• Behaviour.</li> <li>• The extent to which the school works with parents.</li> </ul>

The number of parents attending the pre-inspection meeting and returning the questionnaires seeking parents' views was low. The inspection team broadly agrees with most of the positive aspects of parents' views. The inspection team thinks that an appropriate amount of homework is used well to support pupils learning in school and that the range of activities provided is adequate. The school has improved the ways it works with parents considerably since the last inspection and the information provided for parents is good although the annual written report is not sufficiently informative about children's progress. Most pupils' behaviour is good but a minority of pupils have difficulty in controlling their behaviour and are sometimes disruptive. Behaviour overall is judged to be satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school has set realistic targets for the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001 and is on course to meet them. The targets are below those set nationally because a large proportion of pupils taking the tests have special educational needs. Targets for 2001 are that 58 per cent of pupils should reach average standards in both English and mathematics. Given that pupils start school with attainments that are very low and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in school and achieve satisfactorily. This is because the school provides sound support for pupils with special educational needs. The proportion of pupils reaching standards that match the national average has risen steadily since the last inspection but the standards nationally have also risen at about the same rate, so standards are still well below average by the time they leave school.
2. In 2000 the school's results in national test for seven-year-olds was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics and for eleven-year-olds was well below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards were also well below average when compared with similar schools. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The evidence of the inspection matched the test results.
3. When pupils start school in the reception class at the age of four, attainments are very much lower than expected for their age, especially in their use of language, their listening skills and their use of number. Very few can listen to their teacher and, although a few can speak in sentences, most answer with a few words or simply sounds. They make satisfactory progress during their time in the reception class, especially in personal and social skills where they make good progress due to the good teaching of this element of their learning. However, by the time they leave the Foundation Stage to start the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1 standards are still very low.
4. In the infants pupils make satisfactory progress in English so that by the time they are seven most pupils will respond to teachers' questioning, although many still use clipped phrases rather than extended explanations. However, unless they are actually engaged in an activity very few pupils listen for extended periods of time. This improved in some lessons during the inspection when Year 1 pupils taught by a temporary teacher managed to concentrate for reasonable periods when they worked on magnetism in a science lesson. By the end of the infants many pupils can read a simple story but often need adult help to make sense of the meaning. More able pupils can work out words by sounding out the letters but most pupils do not have sufficiently well developed skills to help them with their reading and writing.
5. Progress in writing is satisfactory due to teachers' great emphasis on writing and by the time they are seven many can write a few sentences, though many still need adult support. By the end of the juniors most pupils can read independently and the more able have favourite authors such as Roald Dahl. Others read books from the class library but many do not read for pleasure and are hampered in their progress by the lack of basic skills such as sounding out letters when they come to unfamiliar words. The range and quality of books available in the school is inadequate and this also inhibits pupils' progress in reading. Progress in writing is satisfactory in the juniors and there is evidence that progress is speeding up, especially in Year 3 and Year 4. The school provides weekly practice in grammar, punctuation and spelling but presentation and handwriting are still poor.

6. In mathematics, pupils in a Year 1 lesson pupils could work out the answers to questions about shopping, for example when they chose a teddy costing 6p and an apple costing 5p, how much would it cost altogether? The more able pupils in this class could do subtraction from 20p and the less able could subtract from 10p, using number lines to help them. Seven-year-olds could add two numbers up to 12 but many had difficulty beyond that. The rate of progress picks up in the lessons for eight and nine-year-olds due to the good teaching pupils receive. In particular, the pace of lessons in these classes is brisk which keeps pupils focussed and interested. In a lesson for nine-year-olds pupils added the weights of different items, including weighing themselves on scales, and made progress in estimating by guessing each other's weight. By the time they leave school at eleven pupils are beginning to understand how to use calculators to convert fractions to decimals and in the top set pupils played a game where they converted fractions to decimals mentally. Although teachers provide opportunities for number practice, pupils' skills in knowing their tables and adding and taking away are still well below average.
7. Standards in science are well below average at seven and at eleven. Pupils make satisfactory progress due to the teaching they receive and by the end of Year 2 most can identify from a picture which objects are powered by electricity and where there are safety hazards associated with electricity. The more able know that materials can be changed by heat, for example one pupil said 'We heated bread to make toast'. Progress is satisfactory overall in the juniors, though it speeds up in Years 3 and 4. By the time they leave school pupils know that some materials are better than others at providing insulation and they have a basic knowledge of the solar system and reasons for shadows changing throughout the day. The more able can explain what a solution is after carrying out an experiment with four different solids and beakers of water. However, many had difficulty in remembering what 'soluble' and 'insoluble' meant. This is partly because a large proportion of the class have special educational needs and partly because their lack of basic reading and writing skills limits the standards they can achieve.
8. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well below average at the end of the infants and juniors. Pupils understand the basic functions of word processing and have used CD-ROMs but, because the new computer suite has only recently been connected to the Internet, their skills in using e-mail and using computers to control objects such as robots are not sufficiently well developed. Computers are not used sufficiently in other subjects.
9. In all other subjects standards are broadly below average, with some strengths in singing and physical education. The school's inclusive policies work effectively, which means that pupils with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic origins, boys and girls all have equal access to the learning opportunities available in school. This has a positive impact on their progress, and they achieve satisfactorily. In particular, the classroom assistants provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs, which has a positive impact on their learning and achievements.
10. Pupils identified as having special educational needs in reading, writing and numeracy make satisfactory progress in relation to their abilities and prior attainment and achieve satisfactorily. Their needs are identified after initial assessment in the reception class and following further monitoring in school. Pupils are placed on a register of special educational needs and targets for improvement are agreed annually. In some cases these targets are reviewed more frequently as required. Pupils generally achieve standards in line with annual education plans. However, for some pupils with specific emotional and behavioural difficulties targets for improvement lack sufficient detail to ensure progress and for these pupils their achievements at the end of each year are unsatisfactory.

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

11. Pupils' attitudes to school and the relationships they have with each other and with their teachers are good. The majority of pupils respond well to the positive values promoted by the school and their personal development is also good. The standard of behaviour is satisfactory overall both in class and around the school. In lessons when pupils are fully involved in and excited by the activity, their attitudes and behaviour are very good. These positive features create a community in which most pupils feel valued. The quality of pupils' response to these aspects of development has been maintained well since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory and good to very good when the teaching was strong. Most of the parents who expressed an opinion prior to the inspection approve of the attitudes and values promoted by the school. Although the majority of pupils enjoy coming to school, the level of attendance is below the national average and is unsatisfactory. Attendance is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection.
12. The children in the Foundation Stage enjoy their time at school and have good relationships with their teachers, with each other and with other adults who work with them. Most children arrive at school in good time and settle happily into the day. They take part in the activities with enthusiasm and generally respond well to instructions. They understand the routines of the classroom and what kind of behaviour is expected of them. They respond well to praise and try hard to achieve this recognition.
13. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, take part in all aspects of school life with enthusiasm and interest. The majority of pupils work hard in their lessons, and sometimes become excited by what they are learning. In a science lesson, for example, Year 4 pupils, conducting a fair test experiment, rose to the challenge of the teacher's high expectations and willingly offered predictions. Pupils' responses to the structure of the literacy and numeracy lessons are often good. This was exemplified in a Year 1 literacy lesson when the brisk pace set by the teacher encouraged the pupils to try their best throughout the lesson. There are, however, a significant minority of pupils who have a short attention span, become bored easily and distract their classmates, impeding the progress they make. Many pupils have poor listening skills and cannot accurately remember what they have learned in previous lessons. Although many older pupils understand the purpose and value of education, some do not have high enough expectations of themselves and of their prospects in life. They lack the confidence and motivation needed to achieve better results. Analysis of parents' views prior to and during the inspection indicates that most pupils like coming to school and this was confirmed in talking to the pupils themselves.
14. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground is satisfactory overall. Most respond positively to the school's expectations of their behaviour and have a clear understanding of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the school community. Not all, however, respect the school and class rules and, when teachers' strategies to control behaviour are not effective, learning is disrupted and progress is unsatisfactory. Prior to the inspection a few parents raised a concern about the standards of behaviour and bullying in the school. Pupils themselves confirm that a small number of their classmates persistently behave in an unacceptable fashion and they strongly disapprove of this type of behaviour. Although they express some concern about bullying, they clearly understand the need to speak to someone if they are unhappy. They express confidence in the way in which the school handles this type of behaviour.
15. Pupils are aware of the structured sanctions that are applied and most respond well to these systems. They value the rewards and try hard to achieve them. They move about the school sensibly and, although playtimes are boisterous and active, no deliberate unkindness was observed. There were two pupils excluded for a short period during the last academic year. This year, one pupil has been excluded for three days last term and a pupil is currently excluded,

awaiting support from external agencies before returning to school. All exclusions have been as a result of unacceptable behaviour.

