

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Mary's Catholic (VA) Primary School

Wingate, Co. Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114279

Headteacher: Mr P. J. Naughton

Reporting inspector: Mrs A. Soper
OIN 18148

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th June 2001

Inspection number: 192656

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

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wingate
Co. Durham
Postcode: TS28 5AN

Telephone number: 01429 838294

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs R. McGlen

Date of previous inspection: 10th March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18148	Alice Soper	Registered inspector	English Science Art and design Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19335	Susan Dixon	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?
21858	John Pryor	Team inspector	Mathematics Information communication technology Design and technology Geography History Music Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

6 – 10

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

11 – 14

The school's results and pupils' achievements
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14 – 15

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

15 – 17

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

17 – 18

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

18 – 19

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

19 – 21

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

22 – 23

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

24 – 26

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

27 – 43

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is situated in the village of Wingate, in County Durham. It is much smaller than other primary schools, with 68 pupils. Most come from Wingate and two nearby villages. The school parish is served from Peterlee and there has been no local parish priest since 1996. The roll has risen in recent years. The school is included in the Education Action Zone for Peterlee. An above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of white ethnic background. One pupil is identified as having English as an additional language but does not require support in speaking English. Over one third have special educational needs, including two with Statements of Special Educational Need. This is above the national average. Most pupils are in the early stages of the school's register for special educational needs. Attainment on entry is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Standards are satisfactory in most subjects by the end of Key Stage 2, where pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, though often better in the later part of the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, though some requirements are not met. There is a good climate for learning. There are some weaknesses in some curriculum planning and the use of assessment that have not yet been fully addressed since the time of the last inspection. Overall the school is satisfactory in its effectiveness and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- ◆ Standards are good and above average in physical education by the end of both key stages.
- ◆ Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 and achieve satisfactory standards in most subjects by the end of the key stage.
- ◆ Pupils have positive attitudes, behave well and have very good relationships with each other and staff.
- ◆ The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 2.
- ◆ There is good provision for pupils' personal development, with very good provision for their spiritual development.
- ◆ Staff have a strong commitment to improvement.

What could be improved

- ◆ Standards in English by the end of Key Stage 1.
- ◆ The use of assessment and the monitoring and recording of pupils' progress.
- ◆ The quality of information to parents about their children's progress.
- ◆ The organisation and management of the Key Stage 1 class.
- ◆ Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance and punctuality.
- ◆ Effectiveness of the governing body.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. The current headteacher has been in post for three years. Several issues have been very effectively addressed. These include the

considerably improved provision for and raised standards in information and communication technology and the very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. The school development plan is now an effective working document that includes costs and evaluation criteria. Governors are now fully involved in development planning, though they have yet to fulfil some statutory duties and to have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Continuity and progression have been established in subjects across the school, although teachers' planning insufficiently takes into account the needs of pupils in mixed age classes and their differing prior attainment. Some success has been achieved in assessment procedures but the school has yet to adopt a whole school approach for assessing and recording pupils' work and progress. The role of the co-ordinator has been improved since the last inspection. The school is now extending their monitoring and evaluation roles. As yet, the results of monitoring and evaluation are not used effectively to raise standards. Overall, there has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and there is good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

As the number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 was less than 10, the table showing the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests is not reported. Trends over time are difficult to determine and are unreliable when small numbers of pupils undertake national assessments. Evidence from the current inspection shows that pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 and attain satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment in all core subjects by the end of the key stage. The school has set low performance targets for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, though these appropriately take into account pupils with special educational needs and are clearly indicative of the predicted performance of the small cohort.

Evidence from the current inspection indicates that whilst the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs is a contributory factor to the very low performance, there are also other factors that influence performance. In particular, pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenged in the mixed age Key Stage 1 class and expectations are not always appropriate. The management and organisation of some lessons limits effective progress, as do the lack of effective assessment procedures and the use of assessment to inform future work. Pupils have particular weaknesses in literacy in Key Stage 1.

Children begin school with below average attainment in most areas of learning, though they have secure personal skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage, they exceed the early learning goals in their physical development and meet the early learning goals for their age in most other areas of learning. They have yet to achieve the early learning goals in language and literacy. Children achieve well in most activities. They are enthusiastic and like coming to school. Pupils attain good and above average standards in physical education by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The school follows a good syllabus for physical education and pupils are fit. Pupils across the school sing well. Standards in all other subjects, including information and communication technology, are satisfactory by the end of both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to the school.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in lessons and at play. At lunch times it is very good. There was no evidence of conflict during the inspection.
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Personal development and relationships	Pupils have very good relationships and their personal development is good.
Attendance	Attendance is just below the national average. Several pupils do not arrive punctually to school and miss out on lessons.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and show very good respect for feelings, values and beliefs. Attendance is declining and too many pupils arrive late, missing out on some lessons. This has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is overall satisfactory. It was very good in four per cent of lessons, good in 32 per cent, satisfactory in 55 per cent and unsatisfactory in nine per cent of lessons observed during the inspection. Good teaching was seen more often in Key Stage 2, where 27 per cent of the teaching was good or better, compared with five per cent of good or better teaching in Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching in English was satisfactory overall, though there was a good lesson seen in the Year 5 and 6 class. This lesson was planned well, with clear objectives and tasks that ensured all pupils worked to their potential. The teaching of mathematics is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. The best teaching in mathematics was seen in the Year 5 and 6 class.

Strengths in teaching included some effective teaching methods that enabled pupils to make good progress in lessons. Most pupils are managed well. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers ensure that pupils respond positively in most lessons. The quality of planning varies and is overall unsatisfactory. Insufficient attention is paid to planning work to meet the needs of different age groups and pupils' differing prior attainment. In some lessons, the organisation of the literacy hour is inefficient, whilst in some other lessons time is not used well. The organisation for listening to pupils' reading and for monitoring their progress is unsatisfactory in the Key Stage 1 class. Insufficient use is made of ongoing assessment to inform future teaching and there is no whole school agreed system for assessment in subjects. In some cases, there is insufficient well-directed support for pupils with special educational needs. These weaknesses have an adverse effect on pupils' learning in some classes, with pupils becoming restless and confused.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught. There is some imbalance in the timetable: too much time is allocated to some lessons, whilst others have limited time.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is effective support from specialist staff. Some aspects of planning for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory. There is insufficient collaboration

	with parents on ways in which to support their children.
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Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is satisfactory provision in the classroom.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual development and good provision for their moral, social and cultural development. Provision for spiritual development has markedly improved since the last inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Overall satisfactory. There are good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. There is good provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents have positive views of the school. They are welcome in the school and can raise concerns at any time. The school provides insufficient information to parents, particularly about their children's progress. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum provided and to additional experiences, such as visits to places of educational interest. Planning for pupils with special educational needs does not always provide clear, measurable targets for improvement. The school cares for its pupils, whose contributions are valued. There is insufficient monitoring of pupils' academic progress and performance. Assessment is not yet used effectively to inform planning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The management of the provision in the Key Stage 1 class is unsatisfactory. Key staff have yet to fully act upon the results of monitoring classroom practice to raise standards and the quality of teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Some statutory duties, such as ensuring required information is presented in the school brochure are not fulfilled. Some health and safety issues have been notified to the school, including fire regulations and procedures.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Appropriate performance management strategies have been established. Governors are not yet fully involved in analysing and addressing the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall, though some staff are not deployed to best advantage to improve standards.

The school is adequately staffed with teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation has been improved and provides appropriate teaching space. Learning resources are adequate. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership overall, though there are some aspects of management that are not fully satisfactory. These include management of the provision for the Key Stage 1 class, the management of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and the organisation for teaching some subjects of the curriculum. A whole school approach to assessment and

recording pupils' progress are areas that are as yet unsatisfactory. Financial management is satisfactory and the school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The school is friendly and their children like school.◆ Staff are approachable.◆ There are high expectations of work and behaviour and children are helped to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Information about their children's progress.◆ Activities outside school.

Inspectors agree that the school is friendly and that staff are approachable. There are very good relationships. Inspectors agree that expectations of behaviour are good, but in some lessons, expectations of work are not high enough. Inspectors disagree that activities outside school are insufficient. Inspectors agree that information to parents about their children's progress is unsatisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. At the time of the last inspection in March 1997 standards of achievement were seen to be satisfactory and in line with standards expected for their age for pupils aged 7 and 11 in most subjects. Attainment was seen to be good and above average in music, but unsatisfactory and below average in information and communication technology. There were weaknesses in some schemes of work that adversely affected continuity and progression, particularly in the mixed age classes where there was insufficient discrimination of work for pupils of different ages. Key Stage 2 pupils were seen to have insufficient opportunities for working collaboratively and there was a lack of investigative and experimental activities in science. Pupils had limited opportunities to use data handling and to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum. There was a lack of guidance material to support the development of skills in information and communication technology and pupils' progress by the end of Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory.

2. There has been considerable upheaval since the last inspection, with two acting headteachers being in place before the present headteacher was appointed. The school has very effectively improved the provision for information and communication technology, resulting in the satisfactory standards now seen at the end of both key stages. Though little music was observed due to the organisation of the timetable, standards in singing are still good. There are now ample opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, to use data handling, to investigate and experiment and to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum. The school is continuing to review and adapt schemes of work as part of identified targets for improvement in the development plan.

3. In 2000, in the National Curriculum assessments, pupils attained very low standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, which placed their performance in the lowest five per cent nationally. Caution is required when comparing pupils' results with national averages when the cohorts are small. Pupils' performance was very low in writing and low in reading and mathematics in comparison with similar schools. To some extent this reflected the lower prior attainment of the pupils and the high number with special educational needs, but evidence from the current inspection indicates that there are other contributory factors. In particular, planning and teaching in the mixed reception, Year 1 and 2 class insufficiently caters for the needs of its older pupils. There is insufficient use made of assessment to inform planning and teaching and as a result pupils often receive insufficiently challenging work, particularly in literacy. The organisation of some lessons sometimes lacks clarity and purpose and time is not always used efficiently. Support staff are not always clear about their input to lessons and the classroom assistant's expertise as a nursery nurse is insufficiently well deployed to support the youngest children in the class.

4. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, pupils attained very low results in English, though it is inappropriate to compare their performance with national averages as there were fewer than 10 pupils in the cohort. Over the last three years almost one half of the pupils eligible to undertake national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were on the school's register for special educational needs, which has had an adverse impact on overall performance results. Evidence, from the current inspection, shows that pupils attain satisfactory standards in English by the end of Key Stage 2, having made considerable progress from the age of 7.

The quality of teaching has a direct influence on the improved rate of progress in this key stage. Pupils begin the key stage with lower than average standards in reading and writing, including handwriting and presentation and considerable work is required to effect improvement. By the time pupils leave the school, their reading and writing skills are appropriately fluent and their work is neatly presented. Pupils respond positively to high expectations and constructive criticism and work hard to improve.

5. Standards in mathematics are satisfactory at the end of both key stages, reflecting both the judgements of the last inspection and pupils' performance in 2000 in comparison with similar schools. Pupils have a secure understanding of number and apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum. They use data handling and undertake mathematical investigations securely. As in English, pupils make good progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2, responding well to lessons that have a brisk pace and high expectations.

6. In science at the end of Key Stage 1, an average number of pupils achieved higher levels than expected in the teacher assessments in 2000, compared with similar schools. A very low percentage of pupils achieved average standards in relation to the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, pupils' performance was satisfactory. Current inspection evidence shows that attainment by the end of both key stages is satisfactory. Pupils generally show interest in investigations and develop secure understanding of both scientific knowledge and skills. In some cases, time is used inefficiently and pupils lose valuable time when there is no extension work. Overall, the planning for science insufficiently takes into account the differing needs of mixed age groups and individual pupils' differing prior attainment.

7. Standards are good in physical education by the end of both key stages. There is a well-devised scheme of work that builds progressively on skills. In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils showed good awareness of the effect of physical exercise on their bodies and they worked hard to refine and improve their performance. This was particularly evident in the Year 3 and 4 class lesson in athletics that was enthusiastically led by the teacher. Standards in singing are also good, though there was insufficient evidence to judge pupils' attainment in other aspects of music due to the organisation of the timetable. Pupils have restricted time for music, receiving only one lesson each fortnight, which does not support continuity in learning.

8. Standards are satisfactory in all other subjects at the end of both key stages. The planning of lessons mostly takes insufficient account of pupils' prior attainment or of their different ages. In practice, much topic work is delivered as whole class lessons. Teachers often adapt questions to cater for the different age groups but subsequent tasks are frequently similar in content and challenge. This results in some pupils being insufficiently challenged whilst others become confused when work is too difficult for them.

9. The special projects initiated through the Education Action Zone are having a positive impact on raising standards in such subjects as design and technology and art and design. In addition, these projects support pupils with special educational needs in their literacy development, where they have good opportunities for extra support in speaking and listening. For example, pupils talked clearly and proudly about their achievements in making "stained glass" windows for the school hall and explained to their peers how they achieved the desired effects. Similarly, adults involved in promoting reading, such as the "Better Reading" partners, contribute well to providing individual support for pupils with lower attainment in reading.

10. Pupils with special educational needs generally make sound progress in lessons. The quality of support varies however. In some classes, work is carefully adapted to meet their needs but overall insufficient use is made of pupils' individual education plans to focus support on their targets for improvement. Some targets are too general to enable teachers to plan and monitor small steps in pupils' progress. Insufficient collaboration is made with parents of pupils with special educational needs to support their children's learning at home. Pupils with English as an additional language generally make sound progress. No help is required in speaking English.

11. Children in the Foundation Stage quickly settle to school routines and their personal development is secure. They exceed the early learning goals in their physical development and meet these goals in most other areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. Their language and literacy skills are less well developed by the end of the reception year. Most meet the early learning goals in reading and are ready to undertake the more structured work of the National Curriculum. Their progress in early writing is less secure. Although most write their first names, several confuse the sequence of letters to spell their names and many have yet to copy adults' writing independently. Opportunities are sometimes missed to interact effectively during activities with children to support their speaking and listening skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They come to school eager to learn and lessons and activities are approached with enthusiasm. This has a positive effect upon pupils' learning and creates a generally purposeful environment. Pupils respond well to challenging and stimulating questions and as they move through the school they reply with growing confidence. For example, this was seen in a Year 6 English lesson where pupils offered their opinions about environmental issues in poems. In Key Stage 2 pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other and instructions are followed quickly and quietly. In Key Stage 1 pupils also listen well to their teachers but listening to each other is less well developed and sometimes reduces the effectiveness of discussions and lesson conclusions.

13. Pupils are usually hard working and concentrate well throughout the day, but there are some occasions when pupils are inattentive and restless. This happens where pupils' work is not sufficiently well matched to their prior attainment. Most pupils have good independent learning skills by the end of Key Stage 2, where they have a good knowledge of reference material and can access information from the Internet and other sources. In some lessons pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop independence in the classroom. Pupils work together well as members of groups and individually when required. The value placed upon pupils and their achievements is evident through displays of their work in the classrooms and in the sharing of each other's work in lessons and assemblies.

14. The good behaviour of all pupils has a beneficial effect on their learning and on the school community as a whole. Pupils behave consistently well in lessons and assemblies. At lunch times behaviour is very good. Pupils are polite and helpful to all. There is no evidence of conflict and pupils show consideration for others when at work and at play. Pupils follow the school rules, which they have helped to form, very well. Resources and equipment are used in a sensible way and pupils of all ages take care when tidying up at the end of lessons. There have been no exclusions in the past year but appropriate procedures are in place should they be needed.

15. The relationships amongst all members of the school community are very good. Pupils throughout the school display a high level of respect for the feelings of others and they think carefully about the effect of their actions on their fellows. This aspect of school life is well supported by the good opportunities offered to reflect on life and the issues surrounding it.

16. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are encouraged to act responsibly. They are offered a variety of duties in the classroom and opportunities to serve the whole school community, for example, by setting up computers or pouring drinks at lunchtime. Pupils have good opportunities to voice their opinions about school life. Inspectors agree with parents' views that the school plays a strong part in helping their children to become mature and responsible.

17. The levels of attendance are just below the national average and over the past three years there has been a decline in the levels of attendance. Absences are due to illness and a considerable amount of holiday taking in term time. The effect of unnecessary absence is detrimental to pupils' learning. Whilst many pupils consistently arrive at school on time, a significant number of pupils are late and miss the start of the school day and the first lesson. Registration is brief and leads quickly into the first lesson.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was very good in four per cent of lessons observed, good in 32 per cent, satisfactory in 55 per cent and unsatisfactory in nine per cent. The very good teaching was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson. Most good teaching was seen in Key Stage 2, though there were also examples of good teaching in Key Stage 1.

19. The teaching of the Year 5 and 6 class is shared by the headteacher and an experienced, part-time teacher. Only two of the teachers were present at the time of the last inspection. There are two adults employed as classroom assistants, though one is qualified as a nursery nurse. The assistants support pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class, pupils with special educational needs and pupils in the combined reception, Year 1 and 2 class.

20. Strengths in the teaching include the very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils respond well to teachers' encouragement and appreciation of their contributions. There is a consistent use of praise for good effort and the school's aims are very well met in promoting a caring, Christian ethos. Pupils start each part of the day with prayers that are often devised and spoken willingly by pupils themselves. Parents' positive views of the school's caring approach are well founded.

21. Teachers often plan interesting lessons that link work in different subjects to make lessons meaningful for pupils. For example, there are close links between art and design, history, geography and science. Pupils learn about their local environment through fieldwork, investigations and observations, using a variety of different sources and resources.

22. At Key Stage 2, basic skills are generally taught effectively. Literacy and numeracy are taught particularly well in the later part of the key stage. In the Year 3 and 4 class, literacy and numeracy skills permeate the lessons, largely due to the school's resolve to focus additional support on the high number of pupils with lower prior attainment and special educational needs in this class. In addition, the class teacher holds an additional qualification in special educational needs, which benefits these pupils by the careful

adaptation of work to ensure success in small steps. At Key Stage 1, the effective teaching of literacy skills is restricted by insufficiently well-matched work for pupils with differing prior attainment.

23. In the Key Stage 1 class, the teacher has secure understanding of the needs of children in the Foundation Stage. Planning is suitably based on providing activities to promote each area of learning. The teacher has had insufficient guidance on how to balance and organise the teaching to meet the needs of the youngest children with those in Years 1 and 2. As a result, work is sometimes inappropriately matched to different age groups and to pupils' differing prior attainment. This reflects uncertainty in some pupils when work is over demanding. There is a lack of purpose and sense of urgency in others when work is too easy. By the end of Year 2 pupils have not achieved sufficient success in literacy.

24. The management of pupils is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Generally, pupils are attentive and responsive. They listen to instructions and explanations, take part willingly in discussions about their work and concentrate. There was very little inappropriate behaviour seen in most lessons in Key Stage 2 as a result of the effective management of pupils. In Key Stage 1, there was little misbehaviour, but some pupils lacked sufficient concentration when work did not challenge them.

25. Time is generally used satisfactorily in lessons. Registration is prompt and lessons begin on time. Some lessons are too long and valuable time is sometimes lost. This was seen in several lessons, such as literacy hours and science lessons, where objectives had been achieved well within the allocated time. In some instances, lessons were cut short by dealing with such things as washing hands for lunch.

26. The teachers make best use of available materials to support learning. Effective use is often made of support staff and volunteers who help groups of pupils in classes. This is not always so, especially where helpers are not fully clear about ways in which they are to contribute to pupils' learning.

27. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is unsatisfactory overall. Marking varies from class to class in terms of its value. At its best, in the Year 5 and 6 class, constructive comments are used consistently to help pupils to improve their performance. At its weakest, teachers have marked unsuitable efforts as being good. Pupils' work is not dated in most classes, which limits the amount of information teachers have to judge progress over time. Overall, the marking is inconsistent and unsatisfactory. The reading books taken home are not accompanied by a diary, which might help parents and teachers to monitor pupils' progress. Assessment of pupils' progress is limited in this area to a reading checklist in the Key Stage 1 class. Scrutiny of this indicates that pupils read irregularly to the classroom assistant and there is no evidence to show pupils' reading achievements at home.

28. Planning is focused on the objectives within the programmes of study but insufficiently makes use of assessment to inform planning for pupils with differing prior attainment, including those with special educational needs. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are not always sufficiently precise to guide planning in lessons. There is insufficient collaboration with parents of pupils with special educational needs on ways in which to support their children at home. The school suitably plans to improve the use of assessment across the school and has identified this in its development plan.

