

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shrewsbury

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123554

Headteacher: John Gilbert

Reporting inspector: Sue Chesters
23196

Dates of inspection: 14th – 18th January 2002

Inspection number: 192720

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:	5 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	New Park Road Castlefields Shrewsbury Shropshire
Postcode:	SY1 2SP
Telephone number:	01743 351032
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Pullen
Date of previous inspection:	17/03/1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23196	Sue Chesters	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language Mathematics Science Music	How high are standards? (The school's results and achievements) How well are pupils taught?
19694	Moira Kerr	Lay inspector		How high are standards? (Attitudes, values and personal development) How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21563	Graham Martin	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
7994	Pam Weston	Team inspector	Foundation stage Special educational needs Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is in the town of Shrewsbury in Shropshire. It is smaller than most primary schools, having 139 pupils one of whom is a Year 7 pupil (78 boys and 61 girls); compared with the average size nationally of 243 pupils. This is close to its size at the last inspection. Children start in the reception class in the term in which they are five. There is a wide range of abilities among the pupils when they start at the school but most have levels of attainment similar to those expected of the age group. The majority of pupils are of white ethnic origin. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are 11 pupils (eight per cent) known to be eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average. There are 22 pupils (16 per cent) on the register for special educational needs, which is broadly average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs; this is broadly average. Most pupils stay at the school for the whole of their primary education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Pupils achieve good standards in all subjects. The headteacher, who had been in post one week at the time of the inspection, is ably supported by the dedicated and hard-working staff. The school is a warm and welcoming community in which pupils learn happily. Teaching is very good. This results in pupils learning very well. All staff constantly strive to meet the school's worthwhile aims and to raise standards even higher. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and learning are consistently very good in all subjects and in all year groups. This results in pupils achieving very well.
- Standards in English and mathematics, by the time the pupils leave school, are above average. In science, they are well above average.
- The leadership and management of the school, by the headteacher and key staff, are professional and show a clear vision for the future of the school. The school reflects very well its worthwhile aims, in all of its work.
- It provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development. It also provides a very good number of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and show a great deal of enthusiasm, interest and involvement in all of the activities provided.
- It involves its parents very well in school activities. This has a significant impact on the children's learning.

What could be improved

- The roles of the subject leaders and senior staff.
- Consistency of assessment procedures throughout the school, so that staff can monitor pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects and use the outcomes when planning future work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since then, it has made satisfactory improvements in addressing the issues raised, although there is still work to do in developing the roles of subject leaders and senior staff and in assessment. There is now a good curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage. This gives the youngest children a full range of opportunities enabling them to reach the goals set for the age group. Information and communication technology has improved significantly. Standards are now above average in both Years 2 and 6. All aspects of the curriculum are now covered and the school is gradually building up resources to support learning. There is now better challenge for all pupils

in lessons and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these are having positive impacts on standards in English and mathematics. Standards in all subjects have been maintained or have improved in the past four years, particularly science.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	C	B	B
Mathematics	A	C	A*	A*
Science	C	D	A	A

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
Well below average	E

Similar schools are those having up to and including 8 per cent of their pupils receiving free school meals. The above table shows that, in the year 2001, national tests for eleven-year-olds, results in English were above the national average and also above average when compared with similar schools; that is when compared with other schools having up to eight per cent free schools meals. Results in mathematics were well above the national average (in the top five per cent in the country) and also very high when compared with similar schools. In science, standards were well above both the national average and the results achieved by similar schools. There has been a steady upward trend in standards over the past four years, which is in line with the national picture.

Results for seven-year-olds in the tests and tasks in reading, writing and mathematics over the past four years are above the national averages. However, the results dipped in 2001, mainly due to the high number of pupils with special educational need in that particular cohort.

Inspection findings show that the majority of the children in the Foundation Stage will reach or exceed the early learning goals set for the age group, by the time that they move to Year 1. Attainment for the current Year 2 is above average in all subjects. In the current Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is above average and it is well above average in science. It is also above average in all other subjects. No firm judgement was made about pupils' attainment in design and technology as there was insufficient evidence on which to make an assessment. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls. The school sets itself high targets and usually exceeds them. It aims to raise standards even higher.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes towards school. They are very interested and involved in the activities that the school provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are trustworthy, polite and well-behaved at all times. They respect each other.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. The staff provide very good role models and this contributes very positively to the excellent quality of the relationships in school.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are punctual.

Pupils take a very great interest in school. They work very hard and are happy. They understand very well the effect of their actions on others and show very great respect for other peoples' feelings, values and beliefs. The older pupils are very mature, show good initiative and take on personal responsibility very well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This contributes very well to the pupils' very good achievement. Teachers have high expectations in lessons, particularly of what pupils are expected to achieve and of their behaviour. They expect pupils to listen and to work hard. The purpose of the lesson is made very clear to pupils and effective use is made of questioning to revise previous learning. Work is very well matched to the individual learning needs of all pupils. As a result, they make good progress in lessons and make clear gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good throughout the school. As a consequence, pupils learn quickly and make very good progress. Teachers teach pupils the basic skills required to succeed in all subjects, with the result that most pupils develop their key learning skills very effectively.

Teachers use information and communication technology effectively to support pupils' learning in all subjects. There are particularly effective links in English, science and mathematics. Teaching is consistently very good in the Foundation Stage and makes a strong contribution to the rapid progress that children make in their learning and to their being happy, secure and confident. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good teaching and benefit from the good level of very high quality support from learning support assistants.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and relevance of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and for Years 1 to 6 is good. The school offers a particularly good range of activities outside of lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support. This enables them to make very good progress and meet the targets of their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school understands its pupils very well. Systems for supporting pupils' personal progress are very effective.