16. The personal development of most pupils is good overall, firmly based on the good relationships that they have with their teachers and with each other. This creates a well-ordered atmosphere in the school in which pupils feel safe and valued. Many pupils work to good effect in pairs and groups and, when given the opportunity, can organise their work to achieve the objective of the task. Although most pupils clearly understand that what they do and say has an impact on their classmates, a small minority show little respect for the feelings of others. They comment that the use of inappropriate language by some pupils upsets them.
17. Most pupils are friendly and polite, holding doors open and quickly stepping back to allow adults to pass. Year 5 pupils, for example, unprompted and almost without exception, thanked the bus driver for driving them to and from the swimming pool. They know the difference between right and wrong although do not always make the right choices. They raise funds for school activities and charities. Pupils carry out their classroom responsibilities sensibly, and older pupils perform a number of whole school jobs conscientiously. Whilst many pupils achieve appropriate levels of maturity for their age, a significant number have low self-esteem and lack self-confidence.
18. Most pupils with special educational needs are well integrated within their class group. As good relationships exist with teaching and non-teaching staff they are willing to tackle new situations and to participate in all school activities. Many pupils with special needs behave well and take pride in their achievements. A minority of pupils has less positive attitudes to school and on some occasions display inappropriate behaviour to other members of the class. The school is aware of the difficulties faced by these pupils and is seeking to address their needs more appropriately.
19. Overall attendance for the year 1999/2000 was below the national average and is unsatisfactory. The reported level of unauthorised absence, however, is slightly better than the average. Attendance statistics for the current year indicate a further drop in attendance. Whilst most pupils attend regularly, there is a significant minority who do not, and this has a detrimental impact on what they achieve. A small amount of the absence relates to pupils who have actually left the school but are kept on roll until the school is notified of their registration in another school. Most pupils arrive at school on time and registration is completed quickly and efficiently.

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

20. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, based on a combination of lesson observations and examining the previous work of the pupils. During the inspection most of the teaching was at least satisfactory and 42 per cent was good. There was very good teaching in four per cent of lessons, which took place in the juniors. There was unsatisfactory teaching in another four per cent of lessons, in the infants, which was due mainly to the teacher's difficulty in controlling the behaviour of the pupils in lessons where she had no additional adult help. There was consistently good teaching in Year 4 and in Year 1, where there was a temporary teacher standing in for a member of staff who was ill.
21. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when 31 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and in the infants this rose to 66 per cent. The improvement is due partly to improved leadership and management, which has resulted in systematic checking by the headteacher, senior management team and local authority advisers on the teaching within classrooms. Teachers now receive feedback on their performance together with targets for improvement. The improved quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning, but has not yet resulted in a rise in standards. This is partly because there are more pupils with special educational needs than at the time of the last inspection and partly because of the large number

of staff changes in the last three years. The systematic efforts of the leadership and management of the school to improve the quality of teaching and standards in the school have been frustrated by the departure of many of those who have benefited from the training.

22. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has also had a positive impact on teaching; the school has taken advantage of the support offered by the local authority, which included specialist visits to monitor teaching. This has had a positive impact on teachers' subject knowledge and resulted in pupils making satisfactory progress. However, because of the low level of many pupils' attainment when they start school, and because there is not sufficient attention paid to teaching the basic skills needed for reading and writing in the infant years, standards in these areas are not sufficiently well developed to help them make good progress as they move up the school.
23. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, with a significant proportion of good teaching; there are particular strengths in the teaching of personal and social development, which helps pupils settle into school and become independent, for example they are expected to dress and undress themselves for physical education, though help is given to those who get into difficulties. Staff keep careful records of pupils' achievements and set targets for improvements, which has a positive effect on their progress. A comparative weaknesses in the teaching in the foundation stage, as well as in the rest of the school, are the opportunities for developing listening skills. Although they do take place listening is not given sufficient planned focus, which is particularly vital for these children.
24. A particular strength is most teachers' skills in successfully managing the sometimes challenging behaviour of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In almost all lessons this means that the work of other pupils is not disrupted and has a positive impact on their learning. However, the targets for improvement for some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties lack sufficient detail to ensure their progress. Pupils' learning and the progress they make are satisfactory throughout the school as a result of the sound and sometimes good teaching they receive. A weakness in the teaching is that in some lessons the pace is too slow and time is not used well. This slows down the rate at which pupils learn. Another weakness is that too many worksheets are used in the infants, which restricts pupils' ability to record their ideas in their own way and does not challenge them to think for themselves sufficiently.
25. Other strengths in the teaching include teacher's good use of resources to help learning, as when the teacher in the Foundation Stage used teddies and wooden 'speckled frogs' to help pupils count from one to five. Teachers throughout the school use homework well to extend pupils' learning in school as when some higher attaining pupils in the juniors downloaded information about Queen Victoria to extend their work in history. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and the juniors but although expectations overall were satisfactory during the inspection, examination of pupils' books indicates that they are not always sufficiently high in the infants. Teachers have improved their teaching of scientific enquiry since the last report and now provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to experience practical experiments but they still tend to limit pupils' ability to think for themselves by providing the exact materials pupils need for a particular experiment.
26. Pupils with special educational needs are taught both in class alongside all other members of the class and in smaller groups outside of the classroom, which ever is most appropriate for their needs and when adult help is available. Class teachers have appropriate expectations of pupils, and in literacy and numeracy lessons plan work that is relevant, offers a good level of challenge and makes good reference to the resources that are necessary to make the lesson successful. In these well-planned lessons the teachers managed the pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties well. In less successful lessons planning has not given sufficient consideration to the challenge in work or to the required resources needed so that the pupils with special needs can

remain on task. One teacher had difficulty managing the large number of pupils with behavioural needs in the class especially at times when there was no additional classroom assistant available. The teacher had an insufficient range of teaching strategies to ensure that pupils know and understand class rules, remain on task and respect the rights of others. In the scrutiny of pupils' mathematics books, some work in the infant classes had been marked correct when it was not, which impedes pupils' progress.

27. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and effort and the most successful teaching takes place when teachers insist that pupils are listening and behaving properly before continuing with the lesson, as in a Year 3 mathematics lesson. They implement the school's inclusive policies well, so that all pupils including boys and girls, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational need have equal access to all the learning opportunities offered in the school. Classroom assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning through their effective support of pupils with special educational needs, as when an assistant in Year 6 constantly moved around the room during a science investigation helping those with special educational needs as well as dealing with queries from different groups of pupils. Questioning is used effectively throughout the school to probe pupils' understanding and extend their learning further. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson the teacher used a series of questions to probe pupils' understanding of magnetism, starting with 'What is special about a magnet?'
28. Teaching would be improved further by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in the infants, increasing the pace of lessons, teaching the basic skills needed for reading and number more frequently and regularly, using pupils' learning in English and mathematics more frequently in other subjects and ensuring that all teachers have the skills necessary to manage classes with a significant number of pupils with emotional and behavioural needs.

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

29. The school was encouraged to upgrade curriculum policies, schemes of work and advice especially in mathematics and the use of computers as a key issue in the last inspection in 1997. The school has made good progress on this issue and subjects now have policies and most, with the exception of music, have schemes of work which set out the work pupils are expected to do in each year group. Now there are good learning opportunities for children in the reception class and these help to ensure that children develop their skills well at this stage of their education. There are satisfactory learning opportunities for pupils aged from five to eleven, which include all of the subjects of the National Curriculum. The curriculum meets legal requirements and is properly planned so that policies are helpful to staff members. The long-term and medium-term plans that teachers have made are particularly helpful and ensure that teachers have a suitable knowledge of how learning experiences are linked. These plans also help co-ordinators to monitor the work in their subjects. Most daily plans show what pupils are expected to learn although some still show activities and tasks rather than learning targets. The range of learning now includes more opportunities to work with computers. There is more work to be done in the areas of modelling and control, for example using electronic instructions to control the movement of a toy robot, but an improvement has been made to the provision for information and communication technology.
30. The quality of the curriculum over the school year is satisfactory overall. The school has rightly emphasised the teaching of English and mathematics. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory overall, although there is still not enough emphasis on the teaching of basic skills to Year 1 and 2 or on the teaching of listening skills in the Foundation Stage. The planning of the daily timetable does not maximise the use of the time available for learning. Some lessons are too long, especially for the younger pupils. The range of



learning opportunities includes a good programme for sex education and other personal and health issues with the exception of drug abuse awareness, which the governors' curriculum committee is currently tackling. The work in this area is good and policies are formulated and reviewed in an open and constructive manner, with staff, governors and parents involved in these important areas of learning. This is another improvement since the last inspection when governors were found not to be involved in curriculum planning and policymaking.

31. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils identified with special educational needs and placed on the special educational needs register. This register is reviewed annually to ensure it reflects the needs and current levels of provision needed for any pupil. The teachers write individual education plans for each pupil on the register and seek external advice if they are unsure of suitable strategies to employ. Some of the individual education plans for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that pupils make good progress. Outside specialist help is bought by the school when considered appropriate so that those in greatest need have full access to the National Curriculum. A member of the governing body monitors the provision in school and offers useful advice and support if required.
32. The school ensures that all pupils have access to the National Curriculum and other areas of learning. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory; it includes sports activities run by community members, visits to places of interest which support learning in geography and history, and visits to the school by musical and theatrical groups. These range from lunchtime games clubs to sports activities and a learning club held after school which covers art and craft work. Links with other schools are satisfactory and members of staff work hard with colleagues from other schools so that young children will have an easy transition from playgroup to school and from this school to the next stage of their education as eleven-year-olds.
33. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall which is an improvement since the last inspection. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The school is an active member of a church community and the school's entrance and special areas of classrooms are set aside for prayer. These areas are tastefully displayed with symbols of faith. Each session of the day ends with prayer and reflection is enhanced in assemblies by candles being lit. Prayers are, at times, well led by teachers and consider the world outside of school in a considerate and sensitive manner. In classrooms and in the day-to-day round of lessons, few opportunities were observed in which pupils stopped and thought about special events or times or about activities which take place as part of their day-to-day work. These opportunities are not planned in the curriculum, an observation that was made at the last inspection.
34. The provision for moral development is good and teachers and other members of staff are consistent in their application of rules as teachers afford pupils opportunities for discussions pupils develop their understanding of right and wrong. They have strong opinions about their world and how people are affecting the environment. Rules setting out good standards for behaviour are agreed by all members of the class and displayed prominently in all rooms. The school's mission statement and aims are also displayed. This aspect of pupils' development has good links with other curriculum areas and discussions are held in the classes for older pupils about natural disasters, which helps them to understand how the world supports areas in difficulty.
35. The provision for social development is good. Of particular note is the work of teachers and learning support assistants in helping pupils who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties. Their calm and structured approach to helping these pupils is, at times, of very good quality and the help and support they give helps pupils to be more fully involved in their lessons. The school's programme for personal, health and social education links well to other curriculum

areas and helps pupils understand what it is to be a caring citizen. Fund raising for charity, work in the community and activities such as gardening and helping other pupils support pupils' social development. Residential visits are helpful in this area although the school has noticed a decline in the number of families who are able to send their children.

36. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils are presented with opportunities to listen to live and recorded music and performances by actors. Visits to places of interest support learning in geography, history and religious education. Visits to museums and work-study centres support cultural development. The school also provides opportunities for pupils to work with children from other schools. However, an area for development remains the opportunities given to pupils to develop an understanding of other faith and cultural groups. This was a finding of the last inspection and not enough development has taken place to address the lack opportunities in this aspect of curriculum provision.

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

37. The welfare of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is an important priority for the staff and governors of the school. The procedures the school has established to ensure that pupils are well cared for are successful overall. Throughout the school pupils' personal development is monitored and supported effectively and most pupils become increasingly mature and sensible individuals. The procedures for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. The information gathered is beginning to prove effective in providing a good level of educational support and guidance for each individual. The good relationships between pupils, their teachers and other members of staff ensure that the pupils feel safe and happy within the school community. This good quality of pastoral care provided for pupils has improved since the last inspection and the weaknesses identified at that time have been successfully remedied. The support and guidance provided for those pupils with a statement of special educational needs are good.
38. The children in the Foundation Stage are well cared for during their time in school. There are good procedures for introducing both children and parents to the school and the children settle quickly and happily into the routines of the classroom. Parents have good opportunities in the mornings and afternoons to speak informally to staff about any small matters of concern. The children quickly learn what is expected of them and staff reinforce good work and behaviour with praise. Staff have a good understanding of individual strengths and weaknesses and plan effectively to encourage the children's development.
39. Although the overall level of attendance is unsatisfactory, the school has good procedures to follow-up absence and encourage punctuality. Governors are advised of the number of absences every term and class teachers and the school secretary alert the headteacher to any unusual or prolonged absence. Most parents notify the school of reasons for absence and this ensures a low level of unauthorised absence. The school does not receive any regular support from external agencies towards raising individual attendance. There are good procedures for recording and monitoring any persistent instances of poor behaviour and, in such cases, parents are always involved at an early stage. Class teachers have good strategies to manage behaviour and are mostly effective in handling any instances of unacceptable behaviour in class. Classroom support staff play an important role in reinforcing these strategies. Pupils are well motivated by the system of rewards and the majority try hard to live up to the school's expectations. There are good and effective procedures to deal with bullying and harassment and both parents and pupils are fully involved in resolving persistent and serious disputes.
40. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the data collected is beginning to identify specific weaknesses. For example, analysis of test result indicates that pupils have limited problem-solving skills in mathematics. Strategies have been built in to the

planning process to focus on and develop these skills. The school is beginning to set individual targets for pupils based on both formal and informal assessment which identify what each pupil needs to do to improve attainment. Staff amend their daily and weekly lesson planning in the light of pupils' progress in lessons and regular meetings are held to feed this information into the medium and long term planning. The procedures are better than they were at the time of the last inspection.

41. The school has good systems to ensure the safety and welfare of the pupils. Pupils say that they would feel comfortable talking to their teacher about any concerns they may have and are confident that they would be helped. The procedures the school has to govern health and safety are good. Formal risk assessment is carried out, recommendations noted and steps taken to remedy any shortcomings. Although there is currently no member of staff with overall responsibility for first aid, all permanent staff have undertaken basic first aid training and the provision is satisfactory. Personal hygiene and aspects of healthy living are taught during science lessons and visitors come into school to talk to the pupils about personal safety. The headteacher is the designated member of staff for child protection and she and another member of staff have received appropriate training. The school follows recognised guidelines and staff are aware of their responsibilities in respect of this aspect of care. The quality of supervision during the mid-day break is satisfactory. The headteacher and other members of staff ensure that there is adequate adult supervision during this important part of the day.
42. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from all teaching and non-teaching members of the school staff. Their needs are monitored regularly using a variety of school-based, local, national, and commercially produced tests. There are many pupils requiring a variety of provision and the school gives good attention to ensuring that if possible all pupils identified with special needs receive adequate support so that they have equal access and opportunity within the curriculum. There are effective links with outside agencies.

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

43. The majority of the small number of parents who expressed an opinion prior to and during the inspection have positive views of the school and value the opportunities provided to become involved in school life. Although many parents take advantage of these opportunities and are involved in their children's learning, the response from a substantial proportion of parents is limited. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is, therefore, satisfactory overall as is the impact that parents have on the work of the school. The school has responded to most of the minor weaknesses identified in the last inspection and the partnership with parents is better than it was.
44. The information provided for parents about the school is of good quality overall. It is practical, comprehensive and informative. Both the prospectus and the governors' annual report for parents contain useful information about the school and its achievements. The school offers parents two well-organised and structured opportunities for formal consultation with staff about their children's progress. Class teachers are always available after school to talk to parents and every Thursday senior members of staff offer a 'surgery' when parents can raise issues of concern. The annual reports are of satisfactory quality overall. At the time of the last inspection it was noted that the reports did not provide a sufficient indication of attainment. Prior to this inspection, a small number of parents felt that they do not have enough information about their children's progress. Inspection evidence supports this view in respect of the annual reports. The format allows very little space for subjects other than English and the text gives no clear indication of attainment. There is insufficient focus on identifying weaknesses and targets for improvement. Parents are kept up-to-date with activities taking place in school through regular letters and newsletters and details of what their children will be learning are sent out each term

for each year group. Presentations on the literacy and numeracy strategies have been organised, and parents have been invited to observe numeracy lessons

45. The school invites all parents of pupils with special needs to attend meetings to discuss the provision and progress of their children. The weekly surgery is also used to encourage parents of pupils with specific difficulty to come and meet staff to share experiences and to judge the rate of progress of targets in individual educational plans. The school works hard to maintain these links and satisfactory partnerships exist with most parents. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in the decision making process and are kept informed about the needs of their children.
46. The school recognises the importance of involving parents in their children's learning in raising attainment. The majority of parents have signed the home/school contract, and many take their responsibilities under this agreement seriously. A small number, however, fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Many parents take time to help their children with their homework and this had a good impact on the progress they make. A few parents help in classes and there is currently a group of reception parents who are embarking with great enthusiasm - and some trepidation - on making Story Sacks for 'The Little Red Hen'. This activity not only improves the resources but also contributes to parental skills in helping their children learn at home. The parents' organisation arranges social and fund raising events and the monies raised are used primarily to supplement resources. The school values parents' views and, from time to time, conducts surveys on specific issues. Although response to these surveys is limited, the results are analysed and incorporated into the planning process.

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

47. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. In particular, the headteacher has introduced a new management structure and delegates responsibilities well, so that members of the senior management team have clear management responsibilities. This has a positive effect on the smooth running of the school. In addition, subject co-ordinators now take responsibility for their own subjects and check the planning and classroom practice of their colleagues. This is especially evident in English and mathematics, as the main priority for the school in the last three years has been the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategy.
48. One consequence of this is a significant level of monitoring involving joint visits to classrooms of the co-ordinators, visiting specialists from the local authority and the headteacher. The points for improvement identified in these visits have been acted upon and have had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. One of the strengths of the leadership is that the headteacher, supported by the senior management team, undertakes regular, systematic visits to classroom to check the teaching. She gives relevant, useful feedback on how teachers can improve and this has had a positive effect on improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
49. The procedures for the school to identify its main priorities have improved considerably since the last inspection. There is now a clear development plan to which all staff and governors contribute. A major aim has been to raise standards especially in English and mathematics. The senior management team and governors have a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what needs to be done to improve further. They have been hampered in their drive to raise standards by the increasing and high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, higher than at the time of the last inspection, and by the large number of staff changes in the last three years. The changes have been for reasons beyond the school's control.
50. The relatively new governing body, which consists mainly of governors appointed since the last inspection, carries out its duties effectively. Governors are knowledgeable and well informed

and have devised good plans to move the school forward. One example is that meetings will be structured to reduce formalities to a minimum and focus on issues that are crucial to the school. In addition, there are plans to develop a clear policy to help governors focus on specific issues when they undertake their regular visits to classrooms.

51. The governors and headteacher ensure that money is spent according to the school's educational priorities and are conscientious in seeking best value, especially in the purchase of good and services. They have a clear view of the financial position of the school and take full account of likely future numbers, which accounts for the large balance currently in the school's account. This is mainly because the school prudently anticipated the fact that they have to repay a substantial sum to the local authority as a result of the fall in the number of pupils.
52. The headteacher and governing body provide good management of all pupils identified for inclusion on the school register for pupils with special educational needs. The link governor is effective in her role and meets regularly with the headteacher in order to monitor the effectiveness of current levels of provision. The headteacher recognises the importance of her role as co-ordinator, and due to other managerial commitments has arranged for the services of a specialist teacher in order to support school staff more directly. This increased support is a new arrangement and it is not possible yet to judge its effectiveness.
53. There are good levels of staffing and satisfactory accommodation and learning resources, although the quality and quantity of books in the school is unsatisfactory. There are too few good quality books to encourage pupils to read and research information. The school administrative staff provide a friendly efficient service which helps the smooth running of the school. Money allocated for specific purposes such as staff development and special educational needs is used effectively and has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

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

54. In order to improve the standards of attainment and quality of education further, the governors, headteacher and staff should :

(1) Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by: \*

- ensuring that teachers in the infants more frequently and regularly teach the basic skills needed to learn English and mathematics, such as letter sounds, tables and adding up and taking away;
- improve the quality of teaching by;
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in the infants;
  - increasing the pace of some lessons;
  - limiting the use of worksheets and encouraging infants to think for themselves;
  - using pupils' learning in English, mathematics more frequently in other subjects;
  - providing training to ensure that all teachers can manage classes containing a significant number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- adjusting the timetable in order to make more effective use of the whole school day;
- providing more opportunities for children to develop their listening skills throughout the school;

Paragraphs 3-7, 22-25, 28, 30, 62, 72-73, 77, 88.