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

29. The curriculum provided by the school for all its pupils, and the organisation of the learning opportunities made available to them go a very long way to meeting the school's aims and objectives and provide a secure basis for future development. Where there are deficiencies the school is generally aware of them and is seeking to make improvements.

30. All the subjects identified in the National Curriculum and religious education are delivered well enough to meet requirements. The under-emphasis on information and communication technology identified as a curricular weakness in the previous inspection report has been very effectively addressed so that it is now one of the stronger subjects in the school's provision.

31. The broader planning of the work in the school makes provision for the progressive development of the pupils' skills as they move from the Foundation Stage through Key Stages 1 and 2. Some of the individual short term, detailed planning of the work with the younger pupils is not specific enough to ensure that the planned progression takes place. The organisation of the school day in some classes does not provide for the effective use of time. For example, although good use is made of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, the "hour" devoted to the subject frequently extends for a further 10 or 20 minutes of less productive time and the sharpness and the pace of the lesson is lost. On the other hand, some concluding sessions of lessons are cut short by the demands of non-educational matters, such as the washing of hands 10 minutes before the end of the lesson. Though the individual periods of time seem small, over a week, term or a year they represent a significant amount of time that could provide, for example, for a weekly music period rather than the fortnightly one. The less rigorous attention to timing of lessons also leads to a reduction in the pace and urgency of learning.

32. The balance between subjects on the timetable is weighted markedly in favour of literacy and numeracy. This has been successful in improving standards in mathematics, but this is not the same with literacy, particularly in Key Stage 1. Teachers plan work that links various subjects to keep the curriculum relevant to the pupils' experience. This also allows for connections to be made with the pupils' everyday lives and concerns. For example, a poem, "Names," by Brian Moses used in literacy was also used to investigate public awareness of pollution for a topic in geography. History topics provide the vehicle for art and design skills to be developed in creating pictures and articles which have a practical educational purpose, such as illustrations for a display on conditions in Victorian Britain.

33. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is broadly satisfactory but there are some limitations. Individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs have been remodelled but some lack precision in the targets for improvement. Parental involvement in subsequent reviews is insufficient. This lack of regular consultation reduces the effectiveness of reinforcement by parents at home. The provision of support for pupils with English as an additional language meets all current needs effectively.

34. There is a satisfactory range of activities outside of lessons, including sports activities and clubs for information and communication technology for both pupils and parents. The inspectors do not agree with the views of those parents who felt that the provision was inadequate. Pupils' experiences outside the classroom include visits to places of educational interest and good use is made of the local environment to enhance pupils'

learning in many subjects. For example, pupils investigate habitats and geographical features for science and geography and use the attractive area around the school as a focus for observational work in art and design. All the school's activities are open to all pupils. Violin tuition is provided and a charge is made to cover the costs. The school provides means of defraying expenses over time or looks for support for the costs of, for example, the trip to France, so that no pupil is disadvantaged and loses the opportunity of a valuable educational experience as a result of hardship.

35. The school provides very effectively for pupils' personal, social and health education. A new programme for this area of work devised by the cluster of small Catholic schools is nearly completed and ready for use. The programme of drugs awareness is well managed in co-operation with the police, who provide either a short or a long programme in alternate years. This aspect of the links with the community is good. The local parish provides some support for the school but the headteacher reports that the lack of a locally based parish priest has resulted in a sense of isolation and a reduction in the quantity and quality of support that is usually found. Good support is provided by the Education Action Zone, in conjunction with the local Catholic secondary school. The work linking literacy and design and technology has been particularly effective in improving the pupils' learning whilst providing a useful form of in-service training for the staff. Parents and friends of the school are also very supportive and rally round when needs are identified. One good example of this is the creation of the Millennium Garden by the entrance to the school. This was designed and built by pupils and adults working together, using materials supplied with the support and generosity of the local community.

36. The school has good links with both the local Catholic secondary school to which most of the pupils go at 11, with the cluster of small Catholic schools in the area and with the nursery school in the village. These links provide mutual support, opportunities for joint efforts and have a good effect on the morale of the school.

37. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This aspect of school life figures prominently in the aims of the school. The spiritual development of the pupils is very well catered for. The opportunities for worship are well managed and provide sensitive occasions for personal reflection and prayer which are natural, unaffected and sincere. Class prayers punctuate the school day and enable the pupils to reflect upon what they have done or are about to do. The provision for religious education and the sacramental programme, which are subject to the Diocesan inspection, contribute considerably to this provision.

38. The provision for the pupils' moral development is good. They are clearly taught the difference between right and wrong and are effectively encouraged to behave well and to be considerate to one another. The rules for behaving well are deeply ingrained, not least when an inspector eating lunch with the pupils and handed a drink by one of the younger ones is reminded not to forget the "Please and Thank you!"

39. The social development of the pupils, important in the creation of a harmonious, Christian school community where each individual matters, which is an important personal aim of the headteacher, is well managed and very largely achieved. The school is a safe and welcoming place for the pupils where they feel valued. This lies behind the high quality relationships that are a strong feature of the school.

40. The provision for the cultural development of the pupils is also good. The pupils are made familiar with the works of significant painters, musicians and authors from the British

and European traditions. Work on religions other than Christianity also brings them into contact with cultural, as well as religious traditions other than their own. Visits to places such as the Sikh Gurdwara help to broaden their outlook and understanding of people from the wider community in Great Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school has satisfactory arrangements for the care and protection of its pupils. Adults show themselves to be sensitive and caring. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for and the supportive environment offered does much to improve their levels of confidence. Health and safety arrangements are satisfactory and risk assessments are undertaken regularly. The action taken to remedy identified risks is not always as swift as it should be. A small number of health and safety issues have been raised with the school, for example, the fire alarm procedures. Child Protection arrangements are good. There is no school policy for this but all adults in school are provided with good written guidance and specific training that supports a good level of awareness amongst all in school. This represents an area of improvement since the last inspection.

42. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils are involved in discussions about the school rules and they follow them well. There is an established system of rewards and sanctions but this is not reflected in the school policy. The system is applied inconsistently across the school. This is the same situation that was found at the time of the last inspection. Behaviour is not monitored formally but in this small school pupils are well known. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There is a good policy and clear guidelines for staff are included. Issues surrounding bullying are discussed in assemblies and in class discussions. Pupils display high levels of respect for each other and there is no evidence of unpleasantness or threatening behaviour.

43. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory. Administrative procedures are efficient and good monitoring information is readily available. The school does not use this information effectively and takes little action to improve attendance or to tackle the significant amount of lateness. Lateness is not recorded correctly and many pupils drift into school after registration time. No records for the reasons for lateness are maintained and pupils arriving late are unchallenged. Not all the requirements for publishing attendance information are correctly met.

44. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. There are at present no formal systems for monitoring personal development, but pupils are none the less well known and well supported.

45. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory overall. Little progress has been made since the last inspection. Whilst assessment in mathematics, English and information and communication technology is satisfactory, assessment is not undertaken elsewhere. Individual pupils' records are not maintained in such a way as to allow accurate tracking of individual progress, the identification of areas of difficulty or the setting of individual targets. No assessment takes place for children in the Foundation Stage. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are therefore also unsatisfactory.

46. The use of assessment information to guide the planning for pupils with differing prior attainment is unsatisfactory. Some individual targets are being set in the Year 5 and 6 class but overall insufficient analysis of the information available is made to set targets for groups of pupils or individuals. Curriculum planning is not informed by assessment information and leads to insufficient continuity and progression in Key Stage 1.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The parents' views of the school are good. Parents are supportive of the school and are pleased that the teachers expect their children to work hard, that the behaviour in school is good and with the way the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Parents feel that the school is a bright and welcoming place. Parents have suitably been involved in the home-school agreement. Some parents expressed concern about the information they receive about their children's progress, the amount of homework provided and the range of activities provided outside lessons. The inspection findings support the positive views of parents and their concerns about the information they receive. The provision of homework is satisfactory, as is the range of activities provided outside lessons.

48. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory. The headteacher and the staff are approachable and parents are welcomed into school if they wish to discuss concerns or any day-to-day matters. Parents are invited to performances and to certain assemblies, but these do not include the weekly celebration assembly or those where pupils share the work that they do with others. Overall there are insufficient opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school or to gain insight into their children's education.

49. The impact of parent's involvement on the work of the school is good. A small number of parents are able to provide regular help in school. There is a well-supported Friends' Association that provides extra resources through fund-raising activities and which organises social and charitable events. Additionally, parents have been involved in the production of story sacks. Parents attend a Maths Club and a weekly Computer Club where they may work alongside their children.

50. The quality of the information provided for parents is unsatisfactory. At the meeting held prior to the inspection parents expressed a wish for better information from the school. Whilst regular newsletters keep parents well informed about day-to-day events and school procedures, there is insufficient information overall. The school brochure is brief and does not meet statutory requirements. Parents receive some information about mathematics work but otherwise receive little information about the curriculum and the work that their children are doing. Information about pupils' work and progress is conveyed in satisfactory annual written reports that are produced late in the school year. These are accompanied by a consultation evening. Parents of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are invited to a meeting to explain the National Curriculum assessments, but in general there are insufficient opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress. The school has recognised that parents would like the opportunity to talk to their children's teacher at an earlier stage of the academic year. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are insufficiently involved in regular reviews of their children's individual education plans, which does not comply with guidance in the national Code of Practice.

51. Parents' contributions to their children's learning at home and in school are satisfactory. The provision of homework is satisfactory and parents appreciate the fact that work set is suitable for the individual child. Parents have expressed a wish for better information about homework in order to provide good support at home. At present parents are not involved in recording completed homework. There is no system for including parents in recording their children's progress in their reading homework, which is not given a sufficiently high profile.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The school has faced considerable upheaval for the last four years, including two occasions when it was led by acting headteachers. Only the part time teacher of the Year 5 and 6 class and the class teacher of the Key Stage 1 class were in post at the time of the last inspection. The Key Stage 1 teacher has five years' experience in teaching, all of which has been acquired in St. Mary's. The headteacher and one other teacher have been in post for three years. The headteacher was previously a teacher in this school and was first appointed as an acting headteacher before being appointed to his present post.

53. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. The immediate aims of raising pupils' self-esteem were identified and have been successfully achieved since the headteacher's appointment. In this respect, there is good reflection of the school's aims and values in its work. Relationships amongst all who work in the school are very good and this has a positive effect on attitudes and behaviour, which are good. Parents feel more welcomed than they did previously and fully appreciate the school's efforts to provide their children with a good education. The headteacher's vision is to develop the school's climate for learning as a place of educational challenge and where pupils develop personal pride.

54. At the time of the last inspection, key issues for improvement included the development of co-ordinators' roles, particularly to provide subject guidance. This was aimed at providing consistent support to teachers in their planning for continuity and progression. The headteacher and governors have addressed much of this issue effectively. Co-ordinators have established appropriate schemes of work that provide continuity and progression and enable teachers to plan objectives for lessons. Co-ordinators now have roles in monitoring teaching and learning, though they have yet to act upon evaluations effectively. They have yet to ensure that work planned for mixed age groups and for pupils with differing prior attainment is appropriate to their needs. In conjunction with this, co-ordinators have yet to ensure that consistent use is made of ongoing assessment to inform future teaching. The planning for mixed age classes and the consistent use of assessment are issues from the last inspection report that have yet to be fully addressed.

55. The headteacher is aware of the need for further improvement in co-ordinators' effectiveness and has built opportunities for professional improvement into the development plan. Termly reviews have been established for evaluating the success or otherwise of subject teaching and learning. The headteacher is similarly working towards common methods of assessment, focusing on pupils' acquisition of skills. This has become a priority following a close analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

56. Most improvements since the last inspection are still being developed. The headteacher has established a sound management structure, which is now being used to improve teaching and standards. Teachers now share a commitment to improvement and

readily appreciate evaluations about their performance. Governors have a satisfactory role in shaping the direction of the school. They have yet to develop a clear role as a critical friend. The school brochure does not meet requirements. There are some health and safety concerns that have been notified to the school. There is a health and safety concern about fire regulations and procedures used in the school.

57. The school's development planning has improved since the last inspection. Priorities are clear and well based on a close analysis of the school's needs. Planned developments include costs and the development plan is used effectively as a working document. Building alterations have improved facilities for staff and pupils and there are good, ongoing plans to continue repairs in some classrooms. The accommodation is adequate. The library is now housed in a separate room, allowing suitable space for physical education in the hall. However, there are insufficient fire signs in the building. The school has been most successful in managing the improvements in the provision for information and communication technology, which is successfully raising standards. This has fully addressed the issue of improving standards in Key Stage 2. Resources are generally adequate for teaching and learning.

58. The main area of weakness is in the management of the provision for children in the Foundation Stage and other pupils in the Key Stage 1 class. Although the teacher is qualified to teach in the early years, there has been a lack of effective support in managing the mixed age class. The class teacher acknowledges that she would welcome further support in managing the different needs in this class. The teacher is supported by a classroom assistant, who follows her job description appropriately. Best use is not made of the assistant, who is, in fact, a qualified nursery nurse, but who is not employed in this capacity. Insufficient attention has been paid to the outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The other classroom assistant is deployed well in supporting pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class and in supporting pupils with special educational needs.

59. The headteacher is the school's special educational needs co-ordinator, though another teacher has an appropriate qualification in special educational needs. The headteacher has rewritten pupils' individual education plans to ensure they are legible and that they provide necessary information about each pupils. Parents are informed if their children are identified as requiring support. Several of these plans are insufficiently detailed, providing only general targets. The sections headed "parental involvement" do not contain details of issues raised by parents or points discussed.

60. The deployment of responsibilities for subjects is satisfactory, though teachers' expertise is not always used to best advantage. This includes the role of special educational needs co-ordinator, but also some other responsibilities such as art and design leadership, where the teacher with a keen interest in the subject is not given responsibility because she is employed on a part time basis.

61. Financial planning is satisfactory, with appropriate procedures in place to monitor and to judge the effectiveness of spending. The budget is monitored regularly by the headteacher and governors. Specific grants are spent wisely, for example, £3,000 allocated by the government was used to replenish resources for mathematics and teaching costs. The Friends' Association is also helping financially by repaying the county loan for computers. The school makes sound use of technology for administration and teaching purposes.

62. The headteacher is relatively inexperienced in leadership and management and would welcome further training opportunities in management skills. The success of his leadership in a relatively short time is reflected in the very good relationships in the school and parents' positive views. This is also seen in the considerable improvements in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is now good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further raise standards and the quality of education provided, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- ◆ continue to improve standards in English by the end of Key Stage 1 by:
 - *raising the profile of reading, both in school and at home;*
 - *ensuring that pupils develop appropriate writing skills, including handwriting and presentation skills;*
 - *providing non-teaching staff with clear guidance on ways in which to support pupils;*
 - *ensuring that individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are used effectively to guide teaching;*

(paragraphs: 3, 10, 11, 23, 32, 64, 72, 73, 75 and 103)

- ◆ improve the quality of assessment and the monitoring and recording of pupils' progress by:
 - *establishing consistent procedures for marking pupils' work;*
 - *establishing a whole school approach to assessing pupils' attainment and progress across subjects;*
 - *using assessment to plan future work that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs;*
 - *developing a consistent system for recording pupils' progress;*

(paragraphs: 3, 6, 8, 10, 23, 24, 27, 28, 31, 45, 46, 54, 59 and 69)

- ◆ improve the quality of information to parents by:
 - *improving procedures for parents of children with special educational needs to discuss their children's progress;*
 - *providing information about work in school;*
 - *developing ways in which parents can be more involved in their children's reading at home, including use of a home/school reading diary;*

(paragraphs: 10, 28, 50, 69 and 75)

- ◆ improve the organisation and management of the Key Stage 1 class by:
 - *reviewing the deployment of support staff and their roles;*
 - *providing professional support for the class teacher to assist the organisation of lessons;*

(paragraphs: 3, 11, 23, 58, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 73 and 75)

◆ improve procedures for promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality by:

- *ensuring registers are correctly completed within the allocated time;*
- *enlisting the support of the Education Welfare Officer when required;*
- *including comments about pupils' attendance in information to parents;*

(paragraphs: 17 and 43)

◆ ensure requirements are met by:

- *including required information in the governors' annual report and in the school brochure;*
- *improving procedures for the care and welfare of pupils, in particular health and safety risk assessment and consequent actions;*

(paragraph 56)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should also include the following additional issues in its action plan. This is included in paragraphs 25, 31, 89, 98, 99, 125 and 144:

◆ The use of time, including allocations to subjects and the effective use of time in lessons.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	32	55	9	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	68
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	22

English as an additional language	Number of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	Number of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	7	5	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58 (75)	50 (75)	67 (92)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58 (75)	67 (92)	58 (75)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

As the number of boys and girls undertaking the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were both less than 10 then only the overall school percentage results are recorded.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	3	2	5

As the number of pupils in Key Stage 2 in 2000 was less than 10, then the school is not required to publish its National Curriculum test results.

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5 : 1
Average class size	18

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	192,855
Total expenditure	183,826
Expenditure per pupil	2,704
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,055
Balance carried forward to next year	26,084

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	68
Number of questionnaires returned	29

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	39	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	39	10	3	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	52	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	55	14	3	7
The teaching is good.	48	38	7	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	41	28	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	41	7	7	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	48	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	34	52	3	7	4
The school is well led and managed.	38	45	3	7	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	52	0	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	48	24	3	8

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

63. Pupils enter the school at the age of four years, almost always having previously attended the nursery school in the village. The school is currently organised with all the pupils under 7 years of age in one class, that is, pupils in the Foundation Stage as well as those in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) being educated together. On entry to the school, the children have begun to form relationships. They share toys and play together well. They co-operate well in their pretend games, such as in packing for their holidays in connection with the seaside theme. They are effectively encouraged to think about other people and to remember the courtesies of using "Please" and "Thank you". This is not limited to the classroom, but is followed up at lunchtime and in the playground. The teacher and other adults encourage children to talk about their immediate interests and provide a warm and caring environment. The experiences provided in the Foundation Stage prepare the children soundly for the challenges and responsibilities they will experience later in the school. By the end of the Foundation Stage they have achieved the early learning goals for this area of learning and are ready to move on.

Communication, language and literacy

64. When the children arrive in the school their literacy skills are more limited than those of the average four-year-old. The experiences and skills they will need to develop writing and reading are also below average. This has a slowing down effect not only upon the development of literacy, but also on development in other areas such as their knowledge and understanding of the world, in creative activities and in listening to and following instructions for most activities. The school provides sound opportunities for the development of their language and literacy skills. The teacher uses very effective techniques of questioning and helping pupils to answer when, for example, they join in with the shared reading work of the whole class. The children are encouraged to look at books and to develop pre-reading skills and progress is made. The class teacher is insufficiently involved in regularly listening to children read from their early reading books. The children are suitably encouraged to develop mark-making skills as a prelude to learning to write, but a lack of close and regular supervision means that some develop inefficient ways of holding their pencils and some remain unsure about the correct formation of letters. By the end of the Foundation Stage most meet the early learning goals in reading and are ready to undertake the more structured work of the National Curriculum. Their progress in early writing is less secure. Although most write their first names, several confuse the sequence of letters that spell their names and many have yet to copy adults' writing independently.

Mathematical development

65. Children make good progress in their mathematical development and meet the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. They have sound understanding of number, sorting objects and matching them with numbers up to 10. For example, they accurately planted the correct number of flowers in a numbered pot. They play snakes and ladders with a large dice, recognising the numbers 1 to 6 and counting on and backwards carefully. Children recognise and name simple shapes. When they play with sand and water they experiment with capacity and ideas such as "bigger than" and "smaller than" in practical ways. Teaching is satisfactory. Good use is made of number songs and rhymes to

reinforce children's learning. The classroom assistant provides sound support for children by supervising and helping individuals in their activities. There is sometimes insufficient interaction between adults and children as they pursue activities with water and sand and little use is made of informal assessment methods to monitor children's progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. The children are introduced to the world around the school, for example, they look at various plants and talk about them. They discuss holidays, such as where they have been and where they would like to go. They discover ways in which to put things together through working with building games and constructing working models with wheels. They talk about the past, including how they have grown up, what they used to do when they were babies and develop an emerging understanding of past and present. Children's progress in talking about their knowledge and understanding of the world is restricted by their lower than average speaking skills. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory. Activities are interesting but insufficient use is made of a steady flow of observations and conversation with the youngest children to develop their speaking skills and to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. Adults who help are not always clear about ways in which to support these skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children have a satisfactory understanding of the world, meeting the early learning goals for their age.