The school has good links with the community. It works hard to involve parents in its day-to-day life.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is new in post. However, he and the dedicated and hard-working staff already operate as an effective team. They share a clear vision for the future of the school and are committed to raising standards even further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are loyal, knowledgeable and supportive. They are increasingly involved in long-term planning and financial management.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors all of its work satisfactorily. It analyses results with increasing accuracy. It uses this information satisfactorily to identify weaknesses in provision and to plan how to address them in order to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Financial management is efficient. The school applies the principles of best value effectively.

The school has very worthwhile aims which direct its work. These reflect its Catholic values very well. There are a good number of well-qualified staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Induction procedures for new teachers are satisfactory. Learning resources are adequate and used well. The accommodation is very good. The school is entering a period of change and has very good capacity to move forward to even greater success.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and they make good progress. • Behaviour is good and the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • They feel that teaching is good. • They feel that the school is well led and managed and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents do not feel that their children receive the right amount of homework. • A few parents do not feel that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. • Others do not feel that the school works closely with them.

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents at the pre-inspection meeting and through the returned questionnaires. With regard to homework, the inspectors found the provision to be appropriate and used well by teachers to support children's learning in lessons. The range and quality of extra-curricular opportunities for the size and type of school is very good. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's learning, however, the headteacher is aware that some parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Foundation stage¹

1. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of ability. Most have levels of attainment, across all areas of learning, which are close to the average for the age group. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with these young children. They make rapid progress in the reception class in all areas of learning. This is because of the very good teaching that they receive and because of the importance placed, by all staff, on using language correctly and working and playing well together. Most children are on course to achieve the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage.

Years 1 and 2

2. Results in the Year 2001 national tests and tasks show that standards for the seven-year-olds were close to the national average in reading and mathematics. They were above average in writing. When compared with similar schools, these results were in line in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. In science, teacher assessments show standards were average. However, this is not the school's normal pattern. Over the past four years, results for Year 2 pupils have been consistently maintained at above average levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is when compared with all schools nationally and in comparison with schools in similar contexts. Last year's dip in standards is due to a larger than usual number of pupils in the cohort with special educational needs. This had a negative effect on the results for that year.

3. Inspection findings show that, for the current group of pupils in Year 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection in English and mathematics and have improved in science. This is the result of the very good teaching and the effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Standards in information and communication technology are above average, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when they were below average. Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography and music have improved since the last inspection, when they met the expectations of the National Curriculum. Standards in these subjects are now above the expected level because of the very effective teaching and improved curriculum. Standards in history and physical education have been maintained over the past four years and are above the expectations for pupils of this age group.

Years 3 – 6

4. The rate of improvement over the past four years in the national tests for 11-year-olds has fluctuated, reflecting the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each cohort. The overall trend in English, mathematics and science has been upward, which is in line with the national trend.

5. The results achieved by 11-year-olds in national tests in the year 2001 were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Results in mathematics were particularly pleasing because they were in the top five per cent of schools

¹ Foundation Stage: the new curriculum for children under six, which started in September 2000, which replaces the desirable outcomes.

across the country. When compared with similar schools, these results are also above average in English and well above in mathematics and science. Here again, the results in mathematics are in the top five per cent of schools in similar contexts.

6. Inspection evidence shows that standards in Year 6 in English and mathematics are above average. In science, they are well above. This shows that standards in English have been maintained since the last inspection, while those in mathematics and science have improved. This is a result of the improved teaching, the implementation of the national strategies and the good focus placed on these core subjects by all staff.

7. Standards in other subjects are also good. In history and physical education they have been maintained at above expected levels since the last inspection. Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography and music have improved, from the expected levels reported last time, to above the expectations of the National Curriculum. This improvement is linked to the very good teaching and also to the way in which staff plan links across the curriculum. This enables pupils to take the skills and knowledge learned in one subject and to apply them in other subjects. Thus, pupils do not study one subject in isolation and this helps them make sense of their learning, with consequent very good achievement.

8. There was insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on pupils' attainment at age 11 in design and technology. Standards at the last inspection were above the expected level. They are now at least at the expected level for the age group, and they show many strengths. The possible dip in standards is partly due to the lower emphasis placed on the subject nationally over the past four years and to the changing requirements of the National Curriculum. However, one of the strengths of the subject is the way in which the school uses it very successfully to support other subjects, such as science and mathematics.

Across the school

9. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning, including the Year 7 pupil. They regularly meet the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They are supported very effectively in lessons by learning support assistants, who work in very close partnership with class teachers, to meet pupils' specific learning needs.

10. The school's focus on teaching the basic skills that are needed for pupils to succeed in the tasks set, ensures that the majority of pupils makes good progress and reaches the targets set. All pupils are on course to reach the predicted targets set for them this year. The school sets itself appropriate targets and strives to exceed them. It works hard to raise standards in all subjects. The thorough coverage of the curriculum throughout the school ensures that pupils make very good progress during their time in school. This, together with the clear learning objectives set by teachers in lessons, has a positive effect on raising standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The pupils have very positive attitudes to the school. Their parents say that they enjoy coming to school, as they know it is a place where they are well cared for and are warmly welcomed by the staff. Pupils are keen and eager learners who settle down to work very well in lessons in response to the high expectations and very good teaching. Throughout the school, the pupils are very attentive, respond very well and answer courteously. The visit of 'The Animal Man' displayed some of the best qualities of the pupils. They could have fun, laugh and enjoy themselves and a lively buzz of excitement could be transformed instantly to silent expectation when an animal was brought in. The pupils participate enthusiastically in

the extra-curricular activities on offer, with the swimming club being a particular favourite of both pupils and parents.