(2) Raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by ensuring that: \*

- all pupils have more frequent and regular opportunities to use a computer;
- ICT skills are used across the curriculum;
- the development of pupils' ICT skills is tracked more effectively;
- all aspects of the National Curriculum requirements are taught.

Paragraphs 8, 29, 113-17

- (3) Improve the rate of pupils' attendance by focusing especially on those who attend for less than 90 per cent of the time.

Paragraphs 19, 39

Less important issues that the governors should consider for inclusion in the action plan:

- Improve the quality of reports given to pupils at the end of the year  
Paragraph 44
- Provide more specific targets in the individual education plans of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties  
Paragraph 10, 24, 31
- Enhance the opportunities for pupils to learn about cultural diversity in Britain  
Paragraph 36
- Improve the quality and quantity of both non-fiction and reading books.  
Paragraphs 5, 53, 78, 109

\* **Areas already recognised by the school and included in the most recent school development plan**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	42	50	4	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	162
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	44

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	75

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	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	18

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	5.2

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
School data	0.4
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 the infants for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	18	12	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Total	19	18	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (71)	60 (58)	83 (71)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	20	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (79)	83 (83)	90 (54)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2*

Number of registered pupils in final year of the juniors for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	13	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	19	14	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (62)	50 (69)	68 (69)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	18	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (76)	57 (86)	61 (76)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	
Indian	2
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	155
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	23

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	340,085
Total expenditure	330,657
Expenditure per pupil	1,817
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,100
Balance carried forward to next year	24,530

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	162
Number of questionnaires returned	31

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	32	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	32	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	42	10	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	35	13	0	0
The teaching is good.	45	52	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	39	16	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	23	6	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	26	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	35	13	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	42	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	48	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	26	13	6	0

## **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**

#### **Pre-school experience and induction**

55. The majority of children enter school with no pre-school experience. Some children attend the local playgroup, or occasionally a nursery, but this is less than half of the class. The school has a programme of extended induction to ease the introduction into school. This school year, as there are only twelve children in the reception class, their programme of integration has benefited by the children having many opportunities to work separately or in small groups with the teacher or classroom support assistant. Their good skills at building positive relationships in a warm and comforting environment is greatly assisting the children in the way they settle into school.
56. When the children start in the Reception class their knowledge, skills, and understanding are very much lower than that expected for their age. This is particularly noticeable in their use of language, in their listening skills and in their use of number. Very few children can listen to the teacher or to others and although a few can speak in sentences, most respond in clipped phrases or simply sounds. Their knowledge of numbers or in counting is also poor. The children make satisfactory progress overall in the Reception class in all areas of learning, but the majority still have very low standards when they begin the National Curriculum in Year 1.
57. During the Foundation Stage the children are introduced to the new curriculum, which has been introduced in this school year for children of this age. This curriculum successfully covers all six areas of learning and offers the children a good range of learning experiences with suitable breadth and balance between all activities. Shortly after the children enter school there is an initial assessment of their skills, knowledge and understanding. Careful records are maintained to record the achievements through on-going observations and assessment, and to set targets for improvement for each child. Children with special educational needs are identified and their progress checked during this initial period in the Reception class.

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

58. Most children start school with personal and social skills well below the levels expected for their age. The children make good progress and by the end of the reception year there has been good improvement although their personal, social and emotional skills still remain below expectations. When the children arrive each morning most are happy to stay and confident to play with the range of games set out to interest them. Good relationships are being established between the children, their parents and the school staff and as a result the children feel secure within their classroom environment. They are helped by the teachers to learn the classroom routines, to put on their coats and tidy away equipment and many are responding positively through the teacher's encouragement and are eager to please. Some more confident children are able to ask the teacher for help or advice and enjoy the opportunity to go on messages to other classes or to the school office. Most of the rest of the group are able to tell the teacher about their needs and concerns, and will visit the hall or other classrooms happily with teacher support. When they arrive in school quite a number of children find it difficult to play with others but with sensitive and careful encouragement they are beginning to join in more readily with bigger groups of children. The children are introduced to circle time activities where they are encouraged to take turns and to listen to the views of others.
59. The teaching of social skills and encouraging the personal and emotional development of each child is good. The staff work consistently to provide an environment where caring and sharing of

experiences are valued and praised and where through a good range of opportunities the children are encouraged to become more independent.

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

60. The majority of children start school with very low overall attainment in language and literacy. They find it difficult to listen to instructions and they have very low levels of concentration and limited skills of recall. The main focus of all lessons is to improve listening skills and to introduce children to new vocabulary so that they are better able to communicate with others. Progress for children including those with special educational needs is satisfactory, and by the end of the reception year all children are able to explain their ideas in a simple way, although not always using the most appropriate vocabulary. Every day the teacher ensures the children participate in a range of activities where they practise the basic vocabulary about regular domestic and school daily experiences, for example, they made a cake for the birds during the inspection week and learnt new vocabulary such as 'stir, melt and mix'. They were fascinated to note the changes in the colour and texture of the lard as it melted in the bowl, and during the ensuing discussion corrected mispronunciation of some of the words for the ingredients. The children listen to stories during the literacy sessions and participate by singing rhymes and action songs during music lessons. The more able can recall songs such as 'The Grand Old Duke of York', whilst others participate in the action of marching up and down showing they understand the vocabulary, but are not yet able to recall the exact wording of the song.
61. In writing, a few children are beginning to learn how to form letters and to write their name with help, although the majority have insufficient pencil control and find this task difficult. The children with least skill in this area of the curriculum still scribble and do not yet realise that writing conveys a message. Some children are beginning to recognise their name and to sort and match familiar shapes such as buses and cars or animals. During the inspection a more able child showed that she is making very good progress in recognising letter shapes and in recall when she recognised the known letters of the alphabet on a computer keyboard and then wrote the name of her sister and herself on the computer screen. Most children are making satisfactory progress in improving their writing skills as they have many opportunities to write during the school day. Most write under the teacher's words or will copy her writing.
62. The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy is satisfactory. It has improved since the introduction of the literacy hour as it gives a good structure to the children's learning. The teacher plans this area of the curriculum well and records carefully the children's achievements, so that she is able to plot the progress of each child and plan appropriate new material. Less satisfactory are the opportunities to develop listening skills. Although these do take place they often occur incidentally and listening is not given sufficient planned focus as a part of the curriculum. This is particularly vital for these children.

### **Mathematical development**

63. Children's learning in mathematics is satisfactory. When they enter school they have little knowledge of number or shape and are unsure of the relevant vocabulary. Their knowledge, skills and understanding overall in this area of the curriculum are very poor. As they sing songs such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs', they begin to talk about numbers and to understand technical terms such as 'more' or 'less'. More able children can count together numbers up to five, but only half of the group can do this confidently. Some children are beginning to recognise number symbols of numbers to five but others have difficulty understanding the difference between letters and numbers. For these children it is difficult to recall a number shape or simple instruction. They are learning through exploring, and by building towers or counting beads they are beginning to understand the concept of number values. More able children can match shapes and are beginning to copy colour patterns successfully.

64. The quality of teaching in this area of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school has introduced the numeracy strategy into school and the teacher is adapting the material satisfactorily to match the needs of these children. However, when the majority of the group are still at very early stages of understanding of the concept of number, more opportunities for practical application are needed in the curriculum to develop understanding in number, for example in structured role-play activities.

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

65. The children have little understanding of their world when they enter school. Many children have limited experiences of different places and events. Only a few speak with confidence about places they have visited. The teacher is aware of these difficulties, and in class or group discussions she sensitively encourages the children to offer what they can to discussions. A broad range of activities is provided around a central theme, for example 'Teddy Bears'. Children read stories together and undertake activities to support this; for example, they read the story called "Peace at Last" by Jill Murphy and then used the Teddy Bear's experiences to undertake tasks to improve sequencing skills and recall their daily activities. They talk about visits to the seaside and go on visits together into the neighbourhood to the shops and park. Most of the class are curious to learn and are often amazed by their discoveries. Some less able children find it difficult to stay on task and lose interest in all but an immediate experience. These children have very poor skills of recall and find it difficult to remember a recent visit or even the journey to and from school.
66. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teacher sets out a wide range of tasks and has a good understanding of the development of the younger child. However, most activities are teacher directed and although well matched to the curriculum, there are too few opportunities for independent exploration and discovery around the chosen theme.