Physical development

67. Children make good progress and exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children come to school with secure physical ability and experience of both large and small toys that they can manipulate and work well. They are quick to develop the skills to manage apparatus such as a computer mouse and the switches on the listening stations on which they hear stories. In physical education lessons children control big balls well with both their hands and their feet, working effectively in pairs. They control the large wheeled toys outdoors safely and confidently. Children use scissors, glue sticks and other small tools well for their age, such as when they make things associated with topics. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory. Good activities are provided for the development of the children's physical skills. The planning and organisation of these has limitations, particularly where roles of adults are insufficiently well focused on ensuring children gain the most from these activities. Too often, children lose interest and wander aimlessly between activities and adults. The children have easy access for outdoor play, but the area provided is difficult to supervise thoroughly. The resources provided for outdoor play have been recently acquired and are good in quality and sufficient in quantity for the number of children. The opportunities for imaginative outdoor play are rather more restricted.

Creative development

68. Children's creative development is good and contributes significantly to their personal development and self-confidence. In painting, they mix colours effectively and talk about what they have painted, often relating it to other work they have done in the class. Creative play engages their attention well. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In some activities, teaching provides good opportunities for promoting children's creative development, such as when stories are used imaginatively to predict what might happen next. The materials for painting and drawing are readily available and the pupils make good use of them. Role-play and interaction with adults is not used fully to advantage to support pupils' creativity and increasing use of vocabulary.

69. The class is generally well staffed with support staff and helpers, but not all of them are consistently used effectively in making use of their strengths, experience and training. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is soundly directed towards the early learning goals and the planning acknowledges this. The quality of teaching of this age group is satisfactory overall and occasionally better than that. The teaching displays a growth of confidence in understanding the requirements of children of this age group. The day-to-day planning and recording of the work of individuals and groups of children has not yet been thoroughly developed. The step by step development of skills is being addressed, but the recording of what has been done so that future planning meets particular needs is not yet firmly established. The quality of relationships between the pupils and the staff is very good and promotes a satisfactory quality of learning, as well as making for a friendly classroom in which the children are able to develop successfully as people and members of the school family.

ENGLISH

70. It is not appropriate to comment on the performance of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in the 2000 National Curriculum assessments in relation to the national average as fewer than 10 pupils undertook the tests. The standards achieved were very low. In the National Curriculum assessments in 2000, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was very low, in the lowest five per cent nationally. Taking the three years 1998 to 2000 together, performance at the end of the key stage was below that expected nationally. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance at the end of both key stages was well below average. Pupils' writing performance at the end of Key Stage 1 was very low in comparison with similar schools.

71. The small numbers of pupils undertaking these tests each year make comparisons with the national average unreliable. In addition, the results are influenced to a considerable extent by the high number of pupils with special educational needs. In 1999, over one half of the Year 2 pupils who undertook national tests were on the school's special educational needs register. In the same year, almost one half of the pupils joined the school after Year 3, with only one pupil attaining the expected level in the tests. A further two pupils who were judged to be likely to achieve satisfactory standards were absent on the day of the assessments. Over the last three years almost one half of the pupils eligible to undertake national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were on the school's register for special educational needs.

72. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is satisfactory in all aspects of English, reflecting pupils' prior attainment and the good progress that they make in this key stage. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is satisfactory in speaking and listening, but unsatisfactory and below average in reading and writing.

73. To some extent, Year 2 pupils' achievements reflect their differing prior attainment and the number with special educational needs. There are other contributory factors that largely relate to management of the combined Reception, Year 1 and 2 class. In this class, there is insufficient account taken of pupils' differing prior attainment and older pupils often lack sufficient challenge. For example, in one lesson observed, although Year 2 pupils made appropriate progress in their understanding of the story, "Percy the Park Keeper", subsequent tasks of identifying capital letters and full stops were insufficiently challenging. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that although there is appropriate progress in developing ideas to tell a story, punctuation, handwriting and presentation are unsatisfactory by the end

of the key stage. Pupils write in simple sentences and they have only just begun to consider story settings and ways in which to plan a story.

74. Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to discussions during introductions and conclusions to lessons. Their contributions are valued and most pupils are confident when asking for help and when explaining their work. Some pupils with special educational needs have limited confidence and they are insufficiently included in some discussions. In some cases, the support provided does not fully meet the needs of some pupils with special educational needs.

75. Pupils develop appropriate understanding of stories read during whole class shared reading times. They listen carefully and gain meaning through the teacher's good questioning and explanations. They learn to predict and anticipate what might happen next in a story. Few are able to read the texts of the Big Books provided and rely on others with higher prior attainment to read aloud during whole class shared reading time. All pupils have reading books that are taken home, but they are heard to read aloud from their books irregularly, usually by the classroom assistant and other helpers. There is no reading diary to accompany home reading and to serve as a record of how they are making progress. Some pupils re-read the same books. Most pupils read books with simple sentences by the end of Key Stage 1. Discussions with Year 2 pupils showed that they understand the purpose of a contents page in a book but few know an index. No pupils in this year group know how to use the classification system in the school library.

76. At Key Stage 2, younger pupils make sound progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The school is focusing support on Year 3 pupils, following their very low achievement in the previous year's national tests at the end of Key Stage 1. This is having a positive impact on raising standards in literacy. There is classroom support, additional literacy tuition and many pupils are included in the special projects being supported by the Education Action Zone. These pupils also benefit from help given by the Better Reading system from adult helpers, staff and some governors. The class teacher, who has a special educational needs qualification, adapts some resources well for pupils with lower prior attainment. By the end of Year 4, pupils read expressively, showing good understanding of stories, poems and other reading material. In one lesson seen, they showed good understanding of alliteration and began to understand the use of onomatopoeia, through a well-devised activity about playing with words.

77. In writing, younger pupils in Key Stage 2 make sound progress. Most develop appropriate skills in punctuation, though those with lower prior attainment are still insecure in punctuating a sentence and their spelling is weak. Those with higher prior attainment write fluently, often using dialogue to enhance their stories. A study of pupils' work in this class shows that presentation and handwriting skills are still below levels expected for their age. Their work is not dated, making evaluations of progress over time difficult.

78. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in all aspects of English. Their good progress reflects the good quality of the teaching, which includes high expectations of work and presentation. They talk confidently and maturely, such as in discussing conservation issues during a literacy hour. The lesson content skilfully drew upon pupils' learning in other subjects, such as geography and science and also contributed well to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. For example, pupils discussed social conscience, apathy and lethargy in relation to the theme of conservation. They recognised the moods evoked in poems and successfully investigated the impact of different styles of writing on the reader. Pupils shared the reading of poems, commented on expressions such as "I'm all right, Jack" and completed subsequent tasks well. The scrutiny of their work over time shows that pupils

develop sound writing skills. They write for a good range of purposes, using a variety of formats. For example, pupils have written play scripts, descriptions and accounts. They include dialogue in their stories and all work is well punctuated and presented. Work is dated and marking is constructive. Those with higher prior attainment achieve well, writing fluently and engagingly. Pupils with lower prior attainment write stories that have a clear beginning, middle and end, with ideas soundly developed. Their use of punctuation is less secure.

79. Pupils respond well in Key Stage 2. They listen attentively, follow instructions and willingly take part in discussions. In the Key Stage 1 class, though pupils show interest in reading and in speaking and listening activities, they become restless during lessons when work is not always appropriately matched to their differing needs. Throughout the school, behaviour is good in lessons. Pupils persevere and complete tasks in the allocated time. Their good response is directly influenced by the very good relationships that exist between adults and pupils.

80. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Apart from the good planning for literacy in the Year 5 and 6 class, planning elsewhere has some limitations. All teachers show clear objectives for lessons, but these do not extend to planning for pupils with differing prior attainment, including that for those pupils with special educational needs. In some lessons observed, guidance for literacy hour planning was used ineffectively. In practice, these lessons contained only an introduction and then written tasks. In others, group activities were insufficiently adapted to meet the needs of pupils with differing prior attainment. Insufficient use is made of ongoing assessment to inform future teaching. The quality of marking varies and does not always provide sufficient guidance to pupils on ways in which they might improve their work. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning in Key Stage 2, but is not effectively used in Key Stage 1. In the unsatisfactory lesson in Key Stage 1, weaknesses involved insufficiently adapted work for pupils with differing prior attainment and insufficiently clear guidance for pupils and for some adult helpers. The planning of work for the wide range of age groups and pupils' differing prior attainment is insecure and unsatisfactory.

81. The headteacher co-ordinates English across the school. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages has been carefully analysed and valuable additional support has been established to raise standards. All staff have received training in literacy. The headteacher, one class teacher, the chair of governors, parents and school clerk have all trained in the Better Reading partnership. The school has introduced "Story sacks" for Key Stage 1 pupils and it has access to a literacy consultant and a speech therapist through the Education Action Zone. Lessons and standards have been monitored and evaluated. The results of evaluations have yet to be fully addressed.

82. The school has introduced some informal, diagnostic assessment procedures for speaking and listening, which will provide a measure of pupils' progress over one year. Pupils in Year 6 have a book in which feedback about their work is given in detail. Older pupils have recently been provided with targets for improvement, which are agreed between the teacher and the pupils. There are no records kept on pupils' ongoing progress.

83. The variation in planning and use of assessment to inform planning has an adverse effect on the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are aware of pupils' specific needs and offer additional support in lessons, but work does not always sufficiently focus on supporting their identified difficulties. Individual education plans have been recently rewritten to ensure that they are legible and that pupils' targets are clear.

Several plans contain insufficiently clear and measurable targets and none identify ways in which parents are included in supporting their children's progress.

84. Book and other resources have been improved considerably in recent years and are adequate for teaching English. The school library is now housed in a separate room, allowing more space for physical education in the school hall. There is a good range of fiction and there are good quality reference books. Some of the reading books for younger pupils are in need of repair or replacement. Although literacy, and in particular reading, is a strong priority for improvement, some classroom displays of books do not inspire interest in selecting books for enjoyment. In particular, books for pupils in the Key Stage 1 class are unnecessarily stored outside the classroom amongst pupils' coats. Pupils' work is sometimes displayed too high for them to read.