12. Behaviour throughout the school is very good. At all times in lessons it was at least good and in nearly three-quarters of lessons, it was very good or excellent. Lunchtimes are a pleasure for all concerned, with well-mannered and polite pupils enjoying their food and joining in interesting conversations in a calm and controlled environment. They move around the school unobtrusively. Pupils appear to come from nowhere to hold open a door or to offer help. They show care and respect for other people, for the property kept in the cloakrooms and for equipment around the school. Parents say they like this aspect of school life. There has never been an exclusion at the school. There is a total absence of any remotely oppressive behaviour in the playground and even the most boisterous play is still controlled.

13. Pupils enjoy being given responsibilities around the school and give informal help when it is required, such as putting away equipment in the hall. However, pupils would welcome even more opportunities to show their initiative and to take further responsibilities; for example, they say they would enjoy running a school council. Pupils display maturity in the way that they accept changes, such as when they were told that they had to use tennis balls rather than footballs in the playground. In class, most pupils show self-confidence and self-esteem and can work independently. The relationships throughout the school are excellent and this is due to the excellent role models of the staff and to the Christian ethos of the school. The youngest reception children are already showing that they can listen to and respect the views of other people. An extended trip is arranged for pupils in Class 6 when they learn to be more independent and to explore and develop inter-personal and social skills.

14. Attendance is good. Registration presents an opportunity for a calm yet welcoming start to the session when news or concerns can be shared. The registers are well maintained by the school secretary who also contacts parents on the rare occasions when they have not notified the school of their child's absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The pupils are taught very well and consequently they learn very well. In all lessons observed during the inspection teaching was satisfactory or better. In 95 per cent of those lessons, the quality of teaching and learning was good or better. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. This is an improvement since the last inspection when some lessons were judged unsatisfactory and the percentages of good and very good teaching were lower. At the time of the previous inspection, weaknesses in teaching were reflected in poorly organised lessons where pupils were not given enough support to allow good learning to take place. This is no longer the case. The strength of teaching in the school is significant. It is consistently good and often better.

16. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good or better in all lessons. In all other years, including Year 7, over half of the lessons seen were very good and nearly half of all other lessons were good. Staff work very well as a team, which results in a consistent approach to teaching.

17. Throughout the school, the teaching of literacy in English lessons and numeracy in mathematics lessons is at least good. The teachers have worked hard to implement both strategies, which they have done well. Interesting texts and a good range of carefully selected books have ensured that literacy lessons are challenging and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Numeracy lessons have good mental warm-up sessions in which the pupils become engaged. They are clearly focused on improvements in mental agility.

18. The teaching of literacy and numeracy supports learning in other curricular areas. For example, in science lessons, the pupils have the opportunity to measure accurately and to record the results of their experiments and explain what the results show. Teachers promote very good cross-curricular links and, in this way, the pupils see the relevance of their learning and the way it develops. They use information and communication technology as an effective tool in other subjects. For example, in most year groups, pupils use a data-handling program to generate a variety of graphs and diagrams which display results from the mathematical and scientific work.

19. Throughout the school, the teachers show great commitment and hard work in their drive to improve their teaching. All staff strive to improve personally and provide the best possible teaching for their pupils. The support and assistance that the teachers give to each other have a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

20. The pupils on the special educational needs register are well taught. Work is specifically targeted for their learning. Clear texts and specific support materials are provided for these pupils. This, along with the very good support from class teachers and learning support assistants, ensures that they make very good progress in relation to their prior learning.

21. The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The teacher has a very clear understanding of the needs of young children. Her enthusiastic, supportive and patient approach enables the children to be confident in their learning and they achieve very well. Planning takes into account the early learning goals for children in the reception year. Careful planning ensures that the needs of all children are met very well. Staff work hard to develop a wide range of learning opportunities, which help to promote very good learning at a good pace.

22. Teachers, throughout the school, have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach. They use the correct technical terms and appropriate, subject-based, specific language to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of each subject. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics and science, where technical language is used accurately. For example, in a very good science lesson, the teacher expected the pupils to predict the outcomes of the experiment that they were doing, using accurate vocabulary, such as soluble, insoluble and magnetic.

23. The teachers place a significant level of demand upon individuals, to ensure that all are fully involved. Thus, pupils listen carefully to the clear instructions that they receive and know exactly what they are expected to do. They work very hard and learn very well. Teachers' planning is good. In literacy and numeracy, the teachers plan very closely to the structured frameworks. They plan all lessons well and, at the beginning of most lessons, recap and revise previous learning most effectively. They usually share the learning objectives for each lesson with the pupils and return to the aims at plenary sessions to confirm that the objectives have been met.

24. Teachers' expectations of the pupils' and their work are very high. They question pupils very well to establish what pupils know and understand and to help them think for themselves. All staff have very high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard. Pupils live up to these expectations. Teachers praise and encourage the pupils and challenge them very effectively so that they give their best performances. This ensures that pupils are fully involved in their lessons, work hard and concentrate well. As a result these pupils achieve very well.

25. In all classes, teachers encourage the pupils to work independently. They plan activities which allow pupils to work in groups of various sizes. Consequently, pupils cooperate well together, collaborate on the tasks set and achieve good results. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. The mutual respect, shown by teachers and pupils, adds significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which they learn. The pupils feel that their input is valued and this aids their personal development.

26. Teachers manage the pupils very well. They constantly strive to find ways to reward and encourage good behaviour and work. Lessons are very well organised. Teachers use time and resources very effectively and, as a result, lessons move along at a good pace. The learning support staff give very good, careful support to pupils and enhance considerably pupils' learning. They are appreciated by the school as a very valuable resource.