### **Physical development**

67. On entry to school most children have poorly developed physical skills. Although many can run and some can jump, only a few can hop and none can skip. They have had little experience of crawling or climbing safely under or over apparatus, and find it very difficult to consider the needs of others and understand about personal space. The children have a good selection of large outdoor play equipment and whenever possible these are made available in the outdoor play area. Children enjoy the trikes, bikes, scooters and rocking horse. They enjoy scrambling through the caterpillar tunnel. This play is supplemented by opportunities to play together in the school hall. They enjoy sharing the large parachute and are beginning to take turns to run underneath it when invited by the teacher. They are beginning to understand how to direct a ball but at present have little control in their gross motor movements to be successful. The school has a wide range of good quality equipment available for the children.
68. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teacher provides children with regular opportunities to improve their physical development. They are shown how to control their body movements and are encouraged to understand the importance of considering the needs of the personal space of others for safety. Lessons are well planned. The needs of children to warm up their bodies at the start of activities and to cool down properly at the end of a session are all built into the planning of lessons. Progress during lessons is not regularly recorded. As a result some activities lack an appropriate challenge for children.

### **Creative development**

69. Children's creative development is well below that expected for their age. Children enter school with poorly developed skills of creativity. A good range of exciting activities is offered to them in the classroom each day. Some children paint but for many these are new experiences. Similarly some children enjoy the opportunity to learn to cut and stick but the majority is still finding hand and eye co-ordination skills difficult and they find these tasks onerous. A few children are not yet able to recognise the difference between paint and glue and if left undirected are unable to use the correct materials themselves. The more able children in the Reception class are beginning to express their ideas in drawings but have poor observational skills. They have limited skills of perseverance and find it difficult to complete a task. When encouraged to do so, they are thrilled by their results. They showed tremendous pride, for example when threading a bird shape with coloured thread, or in painting a picture. During musical activities they are keen to play with percussion instruments but rarely listen to their results and are unaware of their discord or rhythm of a song.
70. Teaching of creativity is satisfactory. The teacher has some good ideas and plans extensively. There are many activities offered to children. The teacher has high expectations and often, through her own perseverance, tasks are achieved when the children would have stopped if unsupported. There is less formal assessment of progress in this area although the teacher has good personal knowledge of each child's progress.

## **ENGLISH**

71. Standards of attainment in English are well below national averages for pupils at seven and eleven years of age. In the National Curriculum tests for the year 2000 the results of pupils at the age of eleven are well below the national average and the average of similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher than expected level five standard is almost fifty per cent below the national average. Over time school results in the juniors have shown a small improvement, but in the infants they have declined and not matched the national trend of improvement. The school attributes these low results partly to the increasing number of pupils in school with special educational needs (twice the national average), to the very low attainment of pupils on entry to the National Curriculum at five plus and to the problems the school has faced with teacher changes and shortages. Inspection findings confirm these low levels of attainment at the end of both key stages.
72. Overall, the progress of pupils of all abilities in both key stages is satisfactory. When the pupils begin the National Curriculum they have poor listening skills, limited skills of recall and many do not yet speak in complete sentences. They enjoy listening to stories but only the more able are developing knowledge of books. Many are able to write alongside the teacher but few can write independently. The literacy strategy has been introduced satisfactorily to all pupils and new systems of planning are proving effective. New more precise records to plot standards and target areas of improvement have been introduced this year. This continuous attention to providing a better match of work to the ability levels of pupils is beginning to improve rates of progress. Very good support has been provided by the local authority and alongside the senior management team the literacy consultant has undertaken monitoring of the teaching and learning in this subject and is providing valuable advice.
73. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening and teacher assessments of standards judge most pupils to have shown improvement, although, at the age of seven, all but the most able still have standards well below average in comparison with national averages and pupils from similar schools. At the end of the infants most pupils will respond to teacher questioning, but are hesitant to answer questions voluntarily. Many still answer in clipped phrases and due to a limited vocabulary rely on teacher support to explain an idea. They are beginning to learn a wider vocabulary appropriate to each area of the curriculum but are still at receptive stages of understanding of technical terms rather than incorporating these more

precise terms into their vocabulary. In the infants listening skills for the majority of pupils are still very low. Unless involved in an activity very few pupils are able to listen for extended periods of time. Many have difficulty with recall of more than one instruction and often misunderstand the teacher's directions. These difficulties continue into the juniors although by the end of the key stage most can join confidently in a class discussion or talk to visitors. In larger groups, for example in assemblies, their lack of confidence still remains. The teachers work hard to ensure the pupils have practice at improving their speaking and listening skills but the introduction and consolidation of new vocabulary is disjointed and there are not sufficient planned opportunities for pupils to develop their listening skills.

74. Standards in reading remain well below average in comparison to all schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools. The school has introduced some new more interesting reading material for group reading in the literacy hour in an effort to encourage the pupils to read for enjoyment and pleasure. However, reading overall does not have a high profile in school and this is reflected in the general apathy of many pupils towards reading. By the end of the infants many pupils can read a simple story independently. The more able pupils can build words phonetically and read a simple text accurately but their limited skills of comprehension affect their understanding. Other pupils are beginning to build words phonetically but are still hesitant and lack fluency in their reading. These pupils do not yet have favourite stories that they like to reread or have read to them. Some less able pupils are making good progress having moved from picture books to reading a simple text during this school year but they still need considerable support in extracting information about stories from picture clues. By the end of the juniors most pupils can read independently. The more able pupils are beginning to enjoy children's classics and have favourite authors such as Roald Dahl and Jacqueline Wilson. Other pupils enjoy reading school class fiction books but do not yet read for pleasure and from choice. A few pupils have visited a local library and have some library skills. Most pupils in this key stage know how to use a dictionary and a few can use a thesaurus accurately.
75. Standards in writing are poor throughout the school. Through a greater emphasis on writing in class each week progress in writing is satisfactory overall across all year groups. Although good efforts are made to improve writing skills in the Foundation Stage, many pupils enter the National Curriculum still having poor pencil control. The more able pupils are able to compose a simple sentence but many still need adult support. By the age of seven many children can write a few sentences retelling a story with the events sequenced accurately. The more able are beginning to understand how to use a wider vocabulary to make the story more interesting. In the juniors most pupils are able to draft their ideas and include some story development of plot and character. For many pupils, although their organisation of writing is improving, their limited vocabulary is adversely affecting rates of progress. There is a weekly practice of grammar, spellings, and punctuation in each class. Handwriting is also practised in most classrooms but inconsistently. A large number of pupils have difficulty transferring skills practised in exercises to their independent writing. As a result at eleven years of age many pupils still write poorly formed letters that are inconsistent in size and often a mixture of printed and joined up script. Pupils have little understanding of acceptable standards of presentation and the criteria of a good handwriting style.
76. The response of pupils to their work is varied. Many pupils concentrate for sustained periods although often not consistently. Most are eager to please and show good pride in their work. Pupils of all ages enjoy stories but rely on the teachers to direct them to new material rather than have the confidence to explore books independently. In discussions, older pupils co-operate well and try their best to offer useful suggestions. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good. A small minority of pupils is less interested in their work and need regular adult support and help to remain on task. Without this help they would accept minimum standards for themselves.



77. During the inspection the teaching of English was generally at least satisfactory and in the majority of lessons in the juniors it was good. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in the infants. The scrutiny of pupils' work and a review of teachers' planning show that, overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. All teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and plan lessons well. A suitable range of teaching methods is employed to vary tasks and maintain pupils' interest. Tasks are generally appropriate to the age and abilities of pupils, although more able pupils are not challenged consistently in all classes. Satisfactory attention is given to ensuring that the least able pupils are offered appropriate material including some supporting texts if applicable. The basic skills needed to learn reading, such as letter sounds, are not taught sufficiently frequently, especially in the infants. Management of pupils in both key stages is good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is also good and they make satisfactory progress alongside other members of the class.
78. The school has an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has sufficient specialist knowledge to be able to offer colleagues specialist advice. With the good support of the local authority literacy consultant the subject has been monitored thoroughly and a very good action plan has been prepared to prioritise improvements. This plan shows a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Resources are generally adequate, although the quantity and quality of reading material is unsatisfactory both for fiction and non-fiction material.

## **MATHEMATICS**

79. In the 2000 national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds standards were well below average when compared with other pupils nationally at the end of the infants. Their results were below those of pupils from similar schools. The inspectors also found that seven-year-old pupils' attainment is well below average. Children leave the reception class with mathematical skills that are well below the early learning goals for the end of the foundation stage of their education. Progress is just satisfactory throughout the infants although basic knowledge and skills such as recalling addition and subtraction facts and knowing times tables by heart are weak.
80. The 2000 results of national tests for eleven-year-olds were well below average compared with other pupils of the same age and well below average when compared with pupils in similar schools. Boys score slightly higher than girls in mathematics. The inspection team found that by the time pupils are eleven attainment is well below average although there are signs that the rate of progress is rising, notably in the classes for eight and nine-year-olds. Pupils in the junior school make satisfactory progress. These standards are the same as the last inspection although there are twice as many pupils achieving average standards in the national tests than in 1997. The proportion of pupils nationally who reach the level expected of eleven-year-olds has also risen at about the same rate as the school's increase. The number of pupils with special educational needs is well above the national average and this is particularly the case in the eleven-year-olds class where the proportion is approaching 70 per cent.
81. Most teachers apply the national numeracy strategy effectively and the school has decided to use two mixed groups of ten and eleven-year-olds so that the higher attainers from Years 5 and 6 work together as do the lower attainers. This helps the teachers plan work at suitable levels but the important factor in all lessons is the pace of the lesson. Where lessons are moved along quickly, as in the classes for eight and nine-year-olds and the lower set in Years 5 and 6, then pupils make better progress. Pupils at this stage need further practice in the basic number facts, for example, quick recall of pairs of numbers that add up to ten and twenty and times tables. Without these facts committed to memory pupils find it difficult to conduct investigations and apply their knowledge to other aspects of the subject.