MATHEMATICS

85. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged 7 the school's results, when compared with all schools nationally, were well below what is expected. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was well below average. Pupils' attainment by the age of 11 was lower than might be expected, though when compared with schools with a similar background, satisfactory. Such judgements, using the results of tests statistically, are not as clear cut as at first they seem when, as is the case with this school, the numbers of pupils in each year are both small and very variable. Standards in mathematics throughout the school were described in the previous inspection report as being satisfactory and in line with the national average at the end of both key stages. Evidence from the current inspection shows similar performance. These judgements are based on evidence from a scrutiny of the pupils' work and observations of how they are performing in lessons. From a lower than average attainment on entry to the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they pass through the school. This progress is more rapid during Key Stage 2 than it is during Key Stage 1.

86. There are differences between the standards attained by boys and girls in some years but not in others. These differences are not regular and do not present a pattern or trend, again because the numbers involved are too small for wholly secure judgements. Another factor leading to variation in results is the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Many of these pupils join the school after the normal age of entry, having started their education elsewhere. In mathematics, the pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress to reach levels of attainment which are not very significantly lower than those of their lower attaining classmates. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils with English as a second language so that their attainment in mathematics is also maintained at a satisfactory level. The school identifies those pupils who are potentially very high attainers and provides them, in the upper part of the school, with suitably challenging material to develop their mathematical skills further.

87. Pupils in Key Stage 1 undertake money problems with assurance when they are presented as sums rather than in words. Those with higher prior attainment add two sums of money together and then work out the change from £1 correctly. They count on and backwards in twos, threes and fives confidently and correctly and discover number patterns on the 100 board. By the end of Year 2 pupils recognise regular simple two-dimensional shapes and some of the three-dimensional ones. Sometimes their progress is restricted by their weakness in reading and the recording of work suffers from their lower than average writing and presentation skills. The pupils have a sound basis of knowledge of mathematics

upon which work in Key Stage 2 is built. Most pupils enjoy mathematics, work well together and behave well.

88. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 investigate, using calculators to speed up work that investigated whether every number multiplied by 4 will end in 2, 4, 6, 8 or 0. Those with higher prior attainment were asked to explain the reasons. Most pupils achieved well. Those in Years 5 and 6 calculate complex sums involving, for example, squares and square roots. These tasks are included in the quick mental mathematics sessions that begin lessons. Good and appropriate use is made of computers and calculators to support mathematical learning. To ensure that the pupils do not grow dependent on such tools and to aid accuracy, they are taught well to estimate answers before using the apparatus. Pupils investigate the relationships between numbers and develop a good understanding of them. For example, some pupils in Year 6 recognised that in the game of multiplication and division bingo it was unwise to choose prime numbers for their bingo cards. They could also explain why.

89. At Key Stage 1, although teaching is satisfactory, there is sometimes a lack of pace and urgency in the teaching which allows other things, such as hand-washing time for lunch well before the lesson has been concluded, to interfere and to reduce the quantity and quality of learning. Most teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. The work provided in mathematics throughout Key Stage 2 is made interesting and challenging. The teaching, especially for the older pupils, is often good. One example of good teaching was seen in the challenge given to a Year 6 pupil to explain in mathematical terms why a tetrahedron could not be a polygon. There is a good focus on investigative work throughout the school.

90. Teachers' planning is soundly based on the National Numeracy strategy and the assessment of pupils' work follows that pattern also. Where the suggestions for work for pupils of different ages and with different levels of attainment are followed then the work provided is well matched to the needs and capabilities of all the pupils. Where two or more groups are dealt with entirely as a single unit, as is sometimes the case in Key Stage 1, the challenge for the older and higher attaining pupils is absent and their progress is slowed. Among the older pupils particularly, homework is used effectively to support and extend independent learning. Classroom support staff are generally used effectively, particularly in Key Stage 2, to improve the quality of learning, as well as helping those pupils with special educational needs. Good use is also made of supplementary help, such as that provided by parents and governors and potential teachers on work experience placement from the local secondary school. They provide extra support for the pupils.

91. Assessment is satisfactory and is currently being further developed. Pupils' work is marked diligently, though there is inconsistency in the quality of constructive comments. The school administers a range of tests between Years 2 and 6 that are being used to provide information about how individual pupils perform in different aspects of mathematics over time. As the information is collected, analysed and interpreted over time it is intended to provide an increasingly valuable tool for planning to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups of pupils.

92. The work for pupils in both key stages is planned around the National Numeracy Strategy suggestions for smaller schools and covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum well. Resources are supplemented by a commercially produced scheme of work. The lack of opportunities for data handling identified in the previous report has been overcome and pupils, by the end of Key Stage 2, create and use graphs representing information from a variety of sources in a confident and competent way. For example, they display information about the shift of population from rural to urban areas using different

sorts of graphs, as part of their work on local history in Years 5 and 6. This is a good example of the effective way that mathematics is used practically to support learning in other subjects. This occurs in Key Stage 1 also when, for example, pupils distribute resources to each other, matching the numbers of objects to the number of people.

93. The resources provided for the subject are sufficient in quantity and of a good quality, providing good support for the school's mathematics programme. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory and increasing in scope and effectiveness. The teaching and learning of mathematics is regularly monitored and regular reviews are made of how the subject is developing.

SCIENCE

94. In the teacher assessments in 2000, the percentage of pupils achieving satisfactory standards by the end of Key Stage 1 was very low in comparison with the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels was close to the national average. The number of pupils achieving satisfactory levels was well below average in comparison with schools in similar contexts. The number achieving higher levels was very good compared to similar schools. In the same year, in the National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attained satisfactory standards. The numbers of pupils undertaking national assessments is small each year. In 2000, only five pupils undertook these tests at the end of Key Stage 2. In 1999, only seven pupils undertook the tests. Small numbers mean that comparisons with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 are unreliable due to the fact that a percentage measure can be considerable for one child. In the tests in 1999 and 2000, there were less than 10 boys and less than 10 girls assessed at the end of Key Stage 1, which similarly means that national comparisons may be unreliable.

95. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that pupils attain satisfactory levels by the end of both key stages. This is similar to the judgement at the time of the last inspection. The school has successfully addressed the previous report's issue of providing opportunities for pupils to carry out simple investigations in Key Stage 2. During the inspection, pupils in Key Stage 2 undertook these confidently.

96. At Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in science. Pupils show sound understanding of life and living processes. They learn to identify common plants around the school environment through well-devised fieldwork. Pupils recognise that plants have leaves, stems and flowers. They develop sound research skills in science. In a lesson observed, they investigated growing plants, undertaking various research tasks such as finding information in the library and from the Internet. Pupils discussed the locations where various plants were found, showing good understanding of shade and sun-loving plants. Pupils showed interest and enjoyment of practical investigations and worked hard to complete tasks.

97. At Key Stage 2, younger pupils continue to make sound progress. They develop sound understanding of life and living processes through their study of habitats. Their visit to the nearby woodland enabled them to distinguish similarities and differences between trees. The good teaching helped them to make choices, such as in determining ways in which to sort and group leaves from different trees. Pupils learned that some leaves were known as "compound" leaves and some reasoned that the small parts of a compound leaf were known as "leaflets". Older pupils used their previous knowledge about a plant's requirements for healthy growth to devise a fair test. They know that "nutrients" are required and talked knowledgeably about ways to test their theories.

98. Pupils respond well and show enjoyment of investigative work. They behave and collaborate well. In some lessons they work at a slow pace, largely as a result of insufficient challenge. For example, many older pupils were already fully aware of the requirements needed for successful plant growth. The time allocated to some lessons is too long, resulting in some pupils losing interest.

99. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the Year 3 and 4 class, the quality of teaching observed was good. This lesson was planned and developed well, providing clear objectives for pupils. Support staff were well informed about the lesson's aims and they led their groups effectively. Subsequent tasks were challenging and contributed well to pupils' investigative skills. Good links were made with literacy, with pupils being encouraged to use appropriate scientific vocabulary. The conclusion to the lesson included direct questioning to ensure all pupils had understood. In the other lessons, though activities were interesting and the introductions were effective, subsequent tasks were not always appropriate and some lacked sufficient challenge. Time was not always used effectively or efficiently.

100. The scrutiny of pupils' work and planning shows that there is insufficient discrimination of content for the different age groups in each class. Teachers' plans show clear objectives for lessons, though only a few provide detail for pupils with differing prior attainment, including those with special educational needs. Assessment in science is not yet fully effective. Marking is inconsistent across the school. The school is currently developing a portfolio with examples of assessed work to guide teachers. The use of assessment to inform future work is unsatisfactory.

101. The subject co-ordinator is working hard to improve the quality of the provision. The science policy has been rewritten in collaboration with all staff. Teachers' plans are seen and the co-ordinator checks these to ensure that necessary skills are taught. Some materials have been adapted for pupils with special educational needs in the co-ordinator's class, though this is not extended throughout the school. Some monitoring of lessons has been undertaken though the school has yet to act upon the evaluations made of teaching and learning. There are adequate resources for science. The science programme is taught through whole school topics, placing considerable demand on sharing these resources. The school makes good use of its surrounding environment for investigative work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102. The previous inspection found that standards and progress in information and communication technology at the end of Key Stage 2 were below national expectations. It noted that there was a need for further professional development of the staff and improvements in the co-ordination of the subject. The standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 are now overall in line with what is expected of pupils aged 11. In particular aspects of the subjects, for example, the use of the Internet and the use of the digital camera to record work, pupils show confidence and skills in advance of what is expected. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are satisfactory. All staff have a sound grasp of the subject and some are very familiar with what can be done and of how to introduce pupils to the skills needed. The subject is under frequent review and the school is continuing to seek ways of further improving the teaching and learning of the subject, as well as improving pupils' access.

103. The younger pupils in Key Stage 1 switch apparatus on and off, load and use simple programs. They successfully learn how to use the keyboard, the mouse and to use a variety

of programs on the computer. They paint pictures and write their stories using appropriate computer programs. They also print out what they have done and save their work onto disks. Information and communication technology is also used effectively to support a number of other subjects such as mathematics and English as well as for providing information to support, for example, science, history and geography. The pupils learn how to be generous towards each other in sharing the equipment and helping each other with advice on ways they have discovered of using the computers and other tools. By the time they are 7 pupils attain satisfactory standards. There is room for the work with the older and higher attaining pupils, particularly in Year 2, to be more challenging. Pupils find information for themselves from programs provided about the topics they are currently working on. They also are developing their skills in writing stories and other pieces of writing directly onto the computer. These skills among the younger pupils are initially somewhat limited by their lower prior attainment in literacy, which limits their ability to word process their stories as accurately as they might.