27. The quality of day-to-day assessment is good. Teachers monitor the pupils' work well and give support and advice, as needed. There is much good practice in existence. However, there is not a consistent approach, throughout the school, to the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress nor to the use of the outcomes to inform planning in all subjects. Teachers mark pupils' work in an encouraging and supportive manner, often indicating what it is that the pupils need to do to improve further. Homework is used appropriately to supplement and support work done in class.

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

28. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well designed and appropriately balanced. It is in line with the latest recommendations for the areas of learning for the under fives.² It provides good opportunities for all pupils to meet the nationally prescribed goals for five year olds.

29. From Year 1 to Year 6, the school provides a broad range of worthwhile activities, which meets the interests and aptitudes of its pupils well. Since the last inspection, a new policy for Early Years has been introduced. A private nursery has been established on site. Information communication technology, especially the aspects of control, monitoring and modelling, has been extended. Each class has been equipped with personal computers and software appropriate to the age of the pupils. This now allows information and communication technology to be used across the curriculum. The school is presently awaiting hardware and cabling to allow access to the internet and e-mail facilities. It is planned to install laptop computers for use by all year groups in a new dedicated suite.

30. The curriculum is interesting and well planned in all of the subjects of the National Curriculum. The school enriches the pupils' learning with a range of opportunities to extend their experiences. Visits to places of interest, such as Ludlow, provide the pupils with a greater knowledge and understanding of history and how people lived in times gone by. There are many visitors to the school. During the inspection, a much enjoyed visit from the 'animal man' introduced the pupils to a turtle, a snake and an owl. The pupils, including those from the neighbouring nursery, responded with a high level of interest and concentration.

² QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in the Foundation Stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

31. The school rightly gives priority to English and mathematics. The National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy are implemented successfully and provide a secure basis for learning in each class. Pupils' appreciation of a range of literacy styles is being strengthened through work in the literacy hour. The careful teaching of letters and their sounds in Year 1 and Year 2 makes a particularly good contribution to pupils' progress in reading and spelling. Teachers plan well for pupils to incorporate these skills in other subjects.

32. The school promotes personal, social and health education very well. There is a good policy document, which is shortly to be updated to take greater account of citizenship and environmental issues. Weekly lessons take place where, for example, pupils are encouraged to think about special people in their lives. Appropriate and satisfactory requirements are in place for health and sex education and for teaching pupils about the dangers of misusing substances such as drugs and alcohol. Local support services, for instance the school nurse, make helpful and welcome contributions to these areas of the pupils' development. A good awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle is raised through the science and design and technology curriculum.

33. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The planning and teaching for pupils with special needs is very good. The full integration of these pupils into the life of the school, and their contribution to school life, has a good effect on their personal development and that of others. This is clear evidence of the school's very good commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.

34. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is well supported by staff and pupils. Football for boys and girls, netball, cricket, cross country swimming and records all take place at various times of the year. The school uses government funding well to provide for extra activities to boost the progress of some pupils in Year 5. French is offered by an external provider, as is music. The pupils take part in local sports and music festivals and there are opportunities for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to take part in a residential trip to Ludlow.

35. The local community makes a good contribution to the curriculum. The school chaplain regularly visits school and celebrates mass with pupils and parents. The very close links with the churches, including regular visits from a local Gospel Hall minister, considerably develop the pupils' spiritual and social development. Regular links are established with local fire, police and postal authorities, so that the pupils are beginning to appreciate the wider community outside school. Older residents are invited to school performances and, when this happens, the school arranges for transport to and from school.

36. Links with other schools in the area are satisfactory and make a sound contribution to the school's provision for its pupils' social development. The particularly strong relationship with the feeder nursery school makes a very positive contribution to the very good start that the children make in the reception class. The close knowledge of each others work promotes a strong link which encourages the pupils' attitudes to learning.

37. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, social and moral development and good provision for their cultural development. Opportunities for spiritual development occur in the good assemblies, where, for example, pupils reflect on how to help someone who has had an unexpected sadness. The pupils are very reflective, thoughtful and listen well as their teacher talks about thinking and feeling about the needs of others. In contrast, at other times a lively buzz of excitement can be transformed to silent anticipation as the 'animal man' enters the hall with yet another animal. Then the silence is broken by gasps of wonder from the pupils as they see a live snake curling around his arm.

38. Provision for moral and social development is very good. The very good ethos and excellent relationships within the school promote very high standards of behaviour. Pupils are expected to work with each other and to discuss their ideas and feelings about their own work and the work of others. They learn to respect the abilities of other pupils and thus gain a better understanding of themselves. The pupils are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. They are responsible and mature in their relationships. There is a clearly identifiable sense of care and respect for the school as a community.

39. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate their own cultural heritage and traditions through lessons such as English, art and design and music. For example, in English and art, pupils are encouraged to appreciate the work of great authors and artists. A range of musical styles is used to introduce assemblies, with attention drawn to the title and composer of the music played. Pupils have opportunities to consider cultures other than their own. They are helped to understand the importance of the major celebrations associated with a number of world faiths. Festivals such as Diwali and Ramadan have been studied. These provide good opportunities for pupils to gain an insight into the traditions, values and beliefs of others, and to consider similarities and differences.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The arrangements for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good. The new head teacher is already getting to know the pupils. Other staff know the pupils very well and are aware of the signs that might suggest that the well-being of a pupil may be at risk. Six members of staff are trained first-aiders. All accidents are recorded and parents are notified orally of incidents when necessary. A recent incident, in which the fire brigade had to be called out, showed that the regular school fire drills had prepared the pupils very well to evacuate the building quickly at a time of risk. The school has good relationships with social services who advise them about their role in supporting children in local authority care. The school nurse is fully involved in the life of the school, monitoring pupils' health and development and sharing in the delivery of the health and sex education programmes. The building and grounds are well maintained by the caretaker to provide a very clean, bright, safe and healthy environment.