82. In one lesson in the infants, six-year-olds pupils worked out quickly the answers to the questions their teacher set them; holding up numbers for checking they calculated the answers to simple addition and subtraction problems. Moving onto solving shopping problems pupils were asked to show the change after buying toys and books. In this class lower attaining pupils could subtract from 10p, average pupils from 15p and more able pupils from 20p. All pupils used number lines and even the more able pupils could not work out  $12 - 6$  without using counting aids and had great difficulty in recognising a number such as 142. In the class for seven-year-olds pupils could add 2 numbers up to 12 but had difficulty if the numbers became any larger than that. Pupils used fingers and other counting aids and had not memorised these facts so that they could be recalled easily and used in other problems. In both classes teachers and learning support assistants gave pupils with special educational needs good support. They ensured that all pupils were involved in the lesson. Most of the more able pupils in this class were working at the level of an average six-year-old. The pace in this lesson was slow and pupils were not encouraged to learn independently.
83. Eight-year-olds work at a brisk pace as their teacher ensured that they started their lesson counting in fives. As they gained more confidence she pushed them further and made it more interesting by starting at different numbers. As the lesson sped along and was made interesting pupils paid attention and enjoyed their work. Careful explanations of what work was to be covered in the lesson meant that each group set to work quickly and understood that they had to do. However, although the teaching was of good quality and pupils made good progress in the lesson, they still lack the skills of calculating mentally. When asked to add 23 and 16 all of the higher attaining pupils found it difficult and came to the wrong answers. A strong feature of this lesson was the teacher's reinforcement at the end of the important points pupils had learned her clear signals about what was coming in the next lesson. Nine-year-olds were asked to recall doubles and halves of numbers and again the brisk pace to the start of the lesson made sure that the rest of the lesson progressed quickly. Helpful advice and support was given to all pupils and particularly those who find formal work in classrooms difficult to manage. The games that the teacher had made which required pupils to add the weight of items produced lots of interest. As pupils weighed themselves on bathroom scales their teacher took the opportunity to ask them to estimate each other's weight and guess who would be heaviest or lightest. This helped reinforce their learning and made the lesson fun. Attainment in this lesson was below average although progress was good.
84. Progress in the lower set of ten and eleven-year-olds is also good. In this class a mental tests helped to tune pupils into the main theme on how to use a calculator to convert fractions to decimals. However, the results of the arithmetic test showed that very few pupils could accurately calculate mentally. This group was the lower of the two sets and attainment was well below average as pupils worked at about the average of seven-year-olds. The introduction and pace of the lesson kept pupils busy and they answered questions more easily as they learned how to use the calculators. The lesson ended with more number practice and during a very successful activity, pairs of pupils were asked to alternately call the answers to the 2 and 3 times table. A third pupil kept the time, providing more opportunities for reading a digital scale. As the activity progressed pupils became faster and faster and pupils with special educational needs achieved great success and others applauded as new records were established.
85. Pupils in the top set started their lesson with a game in which they had to convert fractions to decimals mentally. The first attempt at this game was slow again because of poor memory skills but at the end of the lesson the second attempt was faster as pupils began to calculate accurately. As pupils worked through their tasks in the main part of the lesson the weakness in number knowledge and how the position of digits gives value, caused more problems to calculations. In the upper group of this set only four pupils worked consistently accurately at average levels for the age group. Because the pace in this lesson was satisfactory pupils at times stopped working and chatted and the teacher had to work hard to regain attention. In this

lesson as in others, the care and attention given to pupils with special educational needs and those who were having difficulty in working was good.

86. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in the classes for six-year-olds, which was taught by a temporary teacher during the week of the inspection, and for eight, nine and ten-year-olds. In these lessons teachers work pupils at a brisk pace, this keeps them interested and makes pupils want to work hard. In other classes teaching is satisfactory although still has shortcomings, mainly in the slow speed of lessons and planning which does not help pupils of all abilities make good rates of learning. A scrutiny of pupils' books showed that too many worksheets are being used in the infant classes and that not enough practical tasks are planned. At times in these classes incorrect work was marked as being correct and all pupils regardless of ability were given the same work.
87. The co-ordinator for the subject is new to the post and is supported well by the deputy headteacher and local education authority numeracy advisors. The school is aware of the need to tackle the shortfall in basic mathematical knowledge and improve teachers' skills in planning and marking as a result of the systematic monitoring of the teaching of numeracy. The curriculum for mathematics follows the national strategy. There is a good quality policy and work in mathematics is monitored well.

## SCIENCE

88. Standards in science were well below average in the statutory assessment and national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds in 2000. In the last inspection standards were considered to be broadly average by the age of seven and below average at the age of eleven but whereas only 44 per cent of eleven-year-olds reached the expected level 4 at the time of the last inspection, 66 per cent did so in the last tests. This indicates that the school has made some progress, but that standards are still well below average. The slightly lower standards can be explained partly by the fact that there is a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school now than at the time of the last inspection and part to the numerous changes in teaching staff over the last three years, which has impeded pupils' progress. Another major factor is that pupils in the infants do not have a sufficiently good grasp of the basic skills needed for reading and writing, so that they are not able to research information and record their findings sufficiently clearly. The findings of the inspection broadly confirm the most recent national test results.
89. When pupils enter Year 1 their knowledge and understanding of the world, including their scientific development, is very low. By the end of Year 2 they have made satisfactory progress, but their attainments in science are still well below average. By then most can identify which objects in a picture run on electricity and can identify dangers such as a frayed flex on an electric iron. Higher attaining pupils use simple sentences when studying the effects of heat on a range of materials that 'bread can be heated to make toast'. Lower attaining pupils use simple worksheets to record foods that comes from plants and food that comes from animals but their learning is hampered by poor standards of writing. In one lesson taught by a temporary teacher, Year 1 pupils were fascinated by magnetism and two pupils said, when asked what was special about magnets 'They stick to metal'. After the teacher's skilful questioning and a series of experiments with different materials, about half could explain why magnets stuck to some objects such as a metal spoon and not to others such as a piece of cardboard. In Year 2 all pupils enjoyed testing the properties of a range of materials and a third of pupils could explain that both bent when they pressed them and that sponge sprang back to its original shape. They made satisfactory progress in learning about the forces of twisting and pulling by using 'fun dough' to investigate. Overall, scientific learning is satisfactory in the infants with the exception of scientific enquiry, because although teachers provide practical activities, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to investigate for themselves.

90. By the age of eleven pupils' achieve standards that are still well below average. They make satisfactory progress building on what they have learnt in the infants except in scientific enquiry, which remains undeveloped. Pupils' unsatisfactory skills in reading and writing continue to undermine the standards they achieve. However, there is evidence of improving progress, especially in Year 4, where in a lesson during the inspection pupils made good progress in understanding the effectiveness of a range of different materials in providing insulation. All of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, could explain by the end of the lesson which material insulated best after carrying out an investigation where they wrapped ice cubes in each material, observed the outcome every five minutes and recorded their results. The very good teaching in this lesson had a direct impact on the very good learning of pupils in the lesson. By the time they are aged eleven most have a sound understanding of the position of the main planets in the solar system. For example, a higher attaining pupil in Year 5 talking about the reason for shadows changing position used the words; 'It's the position in the solar system' and 'We go around the sun but it looks as if the sun goes around us'. Pupils have a simple understanding of the fact that some materials dissolve in liquid and some do not, but still do not attain the standards expected of eleven-year-olds, mainly due to the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, but also because they are not given sufficient opportunity to devise their own scientific investigations.
91. Pupils have positive attitudes to science and generally behave well. Some pupils find it difficult to concentrate, but almost always respond well to the teachers' skilful management of behaviour. When the teaching is at its best, as in a Year 1 lesson on magnetism and a Year 4 lesson on materials, behaviour is good and pupils are very keen to learn.
92. Teaching in science is satisfactory overall and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. A strength is teachers' planning, which ensures that the science curriculum is covered and questioning, which is often used well to probe pupils' understanding and extend their knowledge. Teachers use key scientific vocabulary well, as in a Year 6 lesson when the key words of 'dissolve, soluble and insoluble' were emphasised repeatedly. However, pupils' knowledge of basic vocabulary is often so limited that it impedes their understanding of science. A relative weakness is the fact that although teachers have made great efforts to improve the teaching of scientific enquiry, identified as a weakness in the last inspection, and there is far more practical work, the resources to be used for experiments are too often prepared and given to pupils, so that they do not have to think and choose for themselves.
93. Assessment procedures are good and the information gained about how pupils are progressing is used satisfactorily. The classroom assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, especially by supporting those with special educational needs, so that they can take a full part in lesson, The teaching is inclusive, so that boys and girls, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those with special educational needs all have access to all the activities available in science.
94. The national guidance on science has been adopted and is in the process of being developed further in response to the new National Curriculum introduced this year. There are good plans for passing the co-ordination of the subject to a science specialist in the new academic year; these include both existing and new co-ordinators attending joint training. Resources for science are adequate.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

95. Standards at seven and eleven years of age are below those expected nationally. Judgements about standards are based on observation of work in lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' work throughout the year, a review of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers. Pupils begin Year 1 with poor pencil control, very limited skills of creativity and early developing

skills of observation. Although pupils make satisfactory progress during each key stage their achievements remain below those expected for their age. At the time of the last inspection standards were considered to be higher but with the introduction of the national initiatives for literacy and numeracy there were reductions in the teaching time allocated to this subject.