104. By the time the pupils are 11 they are generally competent in word processing. They use computers effectively, and, needing only minimal instruction, create graphs of data collected for use in other subjects such as history, science and geography. They use CD-ROMs for information to support their studies in science and the humanities and access the Internet to develop their knowledge even further. They send and receive e-mails and the school is looking for ways to extend this facility to make links with other schools.

105. Information and communication technology has improved in the school as the result of the development of the teachers' skills and understanding through in-service training, the enthusiastic co-ordination of the subject and the inclusion of the school in the second year of the National Grid for Learning. An improvement in the range and quality of the hardware has also contributed to the improvements. As the teachers have themselves become more confident in the use of the apparatus and programs, so the quality of teaching has improved. They are also better able to see how the subject can be used as a tool for learning in other subject areas. The school is carefully experimenting to find the best way of using the machines to provide both a means of teaching computer skills to a whole class of pupils at the same time and for providing access to computers in the classrooms to support other subjects.

106. Teachers use the clear planning provided for them effectively and use the comprehensive skill recording sheets to ensure that pupils make progress in all aspects of the subject. The older pupils keep their own records whilst the younger pupils' records are maintained by the staff. The management of the subject is sometimes hampered by the frequency of breakdowns as the system, recently fitted, is established. The competence of the staff is well demonstrated by the way in which such problems are overcome.

107. The subject is well supported by two after-school clubs, one for pupils, currently for Years 5 and 6, and another for parents, so that they can improve their skills and also support their children at home. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are generally supported in their learning of information and communication technology and achieve standards appropriate to their needs. Boys and girls do equally well in this subject and neither group dominates in the use of the resources.

108. The resources currently provided are adequate to the current needs of the school's programme. The future development of the subject is under frequent review and new supplementary sources of funding are being sought to extend them further.

ART AND DESIGN

109. Pupils' attainment in art and design is satisfactory and in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. This reflects the standards seen at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Recent initiatives developed in partnership with a Beacon school reflect the good achievement and progress made by pupils with special educational needs and those with lower self-esteem.

110. No direct teaching was seen in Key Stage 1 due to the organisation of the timetable. Evidence from displays and samples of pupils' work indicate that they learn an appropriate range of techniques, using a variety of resources. For example, pupils use paint and crayons to make pictures of shellfish as part of a seaside project. They make crabs, using paper and paper towels, printing and colouring patterns on these. Pupils collaborate to make a large, attractive classroom frieze of the seaside, showing pairs of legs, candyfloss on sticks and ice-cream cornets. They use materials such as corrugated paper and tissue paper to represent three-dimensional objects on the frieze. Though much of their work is undertaken independently, some features such as shellfish are made from templates, limiting opportunities for free expression and creativity.

111. At Key Stage 2, Year 3 and 4 pupils develop their studies of trees, based on images they have printed after using a digital camera. They showed good understanding of shape and form and talked knowledgeably about their observations. In the lesson seen, pupils aimed to print designs for a large-scale model but resources provided were largely unsuitable for the task, limiting the progress made in the lesson. In the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils showed good understanding of textiles. They recalled their previous learning about methods of sewing fabric and willingly contributed their ideas for designing a Victorian scene on hessian. Pupils showed good design skills, using their sketchbooks effectively to indicate their plans for making such scenes as a Victorian lady in a garden. Most knew how to sew seams by using an over sew stitch and used appropriate vocabulary when discussing their ideas. Pupils worked conscientiously but lacked sufficient opportunity to select and retrieve resources, these being handed around to all pupils by adults.

112. In the lessons seen in Key Stage 2, pupils showed interest and willingly talked about their work. The task devised for younger pupils in the key stage was not clearly thought out beforehand in terms of resources to be used. Instructions became overcomplicated, leading to pupils becoming confused about what was expected of them. Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well. Those who take part in the special projects being provided through the Education Action Zone are enthusiastic and many with special educational needs develop increasing confidence and pride in their achievements.

113. Displays in the school hall show pupils' achievements within the special projects, for example, they have learned the difference between transparent and translucent materials through making "stained glass" patterns. Similarly, pupils have learned about famous artists such as Matisse and have used paper and cellophane cuts in his style to make hangings for the hall. This work, which is continuing to develop, is also having a good impact on improving pupils' literacy skills.

114. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, which has a positive impact on learning. Pupils work hard and take pride in their achievements. The lessons seen were appropriately planned to develop a range of skills. Planning across the school similarly aims to provide progression

and continuity of content through the programmes of study. As seen at the time of the last inspection, teachers insufficiently take into account pupils' differing prior attainment when planning work. In practice, all pupils undertake the same work in the mixed age classes. Some assessment is undertaken in some classes, though there is no consistent system for assessment across the school. Some examples of work are photographed as a record of what pupils have achieved. Key Stage 2 pupils have sketchbooks, which provide a record of pupils' progress over time.

115. The subject co-ordinator was allocated responsibility for art and design but has no specific qualification or strong interest in the subject. The part-time teacher in the Year 5 and 6 class has expertise in the subject and provides valuable advice. The policy for art and design has been reviewed very recently. The school follows national guidance and is currently developing its planning for the long term.

116. Displays of pupils' work enhance parts of the school. Most are attractive and informative. Some areas lack this enhancement and some work is displayed too high for pupils to see. There are suitable resources for art and design and teachers make good use of the immediate, attractive environment that surrounds the school as a resource for teaching and learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. The pupils' standards of attainment in design and technology have received a significant boost from the project initiated by the Education Action Zone partnership with the local Catholic comprehensive school. Standards are at least satisfactory by the end of both key stages. The project uses design and technology to enrich the pupils' capabilities in speaking and listening. The well-planned programme has been devised by a commercial firm and is successfully taught in the school by a visiting teacher-demonstrator. Good quality support for completing the making of the designed objects has also been provided. The intention that the school staff will also benefit professionally from the experience of observing a specialist working with their class of pupils is well supported by the school. Two projects, one designed for pupils in Year 1 and the other for pupils in Year 5 have been delivered in the school already and two more projects are being introduced. The structure of the classes in the school has meant that the Year 1 project has been undertaken by pupils in Reception and Year 2 as well, while the Year 5 project has also been undertaken by Year 6 pupils.

118. The quality of designing and making in the Key Stage 1 class is sound, though the projects have a firm structure that allows less room for personal initiatives and designs than is usually desirable. The pupils designed and part made the soft toy, Toby, to meet criteria that they discussed themselves. They tried it out, then redesigned aspects of the toys, such as the design of the ears. In this way they develop a clearer understanding of the design process. The successfully designed and made soft toy, Toby, features in the second project which is to plan and design the elements of a surprise party for him.

119. The quality of design and the work the pupils undertake in the Years 5 and 6 class is in most cases satisfactory and in some good. This involves designing a series of floor quilts for use by pupils on the carpeted area. The design brief is clear and pupils design their sections of the quilt to suit the taste of the target group, pupils like themselves, well. Designing, discussing, testing and improving the designs, for example, testing various types of fabric to discover those that take dyes best, are all carried out effectively. As a result the

pupils grasp something of commercial practice in designing and making a product. The outcome of the first project has been very successful and the quilts are currently in use by the pupils. The project has caused some lack of continuity in the programme of skill development in Key Stage 2, where the full impact of the project on the subject in the school awaits to be seen. Years 3 and 4 are not included in the programme and the co-ordinator has not been involved in the planning of the work.

120. The teaching of design and technology by the school staff is at least sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The projects have provided the staff with a good range of new ideas for developing the subject. Planning the work more effectively and providing the pupils with a stronger motivation to do well by giving the designs a really useful and practical outcome is encouraged well, and the staff have derived considerable benefit from this. The pupils have derived great enjoyment and a strong sense of purpose from the projects and as a result there have been improvements in standards. This provides a good basis for future work devised and delivered by the school staff using the projects as models. As a result of the work, the teachers have a better view of the levels of achievement that they can expect from the pupils when their imagination is stimulated and their skills are challenged. The older pupils in Key Stage 2 responded enthusiastically to the next stage in the project, devising a new yoghurt based drink to use at an end of term party or sports day. They confidently relate this activity to other areas of learning, as for example when a Year 6 boy linked the tasting activities to the fair testing they have become familiar with in their science lessons.

121. The subject has been developed significantly since the previous inspection, which identified standards in the subject as being in line with what is expected of pupils at the end of each key stage, but needing a scheme of work to encourage progression in the development of skills. One was produced and is now due for review in the year 2001/02 in the light of the school's current experience of the project.

122. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory and enables them to achieve standards appropriate to their needs. In one class where there is a higher than usual concentration of pupils with special educational needs the teacher had felt inhibited from planning work that involved the use of edged tools. Increased support in the class has helped the teacher to devise appropriate ways of managing this.

123. The management of the resources and the planning of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordination of the subject is sound. One difficulty the project has thrown up has been that it requires more time than the subject had been allocated on the timetable to ensure that the practical aspects of the lesson have sufficient time to be accomplished. This has not resulted in a slow pace, but on the contrary the project lessons are conducted very briskly and efficiently so that no time is wasted and the pupils are kept engaged profitably throughout the lesson. Design and technology is a popular subject among the pupils who respond well to its practical character and adult feel. They respond well, their behaviour is good and they co-operate with one another well.

124. The resources provided for design and technology are sufficient in quantity and in quality to meet the requirements of the curriculum. Those provided by the project, especially the project booklets, are of a very good quality and provide very good models for the staff to follow. Design and technology plays a full part in the curriculum of the school, supporting its aims especially by providing opportunities for pupils to taste success and to feel that what they are doing is important.

GEOGRAPHY

125. Owing to the organisation of the timetable, only a very limited number of lessons could be observed. Geography was seen in the Year 4 class. A scrutiny of records of work, conversations with staff and pupils and an interview with the co-ordinator provided evidence to show that the standards achieved by pupils at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with what is expected of pupils of their ages. Similar standards were seen at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make sound progress across the school.