41. The procedures for monitoring attendance are good, with careful analysis of attendance by the school secretary and the Educational Welfare Officer. Any necessary action is taken promptly. Families are discouraged from taking holidays during term time. There is no need for formal procedures for promoting good attendance as pupils attend regularly in response to the very good teaching and the caring Christian ethos of the school.

42. Many of the monitoring and support procedures within the school are informal. This is made possible by the fact that both teaching and support staff know the pupils very well. This system works very well within the school, monitoring behaviour and personal development. Staff pick up quickly on any inappropriate incidents and deal with them in a supportive way through discussion with the pupils. The pupils are also involved in setting their own targets for their academic and personal development. This gives them a very good opportunity to reflect on what they need to do and why. Pupil profiles are maintained throughout the school. They are a personal record of a child's development throughout their time in the school and these are shared with the pupils each year. The school has a good anti-bullying policy that outlines the responsibilities of both school and home and it subscribes to an excellent document on tackling racism. However the behaviour policy is in need of updating, to clarify both expectations and responsibilities.

43. Day-to-day assessment is good and there is some very good practice in place to monitor pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment data is used more and more to identify targets for pupils' improvement and to inform planning. These are improvements since the time of the last inspection. However, the procedures in place are not consistently used throughout the school. The main emphasis for assessment is English and mathematics. In science and information and communication technology it is less formal. In other subjects, because teachers know their pupils so well, they are very aware of the progress pupils make but there are no formal records to monitor this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Parents' views of the school are very good. Almost all parents spoke very highly of the school and the arrangements it makes to provide a rounded educational experience for their children, in a warm and caring environment. Some have moved their children to this school from others because of this. They say that their children are very enthusiastic about coming to school and the pupils themselves confirmed this. Parents are made very welcome in the school. The involvement of parents of new pupils in their induction into the school is very good. They share in producing some work to show the school what their children are able to do. They are invited with their children for an afternoon in school, including lunch, so that they can get to know some of the staff and the routines of the school. When Mass is celebrated at the school, parents are warmly welcomed, and invited to stay for refreshments after the service.

45. A third of the parents who responded to the questionnaire said that they are not happy with the amount of work their children get to do at home. Some believe that they get too much and others that they do not get enough. The inspection team found that the school was setting homework appropriately to impact positively on the work that the pupils are doing in school. However, reviewing the homework policy may enable the parents to understand better how the school is using homework and what their role is in this. The home-school agreement is in place but some parents are not clear about its purpose.

46. Staff are always willing to discuss concerns that parents may have and their presence in the playground at the beginning and end of each day gives parents an opportunity to raise issues informally. Parents are always welcome to make an appointment with the head teacher or class teachers if there is an issue which requires more time or greater privacy.

47. Parents make a positive impact on the school through their involvement. This is much appreciated by the school. One teacher said, "Parents are wonderful!" This is a school where events are well supported and where parents are encouraged to help in the classrooms and around the school. Many, who begin in this way, go on to become classroom assistants or mid-day supervisors. The wide range of extra-curricular activities could not take place without the help given by parents, particularly the swimming and cross-country clubs. The Parent-Teacher Association also gives very good support in running fund-raising and social events; the termly fairs are of particular note. Recently they have allocated funds to up-grade the library and information technology facilities.

48. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The regular newsletters give timely, quality information about forthcoming events at the school. Those sent out at the beginning of each term include a warm welcome, by name, to each reception pupil new to the school. The annual reports on pupils' progress are very good. They have detailed information on all curricular areas about what each pupil is able to do and where they are

having difficulty. A full attendance record is sent out with the reports. The Annual Governors' Report to Parents is generally informative but fails to meet statutory requirements fully, for instance, it does not give the clerk's address and contact number. The prospectus provides good, clear, concise guidance for parents to give them a rounded picture of the school and of its strong Catholic values. However, it does not meet all statutory requirements, particularly lacking a statement indicating that it is possible for pupils to be withdrawn from religious education and collective worship.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. When the school needed an acting headteacher, the dedicated deputy headteacher showed a strong commitment to fulfilling this role well. With the support of the hard working team of staff, she maintained steady improvement in the school. Together, they promoted an ethos of care and concern for the school which resulted in the inspection team seeing very positive attitudes from and effective learning by the pupils. High expectations of the pupils' achievement are a feature of the school. Together, the staff contribute to an atmosphere in which pupils enjoy learning and are keen to do well.

50. The recently appointed headteacher, who took up post one week before the inspection, has begun to review the school's capacity to continue this improvement. He has clearly identified key priorities to be addressed in a new school development plan. These priorities, such as developing the leadership roles of key members of staff, raising awareness of the school in the community, improving communication with parents and promoting the personal development of the pupils, are well matched to the needs of the school.

51. The aims of the school, as stated clearly in its statement of mission, are well met. Excellent relationships, valuing all pupils equally and promoting effective learning are all strong features of the work of the staff. Teaching, classroom support and ancillary staff and volunteer helpers all share this commitment. From this shared commitment the pupils feel valued and they respond very well to the many opportunities for learning and personal development that the school provides.

52. Evidence from the inspection shows that the staff and governors share a strong sense of purpose for the continuation of school improvement. Discussions with the deputy headteacher and with subject leaders show that they are keen to develop their roles and to contribute to school improvement. The greater involvement of staff, in leading subjects and taking responsibility for school management, is an identifiable priority in the school improvement plan.