96. By the age of seven pupils undertake a satisfactory range of experiences using paints, pencil crayons, charcoal and junk materials. They have made good use of paper plates to create puppets and linked the work well to provide an activity in English to write a report of the process which will improve their skills of sequencing of an event. They have used collage materials creatively to give interest to the facial features of finger puppets and most pupils show satisfactory skills of cutting and sticking. During painting sessions they are encouraged to look at shades of colour and then mix their own paints to copy these colours accurately. Although pupils have regular opportunities to improve their skills of observation, standards in observational drawing are well below those expected. Most pupils at seven are not yet able to draw a figure that includes all the main body parts such as arms, legs, fingers and toes. In many drawings pupils in the infants still draw from their imagination. For example, in a painting lesson planned by the teacher to develop observational skills, many pupils in the Year 2 class drew the sprig of fresh flowers on the desk as though in the ground and added the soil, trees and the sun in the sky. Art is often used as a means of recording information in other subjects and teachers use these opportunities to consolidate techniques.
97. By the age of eleven pupils have developed the ability to use a range of media to create designs and pictures in which they show satisfactory understanding of colour, line, tone, texture and space. In some good work in Year 6 pupils have used a mixture of papers and materials to create an abstract picture of a winter landscape and through their choices of colour and texture and have given good attention to their interpretation of perspective in their pictures. This work is linked very successfully to some language work where the class had created a class poem called 'The Last Word' about the lonely journey of a traveller, and then used shades of blues, white, black and grey to depict in their pictures feelings of loneliness and isolation. Through undertaking this work many pupils in Year 6 are beginning to understand how an artist is drawing attention to his views of the world through his use of colour and materials in a variety of techniques. At the end of the key stage pupils' observational skills have developed in the control and detail of their work although it is still below that expected for their age. They have a little knowledge of the work of artists such as Picasso, Van Gogh and Leonardo de Vinci and more able pupils can describe the work the work of Monet. They are beginning to evaluate their own work and suggest methods of improvement. Some pupils described a weekend visit to the 'Pump Rooms' in Leamington. They expressed preferences about the work they had seen giving good detail in their discussions and evaluating the work of local students from the town effectively.
98. The pupils enjoy art and show satisfactory levels of concentration in their work. Younger pupils are eager to show their work to their teacher and their class, and are proud of their results. Most pupils use tools and materials carefully and share equipment fairly. Many pupils have difficulty in listening to instructions and in recall of tasks. As a result these pupils need adult assistance in order to complete a task successfully and show little learning in skills of independence.
99. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory although there is some unsatisfactory teaching in the infants. In the satisfactory lessons the teachers plan suitable individual lessons, but there is a lack of attention to prior attainment and the further development of skills. Teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and teach basic skills successfully but the range of opportunities available to pupils is too narrow. In some lessons the expectations of the teachers are inappropriate and pupils are not challenged sufficiently. For example, opportunities for the more able to work independently rarely occur. In some lessons the teachers do not explain lesson

objectives clearly and pupils accept minimum standards of achievement. In less successful lessons classroom organisation was confused and pupils were unsure of class rules. In these lessons positive behaviour strategies were not employed and management of inappropriate behaviour was ineffective.

100. Management of the subject is satisfactory. A temporary co-ordinator is ensuring that some monitoring of planning takes place so that requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The action plan for the subject includes a review of the present policy and scheme of work in light of new national recommendations. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the needs of the subject to further raise standards, particularly by the review of the scheme of work to ensure progression from year to year.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Because of the way in which the timetable is planned there were no observations of any design and technology lessons and therefore the quality of teaching cannot be judged. Discussions were held with pupils and a scrutiny of work was undertaken. In the 1997 inspection although there was no scheme of work or co-ordination of the subject, and resources were just adequate, standards were thought to be at least satisfactory and at times good. Since then the provision of the subject has improved and resources are managed effectively largely because a co-ordinator has been in post for two years. However, standards are below average for seven and eleven-year-olds. Pupils do not fully understand the process of design, make and evaluate. In discussions with pupils they are enthusiastic about their work and talk in a limited fashion about how they have made their projects but do not know how to evaluate their work to improve the quality of their projects.
102. Seven-year-olds had made puppets by using paper plates and finger puppets. Although this work shows imagination, pupils' cutting skills are well below average as they find it difficult to control pencils and scissors. They chose the materials they used to make hair and teeth and stuck 'moving' eyes to the puppets' faces. Eight-year-olds made sandwiches and selected the fillings. They understood the need to make the filling healthy and nutritious. Pupils in the classes for ten and eleven-year-olds experimented with strong shapes. Using construction kits and adding diagonal struts to their basic shape pupils strengthened their constructions. This was well linked to their history topic of the Tudors, as pupils looked closely at how houses were built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. From this work they then made timber frames; cutting small cross-sectioned timber they jointed the frames using glue guns and card to hold the joints firmly. This work was of satisfactory quality. In the same topic pupils made models of wattle and daub walls by drilling holes and using willow canes. Pupils have begun to draw three-dimensional shapes but this skill is not used when planning work.
103. Teachers' medium terms plans clearly show what is to be covered and how it will be assessed although, as the co-ordinator recognises, there is still too little emphasis on the development of skills. The co-ordinator has good plans to rectify this situation and is working closely with colleagues from other schools to provide schemes of work which detail skill development. The policy is of good quality and addresses the needs of all pupils.

## GEOGRAPHY

104. Standards in geography are below those expected of seven and eleven-year-olds. Progress is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress through the sensitive support provided by classroom assistants. Inspection judgements are based on observations in lessons, discussions with pupils and their teachers, a scrutiny of pupils' work, and a review of teachers' planning. Since the last inspection there has been no improvement in standards.
105. By the time pupils are seven they have only a little understanding of their local area. At the beginning of Year 1 they have limited skills of observation and find it difficult to remember key features about their environment. In the infants they are involved in a programme of discovery about their neighbourhood and school. In Year 1 they begin to notice and remember their home address. They record in pictures the key features about a journey between home and school. More able pupils can find their way around school and know some directional vocabulary. They begin to use charts to record details about the weather and some can use weather symbols effectively. They are beginning to learn about different climates and have made a large mural to show how we would dress in hot and cold places. In Year 2 pupils are beginning to think in more detail about journeys and are following the journey of 'Barney Bear' around the country. They have marked on a map the Bear's trip to Kenilworth with older pupils from school, and

also his visit to Stratford-on-Avon. They are beginning to learn about famous cities for example London. Pupils have limited understanding of a map. They find it difficult to draw with true visual accuracy and do not yet understand an aerial view. Most pupils still make pictures from their imagination.

106. By the time pupils are eleven they are more confident about the topics they have covered in their geography lessons. They can talk in class from a wider general knowledge about pictures, which they see but most pupils across the school have poor recording skills when working alone. Pupils begin to learn about people, settlements and occupations in the countries of the world. In Year 3 pupils make a study of the weather around the world. In good aspects of a lesson during the inspection they researched in holiday brochures the climatic differences of holiday destinations in the Mediterranean, in Africa and in America. They worked well together as when they produced large posters describing the benefits of each country. In Year 4 the pupils undertake a more detailed study of their local town, Royal Leamington Spa. They identify key buildings and amenities in the town, and then note the benefits for tourists. By Year 5 good links are being made to world events to describe the solar system. For example the recent moon eclipse was used as a good example to explain the movement of the sun, earth, and moon. Pupils talked with interest about the event and have made a good collection of newspaper cuttings containing effective photography of the eclipse. By Year 6 pupils use some technical vocabulary. They describe the water cycle correctly and list, using appropriate terms, some of the factors responsible for climatic change. They are beginning to use their knowledge about climates of the world in order to make reasoned judgements about settlements, vegetation and occupations. Less secure is their knowledge of oceans, continents, rivers or capital cities. They find it difficult to identify the major cities and rivers of the British Isles on an atlas. They do not yet understand how an Ordnance survey map operates and only the more able can make good informed guesses about geographical symbols. None of the pupils can use grid references on a map effectively.
107. Although no lessons were observed in the infants, the lessons observed in the juniors and a study of teachers' planning shows that teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge, and that they use the local environment with skill in order to give the pupils practical experiences of geographical knowledge. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with special educational needs so that they have equal access to the curriculum. For pupils in Year 6 a residential visit is used effectively to help them have a better understanding of the curriculum, showing them in practical terms the similarities and differences of a contrasting locality. There has been a significant improvement in planning since the last inspection and staff are more receptive to the need to monitor and assess pupils' work.
108. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory but because the scheme of work in use at present is narrow there is limited opportunity to explain or consolidate new information. Some teachers make arbitrary use of the scheme and overall coverage is inadequate. In the best lessons the teachers take good account of the pupils' limited concentration skills and aptitude to work, and provide a good variety to the tasks, which are to be introduced. For example, in a good lesson in Year 6 pupils watched a video about the River Severn. They learnt new vocabulary such as "source, meander, and estuary" as they created together a class picture of the journey of a river. They identified the major rivers of England and Wales using atlases, and then looked at the current earthquake disaster in India to ascertain the effects of climate and drought on the people of this country at the present time.
109. Resources are generally adequate although the acquisition of more non-fiction books and geographical CD-ROMs would significantly improve provision. A new co-ordinator has been appointed this year but she has not yet had the opportunity to influence the subject significantly.