126. At Key Stage 1 pupils have secure understanding of geographical features and locality. They learn how to describe the weather and the geographical features of the area. They explore and then describe the surroundings of the school. Topics such as "The seaside" involve the pupils in hearing and reading stories about holiday places. They make up stories together about the exploits of characters in the stories, setting them in different places. Pupils learn how people can have an impact on their surroundings by looking at the immediate environment of their school.

127. The standards achieved by pupils aged 11 are similar to those expected of pupils of that age. Pupils are suitably equipped for the geography they will receive in secondary school. They understand a good range of geographical terms and interpret geographical data they have collected for themselves. Pupils in Key Stage 2 carefully devise a set of questions to be given to fellow pupils and their families to discover why they live in the villages of Wingate and Station Town, or what reasons they had for moving into the locality. This is part of a study about population movements and will support work they will do later in history when they consider the shift from rural to urban areas in Victorian Britain. This is a good example of the way in which subjects like history and geography are dealt with in complementary ways in the school's planning, so that work in one subject also improves standards in another.

128. Good use is also made of literacy and numeracy skills in the work on the topic questionnaire. The wording is carefully devised and the analysis of answers utilises information and communication technology to present it in a graphical way. Pupils also develop an understanding of the countries of Europe, as part of their preparation in Year 6 for a visit to France. Pupils locate countries in Europe, showing secure mapping skills, using atlases and globes. Their understanding of co-ordinates is reinforced by their work in mathematics.

129. The pupils in both key stages enjoy the subject and like learning about other places as well as discovering more about their own locality. They generally work hard with interest and perseverance, working well together. The quality of their learning is at least satisfactory and when the good quality teaching captures their imagination it is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language receive a sound level of support that enables them to make satisfactory progress and keep up with the other pupils in the class.

130. The teaching of geography is at least satisfactory and some aspects of it are good. Pupils are managed well and, particularly in Key Stage 2, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and of how pupils learn is good. The use of assessment to help plan future work is less secure as there is no established system for doing this. This is to be tackled when the policy and guidelines for the subject are renewed in the year 2001/02. Currently the work is planned using the guidelines devised to deliver the original National

131. Curriculum, with support from more recent national guidance. The review of the teaching of the subject is to be based on the development of skills in geography rather than topics and content. This is expected to provide a more effective basis for the assessment of the pupils' capabilities in the subject. Effective use is made of visits to local and more distant places to develop the pupils' understanding of geographical terms and features.

132. The resources available for geography are sufficient for current needs and satisfactory in quality. Teachers also make use of local loan schemes to supplement the school's collection of geographical resources to support the pupils' learning. Good use is made of the school's surroundings for fieldwork. Geography plays a full part in the curriculum of the school. It supports the school's aims and is a positive influence in the establishment of the pupils' self-identity.

HISTORY

133. Due to the organisation of the timetable only a very limited number of lessons could be observed during the inspection. History was observed in the Year 5 and 6 class. The scrutiny of work, conversations with staff and pupils and an interview with the co-ordinator provided evidence that standards are satisfactory and in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. This is similar to the standards seen at the time of the last inspection. In some aspects of history, particularly in discerning the validity of sources of information, pupils' attainment is good and above standards expected for their age by the end of Key Stage 2.

134. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop an awareness of the past through looking at their own families and local changes that are readily visible. They consider past periods such as the Victorians through looking at toys and other familiar objects. They compare and contrast life styles and homes in the past and present and recognise the differences and similarities in, for example, kitchens, utensils and meals. Pupils develop sound understanding of different sources of evidence.

135. During Key Stage 2 pupils deepen their understanding of the past by considering other periods of history, such as the Tudors, and by looking in more depth at aspects of Victorian times. Pupils develop increased skills of interpretation and a more accomplished ability to develop and support an opinion. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils develop a good appreciation of the use of documents such as a national census as sources of historical evidence. They use information and communication technology very effectively by the end of the key stage to present facts, such as population movements in Victorian Britain. They also relate one set of information, such as the dates of laws reforming the employment of children and women, with other events and with other sources of evidence such as that provided by contemporary writers such as Dickens. This approach to history leads towards a developing maturity of historical understanding and helps pupils to recognise the value of supported judgements.

136. The teaching of history is at least satisfactory. It was good in the lesson seen in the Year 5 and 6 class. The good teaching is marked by good knowledge and understanding of the subject. As a result, the teachers' incidental comments and observations following up the pupils' questions add considerably to their understanding. The teaching generally shows a sound level of competence and a good range of teaching strategies. The pupils are challenged to think hard about what they are being introduced to; they are encouraged to risk being wrong when expressing their opinions. They feel safe to do this because of the

very good quality of relationships that exist in the school between pupils and between pupils and staff. Where the teaching is thoroughly planned and conducted at a brisk pace the pupils' interest is held and their behaviour is good. There is no formal assessment of pupils' attainment in history.

137. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are used well in history lessons. The subject also provides topics through which art and design are taught, such as the creation of illustrations for a display on the Victorians using a variety of selected media and techniques. History and geography complement each other and standards benefit from the links between the two subjects.

138. The planning of history is within a rolling two-year programme where history and geography are taught in alternate terms. The medium term planning of topics and the short term weekly planning vary from class to class. The policy and guidelines document is due for review in the year 2001/02 at the same time as that for geography. The two subjects are planned with an emphasis on using individual teachers' strengths; this improves the quality of the teaching and makes for higher standards in each subject as the pupils catch each teacher's enthusiasm. The current planning is based on the original National Curriculum and has a good emphasis on teaching historical skills and understanding. The current assessment of the subject and the monitoring of its teaching and learning are informal. The

review of the policy and guidelines for the subject, which will be related to recent national guidance, is expected to provide for a simple system of assessment based on the published objectives for learning in history.

139. The school makes good use of resources including those from local loan collections. Good use is also made of the locality as a source of evidence, such as in relating pictures of work in mines in the 19th century to what was happening in the village at that time.

MUSIC

140. Standards in music were identified as being good at the time of the last inspection. There were no music lessons taking place during the period of the current inspection. Observation of the pupils' singing during collective worship and in the Key Stage 1 class at the end of a mathematics lesson indicate that standards of singing are still good. Information about music has been gained from interviews and conversations with staff and pupils, together with a scrutiny of planning and policy documents.

141. The pupils in Key Stage 1 sing number songs and other types of music such as "Down in the Forest Mrs Bear" and a "Boogie" song with great enthusiasm. They know the words and music by heart and follow the tune well, singing with expression and enthusiasm, using variations of tone and volume as the song demands. They clearly enjoy singing and have acquired a good repertoire of songs of various types, both for purposes of education and enjoyment. In this they are following the aims of the music policy document.

142. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were observed singing during collective worship. They sing well both unaccompanied and to a guitar. The hymns and sung prayers are well known and sung with good, expressive use of their voices and an understanding of the meaning of the words. The older pupils joined in with the same degree of enthusiasm and evident enjoyment as the younger ones. Clearly, the school successfully uses singing as an aid to

the objective of creating a Catholic Christian community and enabling the pupils to enjoy school.

143. The 40 minute music lessons for each class occur in alternate weeks and radio programmes are used to provide the content and such continuity that can be maintained with intermittent lessons. Music making, composing and listening to music are included in the programme but the range has been narrowed as the time devoted to the subject has been reduced.

144. The policy and scheme of work are due for review in the year 2002/03, at which time the match of the radio programmes and the cover required by the National Curriculum 2000 will be reviewed to ensure that they match. Preparatory to this review the resources have been checked over and instruments repaired where possible. These are currently adequate for the present demands of the subject, allowing music making using a variety of instruments to take place. There is also an adequate provision of recorded music available for the pupils to listen to. Violin tuition is available at a charge to some pupils in Key Stage 2, but there are no records of recorder or guitar tuition in clubs or in class.

145. Apart from the violin tuition all pupils have equal access to music in the school and those pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language receive appropriate support. The previous complex formal assessment of the pupils' skills and abilities in music is being revised so that currently the teachers use their good knowledge of their own pupils to make comments on how well they are doing.

146. The pupils enjoy music and enthusiastically take part in performances to support worship and other community activities. They behave well and are co-operative, supporting each other's endeavours. Sound use is made of those staff who have skills in music to undertake the teaching of the subject throughout the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Pupils attain good and above average standards in physical education by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. They are fit and show good stamina. The Key Stage 1 lesson was altered from an outdoor lesson to one indoors because of inclement weather. Pupils moved sensibly to find a space in the hall and listened carefully to instructions. They practised receiving and passing a ball, with appropriate control. They improved their skills and maintained good control and then used these skills effectively in a competitive game.

148. In Key Stage 2, younger pupils showed good understanding of athletics. They undertook warming up activities well and knew the effect of exercise on their bodies. Pupils worked hard to improve movements, such as enlarging their strides and ensuring their weight was evenly distributed in order to balance effectively. No lessons were seen in the later part of the key stage though pupils talked knowledgeably about their skills in all aspects of the subject. By the end of the key stage, pupils achieve good standards in swimming. Most swim four different strokes within a distance of 200 metres.

149. The quality of teaching seen was good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Pupils show enthusiasm for physical education. They listen and respond well. This is in great part due to the well-planned lessons, which follow the "Top Sport" scheme and county guidelines. The lessons seen were brisk and built carefully on pupils' prior achievements. Teachers made good use of a range of strategies, including good demonstrations, to help

pupils to refine and improve their work. Pupils were managed well and were clear about what was expected of them. There is no formal assessment of physical education.

150. Pupils receive swimming lessons from Year 4 onwards, so that they have three years of instruction before leaving school. Hartlepool United Football club provides some pupils with the opportunity to visit their pitch and to receive coaching. Cricket coaching is provided by the local council and the county. The school hall is now used well for gymnastics and dance, this provision having been improved since the last inspection when there was a concern about the lack of space. The school benefits from having a good sized field for games and ample outside play areas. Resources have been improved over the last two years and these are checked annually.

151. Physical education is led by the headteacher as co-ordinator. All staff have received training in "Top Sport" and as part of the planned review of the subject in the next academic year, further training is to be provided. The headteacher visits lessons each term to monitor teaching and learning. Although the physical education curriculum provides appropriate breadth, the current planning of the timetable is inappropriate, restricting opportunities for pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class to undertake weekly physical education lessons.