53. The strong ethos of joint responsibility evident in the school is a good indicator that the staff and governors share and support the head teacher's plans for school development. The governing body gives good support for the school's priorities for improvement. Their support has empowered the staff to use their extensive experience and commitment to the school, to work effectively with the head teacher in the school's development.

54. The governing body monitors the work of the school well. They have a direct involvement in financial planning and keep a close watch on spending to ensure that they achieve best value from the school budget. The governors have taken a realistic long-term view of staffing costs. They expect to work positively with the headteacher to promote the success of the school and increase pupil numbers. This will enable the school to at least maintain current levels of staffing.

55. A good knowledge of the school's achievements is a positive aspect of the work of the governors. They know, for example, that the results of the Year 2 tests and assessments in 2001 are a little lower than in previous years and have analysed the reasons why this is so. Conversely, they have also recognised the high standards achieved by the Year 6 pupils in their tests in 2001.

56. The school's good accommodation makes an effective contribution to the opportunities for learning. The staff make good use of the accommodation for the benefit of pupils, with creatively used areas of working space. A bright and welcoming library area has been developed, which the pupils are keen to use. Some of them have been taught to take responsibility for issuing and collecting books, as in a real lending library, and they do this well. Work to install computers to improve the pupils' access to information and communications technology is scheduled for the current school year and a spacious room is available for the installation of this equipment.

57. The school's use of information and communication technology in its management and administration systems is satisfactory. The head teacher and school secretary have access to pupil information stored electronically and attendance records are stored as computer data. The secretary is keen to use her computer skills to extend the use of computers as part of the efficient management of the school as new technology becomes available.

58. Systems for the efficient management of the school's finances are in order. Funds carried over from one financial year to the next are allocated appropriately by the governors. Taking into account the average cost per pupil against the high quality of education the school gives very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve the quality of education provided, the headteacher, staff and governors should consider how to raise standards by improving:

(1) the roles of the subject leaders and senior staff to include greater involvement in monitoring teaching and learning;
(paragraphs: 52, 83, 90, 96, 101, 118)

(2) assessment procedures to monitor pupils' attainment and progress by:
(i) sharing the good practice already in existence to create consistency throughout the school;
(ii) extending this practice to include all subjects; and
(paragraphs: 27, 43, 101, 107, 118, 124)

(3) ensuring the governors' annual report to parents and the prospectus meet all statutory requirements.
(paragraphs: 48)

60. They may also wish to consider the following minor, but nevertheless important, issues:

- providing even more opportunities for pupils to show their initiative and take responsibility around school;
(paragraph: 13)
- developing a homework policy and reviewing the behaviour policy to clarify, for parents, the school's expectations;
(paragraph: 42, 45)
- providing a more exciting outdoor learning environment area for the Foundation Stage suitable for all weather use.
(paragraph: 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		21	15	2			
Percentage		55%	40%	5%			

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	139
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	22

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.1
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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	10	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	13
	Girls	8	10	10
	Total	22	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (95)	89 (86)	85 (95)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	8	10	10
	Total	22	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (86)	85 (91)	89 (95)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	(88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	7
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	13	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (77)	93 (77)	93 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	7
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	11	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (82)	93 (77)	93 (86)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	126
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	298135
Total expenditure	285494
Expenditure per pupil	1969
Balance brought forward from previous year	9479
Balance carried forward to next year	22120

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	133
Number of questionnaires returned	62

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	24	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	31	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	45	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	42	21	10	0
The teaching is good.	65	31	2	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	37	8	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	27	5	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	47	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	44	16	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	48	35	6	6	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	46	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	44	13	2	4

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

61. Since the previous inspection there have been several changes and all have been very successful in enhancing the provision for the children in their early years of education. The new Foundation Stage curriculum has been introduced and standards have risen. Some of the rise in standards is due to the establishment, on the same site, of private nursery provision. Usually all the children from this nursery transfer to the reception class in the term in which they are five years of age. The very close liaison, sharing of assessment procedures and some resources enable children to receive a very good start to their education when they start in the reception class in school.

62. At the time of the inspection, there were 13 full-time children in the reception class, seven of whom had been in school for only four days. Next term, a further 12 children will transfer from the neighbouring nursery into the reception class. Overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good with children benefiting greatly from the very good teaching and the small class. The outdoor play areas are adequate although not entirely suitable for use in inclement weather.

63. The quality of teaching is very good. Relationships are strong and supportive. Children's ideas are valued, and praise and encouragement are used effectively to build confidence. High quality team work between the teacher and classroom assistants makes optimum use of everyone's skills to promote the children's progress. The teacher uses her secure knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children to provide a range in interesting, first hand experiences, which are clearly focused and enthuse children to learn.

64. Attainment varies, but, on average, children enter reception with skills that are similar to those of most children of this age. This is confirmed by the careful assessments made of these young children soon after they enter school. The children make very good progress and, by the time they start in Year 1, most children have achieved the early learning goals³ and make a confident transfer to the National Curriculum programmes of study.