## **HISTORY**

110. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on history in the infants. In the juniors judgements on standards are based on observation of one lesson and the work in pupils' books for this school year but there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the teaching of history. In the last inspection standards were judged to be good, but now, by the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven, standards are below average. This is partly due to the greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils' lack of basic skills in reading and writing and the smaller proportion of the timetable now devoted to subjects like history and geography.
111. Pupils in the juniors know that the Victorian age was the age of steam and the higher attaining pupils produce sound evidence of facts about Queen Victoria and the link with Victoria Station in London, which they downloaded from the Internet. Most accounts are based on simple pictures of objects they saw on a visit to St John's museum, where they spent the day living as Victorian children. It is clear from photographs displayed in the school and from talking to pupils that they enjoy and are interested in history but their limited skills in writing mean that they do not write down all that they know. Pupils in Year 5 enjoyed learning about life in the Second World War and a small group of higher attainers could make up an imaginary wartime menu based on the amount of rations allocated. However, the majority found it difficult to give reasons for which foods might be rationed and which might not. By the time they leave school at the age of eleven, pupils know a limited range of basic facts about period of the past they have studied. Most can suggest differences between then and now, for example, one pupil said; 'The rich got around by horse, the poor walked, today we have planes'. All the pupils in Year 6 had made computer-generated pictures of a Tudor house.
112. The school makes good use of a range of visits to museums and places of historical interest, including using the local Leamington Spa Historical Society to extend pupils' knowledge and interest in history. This links well to their learning in geography, to help pupils gain a better sense of their locality.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

113. Standards in ICT for seven and eleven-year-olds are below average. They have not improved since the last inspection although the provision has improved. In 1997 the curriculum was not meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. Now all of the elements of the National Curriculum are in place and the number and quality of computers has been improved. There is a suite of four computers in a small bay off the main corridor of the school. These computers are networked and cabling has been installed so that eventually all of the computers in classrooms will be able to access all of the programs available in the suite. Each classroom is equipped with low power computers. The school is waiting for the connection to the Internet to be completed. During the inspection the infant classes were not using the computer suite and observations took place in three of the junior classes and discussions were held with pupils.
114. Nine-year-old pupils use a word-processing and paint package to learn about cutting and pasting and how to rotate text. For example, in one lesson after they had practised this they drew and painted a fish for their 'class aquarium'. In this lesson the teaching assistant offered very good support to special educational needs pupils, showing care and attention as the pupils became very excited as they learned how to alter the size of text. Pupils' knowledge and understanding were well below average and pupils' skills in moving the mouse were very immature. In the class for ten-year-olds pupils began to use a spreadsheet for the first time and planned a party. They entered the items they were to buy and their costs in the cells of the spreadsheet. The eleven-year-olds worked very well together in their lesson. They shared resources and discussed their work, which was to design a school logo that will be manufactured in plastic as

part of a project involving a group of schools. Progress was satisfactory in this class because, although pupils could use the basic functions of the software, they did not understand how to use the more complex facilities, which would have made their task easier. The teacher taught pupils how to cut, paste, rotate and flip their designs. All of the pupils in the classes observed know how to log on by using their personal number; they access the program they are to use and save their work in an appropriate file.

115. Pupils understand the basic functions of word processing and art packages and are just beginning to use spreadsheets and have used CD-ROMs to search for information. Because of the lack of an Internet connection and the comparatively recently installed computer suite pupils' skills in using e-mail, the Internet, modelling and control are not well developed. Pupils do not use computers sufficiently in other subjects and at present computers are under-used in classrooms.
116. Teaching was satisfactory in all of these lessons and good levels of attention were offered to the pupils by learning support assistants. This was particularly notable in the case of pupils with special educational needs. The school has planned training for all staff, although subject knowledge is not the limiting factor in pupils' progress. Much more important is the fact that there are only four computers linked to the network and so pupils receive only a short allocation of time in each computer based session. Therefore, it takes two weeks for all pupils in a class to experience the planned learning. This means that pupils do not have time to develop and complete their ideas. An assessment is made of pupils' capabilities at the end of each school year and these are passed to following teacher. However, there is some way to go before pupils' skills in the subject are recorded in an effective manner.
117. The headteacher is managing the subject until the newly appointed co-ordinator takes up the post in a few weeks time. The school is aware of the need to develop the provision for ICT.

## MUSIC

118. Standards in music are below national expectations for pupils of seven and eleven years of age. As at the last inspection pupils enjoy singing and playing percussion instruments but have limited experience in practical music-making and in listening and appraising different styles of music. Since the last inspection there has been a reduction in the time allocation for this subject due to the introduction of the national initiatives in literacy and numeracy. However, in most lessons pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress and participate equally in all activities alongside other members of their class.
119. In the infants pupils enjoy the opportunity to sing and play percussion instruments but become restless if the lesson is not well managed or if they are insufficiently employed. When given the opportunity to play most pupils hold the instruments correctly and strike them appropriately. By the age of seven the majority of pupils can sing in tune, know the words of favourite songs and enjoy action songs. They are beginning to sing two-part songs, and can maintain their own musical notation and words with adult support. They have limited understanding of tone and rhythm. For example, when playing musical instruments, the pupils in Year 2 played loudly and did not recognise their own discord. They showed little understanding of the purpose of a band and had no understanding of the need to play co-operatively with other members of the group. In the infants the majority of pupils have poor listening skills. They find it difficult to recall well-known tunes or recognise famous pieces of music. When listening to the 'Carnival of the Animals' by Saint Saens, more able pupils are beginning to show that they recognise the intention of the composer to create music, which represents the animals gliding, slithering, or jumping.

120. In the juniors pupils know that music comes from a range of times and places. They can identify some of the differences between classical, jazz and rock music. They have made satisfactory progress in two and three-part singing and enjoy singing rounds. They have a little knowledge of famous composers, but this is patchy with the pupils who have instrumental lessons having a better general knowledge in this subject. Pupils know about rhythm and beat and can identify the rhythm in a piece of music. Very few pupils understand how a composer will create character and mood in his music. Most pupils have only a limited knowledge of the instruments of the orchestra. The pupils who have instrumental lessons have greater knowledge and, in addition to playing in assembly, sometimes have practical experiences playing in music groups with the town. The school puts on a musical production every year, which involves all the pupils in the juniors, whilst infant pupils take part in musical activities at Christmas.
121. Music features strongly in assemblies and the singing is well-pitched with the pupils producing a warm tone with clear diction. The pupils enter and leave assembly to music chosen weekly from the school's collection of recorded music from around the world. Recorder groups and the violin ensembles are encouraged to play and often accompany the hymn singing, as well as providing instrumental contributions to the collective worship. The musical element of the assembly contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.
122. Pupils enjoy singing and playing instruments and mostly look forward to lessons with a positive attitude. Although they find listening to music difficult they generally remain on task as long as they are presented with a good range of activities. Older pupils are able to give opinions about the music they have heard and express preferences. Pupils are less positive and behave less well when they are unable to relate to the task which is set or when they are not actively involved in performing or singing.
123. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Specialist teaching by the co-ordinator helps to promote positive attitudes and gives good support to less confident teachers. Most teachers prepare well for lessons but for some there is a lack of subject knowledge, and limited confidence. This means that they are unable to cope with difficulties, which sometimes occur in music making during the lessons. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and when necessary the curriculum is adapted to take account of their individual educational plans.
124. There are satisfactory resources for music. Additional teaching during the school day of woodwind, guitar and violin enhances the overall quality of provision. Although restricted to minority groups they benefit from good teaching and gain important opportunities to make connections to local music groups. The policy and scheme of work are adequate although coverage of the scheme is intermittent, as teachers often prefer to choose their own focus of activities.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

125. Overall, attainment for seven and eleven-year-olds is average maintaining the position observed at the last inspection.
126. In the swimming lesson attainment was below average. This is because the pupils swim when they are nine and ten and as funds are limited do not receive the time to develop their skills in the 30-minute lesson. However, the lesson was taught satisfactorily and pupils made satisfactory progress. In this lesson behaviour was very good. Lower attaining pupils used floats and practised leg kicks. Some of the average swimmers used floats to help with their swimming while others worked on backstroke. More able swimmers, who could swim, worked with a local authority coach to develop strokes and style. All pupils gained in confidence and thoroughly

enjoyed their session and about half of the more able swimmers managed neat dives through a hoop. Arriving back at school many pupils thanked the driver spontaneously.

127. Pupils in the class for seven-year-olds made satisfactory progress as they combined movements to portray the flames in the Fire of London. This lesson had a good structure and the teacher used her voice well as she quietly described the effects of the flames and asked pupils how they thought the fire would spread through the city. This was a good connection to pupils' history topic and words such as 'enormous' were used to describe the fire. Reminded of their posture and balance, pupils performed a sequence of movements in pairs and individually which built into the fire's inferno. Pupils were enthusiastic in this lesson because their interest was captured and enthusiasm maintained.
128. In the eight-year-olds class the teacher used the music of Saint Saens as a stimulus. This was a good resource, not only did it capture the imaginations of pupils but the teacher has recorded several sections a number of times so that she was not continually moving back and forward to the CD player. Most pupils moved sympathetically to the music, swaggering like the king of the beasts or marching imperiously. In this lesson interest was so high that as soon as the teacher began to narrate the story pupils immediately took on the role of the lion. The teacher gave lots of ideas and pupils began to crawl in the undergrowth and because there were lots of planned opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work, good progress was made, as they understood how to improve.
129. Good progress was also made in the eleven-year-olds' class as pupils improved their throwing and catching skills in an indoor games lesson. Behaviour was good in this lesson, as the class teacher set a smart pace and a vigorous warm up prepared pupils for the skill development and practice that was to come. Boys and girls made the same good rate of progress as the accuracy of their throwing and fielding improved. The game was conducted well without much input being needed from the teacher as all pupils showed good manners and obeyed the rules well. Teaching was good because the teacher frequently stopped the lesson and asked pupils to judge how well things were going and showed pupils good examples; highlighting the skills and how to improve.
130. The quality of teaching is good in physical education. Teachers plan interesting lessons and this helps pupils to remain interested. Pupils work hard and the lessons have a good structure with a suitable period of warm up, skills development and then a cooling down period. The management of the subject is being covered by the headteacher until the newly appointed co-ordinator takes up the post inspection few weeks time. A good quality policy supports teachers in their planning.