65. Currently there are no children with special educational needs on the special educational needs register. Nor are there any children with English as an additional language.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Teaching is very good and reflects the considerable emphasis given to this area. Staff promote personal, social and emotional development through all aspects of school life. Daily routines are established consistently so that the children come to learn what is expected of them. Staff treat the children with care and respect and value their contributions. They are patient and sensitive in encouraging all children to participate so that they grow in confidence. Particular efforts are made to welcome children to the school and to build up individual's self-esteem. For instance a child who has recently joined the reception class is paired with a child who is in their second term in school, this enables them to very quickly gain in confidence and quickly settle into their new surroundings. This was most noticeable during

³ Early learning goals: The set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six.

the period of the inspection when some children had been in school for only a few days but had very quickly settled and were playing a full part in all activities. Staff work very hard to establish acceptable standards of behaviour, and caring attitudes. Many opportunities are provided for children to share and take turns and to care for others and for equipment. Staff model positive attitudes that clearly and frequently reinforce the school's values. For instance, at the start of morning and afternoon school, the children sit for one minute with their teacher and classroom assistants holding hands to form a friendship ring. One little boy told his teacher that it was important to hold hands tightly because 'if you let go all the love would flow out and be wasted'.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Teaching is very good and children achieve very well. Very good emphasis is placed on the development of language skills. Every opportunity is taken to develop these skills though play and interaction with staff and other children. Staff spend time listening to children and encourage them to relate their thoughts and experiences. The children chat freely amongst themselves and speak well. When looking at a painting by Escher, one child remarked; "The trees are reflecting in the water." Another replied, "It's like a mirror." They are confident when speaking to adults and describe what they are doing. They listen well and concentrate on when they are spoken to. A particularly successful contribution to encouraging the children's language development is the involvement of Duncan the Dragon, a hand held puppet used by the class teacher to encourage the children to listen.

68. The children are becoming confident readers. There is a good range of books. Children are encouraged to take home a library book as well as their reading book to read to their parents or carers. The teacher reads with each child daily. There is a very good home-school diary, maintaining a very good communication between the teacher and the parent or carer. Because of this, the children develop an interest in books and become confident readers. When asked questions, such as "What is 'blurb' on the back of a book?" They reply, "It gives us a clue about the storyline."

69. Children know the correct orientation of letters and produce work with even size and shaped letters. This is because the teacher pays particular attention to letter formation and presentation. Higher achieving children write familiar words and form complete sentences in regular well-formed letters, showing good attention to punctuation. Other children are encouraged to build sentences using words from their reading book and a sentence maker. Because of this, the children understand well the use of capital letters, spacing and full stops when forming a sentence. By the time children transfer to Year 1, their standards in communication, language and literacy are at least average, with most children achieving the early learning goals and a good number achieving above average for children of this age.

Mathematical development

70. Teaching is very good. The teacher promotes the systematic development of skills through a range of organised activities. Lessons flow very well and there is the right balance between oral, practical and recording. Because staff know the children very well, all children are appropriately challenged. This was observed when the teacher started her lesson with a brisk question-and-answer activity ordering numbers to 10. Higher attaining children know that $5+5=10$. All can count to 10 and recognise numbers to 10. Most are able to recognise the smallest or biggest in a line of numbers. They know and understand the meaning of zero. The pace of lessons is very good. This holds the children's interest. Staff change activities skilfully and this adds to the children's enjoyment. The children extend their repertoire of number rhymes and practise reciting numbers to ten. Most recognise and name numerals. They are encouraged to use mathematical language and a significant number correctly make

comparisons such as larger, smaller, thicker and lighter. When making and painting repeated shapes, the children learn about their properties using language such as curves, straight and sides. There is very good use of information and communication technology to reinforce the children's number skills, such as when they fill in the missing number and complete simple addition sums using the computer. This work is very well supervised by the classroom assistant. Children make very good progress. Most achieve above national averages by the time they transfer to Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Teaching is very good and children develop a very good understanding of the world around them. The teacher plans interesting activities, which are clearly focused and enable children to investigate plan and evaluate. This was seen when children planned the construction of a house for Bear and his friends. Here, they used a wide variety of constructional materials which were carefully organised so that children benefited from being able to choose. The teacher talked skilfully to the children, encouraging them to consider what they needed to include in their models; for example walls, doors and windows. Because of this, all completed their planning sheets, some writing for themselves, whilst teacher acted as scribe for younger children. Higher ability children said how they could improve on what they had made. Children understand differences between push and pull and explain that we push the buttons on a mobile phone. The teacher makes very good use of the local environment to develop the children's understanding of the immediate vicinity; for example, they noted the signs and symbols that they have seen on their walk. The children achieve very well because of the determination of the teacher to develop the 'whole child' and to give equal priority to all areas of early learning. Very good attention is paid to developing the children's information and communication technology skills. Most children who are now in their second term use computers to write the alphabet in order (upper and lower case letters), use the space bar, backspace and are familiar with the keyboard.

Physical development

72. Teaching is very good. The teacher has clear plans which show good knowledge and understanding of this area of learning. Her confident approach results in pupils feeling confident. Because of her careful explanations, the children understand how moving different parts of the body affect the way we move. During the inspection, some children were taking part in gymnastics for the very first time. The teacher explained carefully to the children why it was necessary to have warming-up exercises and they listened carefully. The pace of the lesson was very good throughout. Children moved well from one piece of apparatus to another so that all had an opportunity to try each activity. The children enjoyed the lesson and were very well behaved. They responded very well to the clear direction of the teacher and tried out several different ways of working. There are daily opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills. They control tools, such as scissors and paste spreaders, purposefully. They become increasingly competent at managing their personal hygiene and most are independent in dressing and undressing.

Creative development

73. Teaching is good. It enables the children to achieve the early learning goals in this area of their development. Following the theme of the Jolly Postman, the children have developed an imaginative post office play area. This is well organised to stimulate the children's imagination. However, during the inspection the children did not seem to take part in role play and consequently opportunities may be missed to extend children's ideas through adult intervention in their play. There is a good range of creative activities and children are beginning to observe colour and change in the environment. Children paint, cut out, glue and

make models with tactile materials. They successfully explore colour shape and space in two- and three-dimensions through construction materials. They have looked at the work of Lowry and painted in a similar style using newspaper, wax crayons and a black backwash very effectively. There is very good photographic evidence that records the work completed by the children. Language development is very well promoted through creative activities. Children enjoy singing and clapping to rhythm and learn to listen carefully to the words and music. They particularly enjoy action songs, as was evident when they sang one action song with the words gradually dropped. Information and communication technology is used effectively to reinforce the children's use of colour and design. Here most of the children choose a colour, print, move to a new page and have good mouse control.

ENGLISH

74. Standards throughout the school are good and similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. The children come into the school at four with average levels of attainment. They achieve well and, by the end of the foundation stage at the age of five, they have good standards of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

75. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 also achieve well and, by the age of seven, they have good standards of English. They read fluently and show a keen interest in stories, poetry and non-fiction books. When they re-write well known stories, such as 'The Gingerbread Man', in their own words, they show a good knowledge of how to construct sentences. Punctuation such as full stops, capital letters and speech marks are used correctly and written work is presented to a very good standard. Evidence of the achievement of the pupils in Years 1 and 2 is seen in the results of the tests and assessments taken in Year 2. These results show that the school consistently achieves results above the national average and that, overall in the subject, the pupils do at least as well as children in similar schools. In 2001, the Year 2 pupils achieved close to the national average in reading and above the national average in writing. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was a little below the national average in reading and a little above the national average in writing.

76. Achievement continues to be good in Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6, standards of reading, writing and spelling are good and standards of speaking, listening and handwriting are very good. The pupils read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction and comprehend what they read, well. The stories and poems that they write are imaginative and show an effective use of English. The work in books, on display in classrooms and around the school is presented to a high quality, with a very good standard of handwriting. This shows that the pupils take great pride in their work. The 2001 test results for 11-year-olds show that the attainment for the group of thirteen pupils taking the tests was above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was very much higher than that found nationally.

77. The pupils use their English skills well in other subjects. They make effective use of non-fiction texts to research topics in history and geography. Using their findings they produce writing of good quality. They use computer word-processing to draft and improve their compositions. They extend these skills by making eye-catching advertisements, newsletters and posters, using desktop publishing programs. The use of information and communications technology in English has improved since the previous inspection.

78. Very good attitudes to the subject are strongly evident in lessons. Enthusiasm for learning, interest in the subject and a desire to produce work of good quality all stem from the excellent relationships between the teachers and the pupils. These relationships have a very positive effect on pupils' personal development. From the beginning of their time in school,

the pupils respond positively to the high expectations of their teachers. Throughout the school, the experience of being consistently well supported by the teachers consolidates the pupils' trust in them. Their confidence in their own ability grows as their achievements are recognised and celebrated and, as they move through the school, they become more and more independent as readers and writers.

79. Lessons are of a good standard overall. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully introduced and there is very good teaching of the basic skills. Formal teaching of phonics and spelling in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 gives the pupils a firm foundation for developing their reading and writing skills. The good, and sometimes very good teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6 is similar to that found in the previous inspection. The teachers know their pupils well and set work that is appropriately challenging.

80. Teaching assistants and voluntary helpers are used very well to help pupils who may be experiencing some difficulty with their learning. An example of this was seen in an infant lesson, when pupils, who needed extra practice to learn alphabetical order, worked very well with the support of a teaching assistant. These pupils successfully completed a challenging worksheet and were proud that they had learned the alphabetical sequence of letters. The skills of speaking and listening are also taught well. For instance, Year 5 pupils took the roles of news reporters and used a cassette recorder to record a bulletin about a volcanic eruption.

81. The support given to pupils who find learning difficult is very good. The teachers plan activities within their lessons to ensure that these children can feel successful. The help given to pupils with special educational needs by teaching assistants, and volunteer helpers, is very good. Consequently, pupils who might otherwise feel excluded from learning, feel highly valued and are motivated to learn well and achieve. It is a credit to the school that the support, given to two pupils on the register of special educational needs, helped them to achieve the expected Level 4 in the Year 6 tests in 2001.

82. In English, there are good examples of the use of assessment to promote the pupils' learning. In lessons, feedback to the pupils about their work is used effectively to challenge them to achieve well. The clear marking in exercise books shows that teachers take care to evaluate the content as well as the presentation of work. Record sheets in the front of the Year 2 workbooks show how the key skills of using correct grammar and punctuation are learned. This is good practice. The subject leaders plan to co-ordinate effective methods of assessment like this, so that there is a more consistent approach to assessment throughout the school.

83. Co-ordination of the subject has been effective and recent work impacts positively on the school. A portfolio of pupils' work has been developed which shows clearly the school's expectation of high standards of English. The development of a welcoming library area has improved the opportunities for pupils to learn library skills and to use non-fiction books for reference. A visitor from the school library service has taught the pupils how to find books by subject. Pupils from Year 6 take responsibility for issuing and collecting books and learn the importance of running an organised library system. The subject leaders' plans for developing English are clearly prioritised and well-matched to the needs of the school.

MATHEMATICS

84. By the ages of seven and 11, standards are above average and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in their learning. In the national tests for 11-year-olds, pupils' results were in the top 5 per cent of all schools in the

country. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school.

85. Throughout the school, pupils use their mathematical skills very well to support their learning in other subjects. For example, they use their tallying skills to record results of their scientific investigations. A great strength of the subject is the way in which pupils take pride in the way they present their work. This shows great maturity and very good personal development. They produce graphs and charts of high quality and make sure numbers are kept in the right columns, when adding or subtracting. In a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, one pupil was overheard reminding his neighbour to use a ruler when writing the answer to his sums. As a consequence of this attention to detail, pupils' work looks immaculate and, because it is set out correctly, it is usually accurate. Staff have very high expectations of the pupils and, consequently, pupils want to please and work very hard to produce their best work at all times.

86. Achievement in the use and application of mathematics in investigations and problem solving is good across the school. Teachers plan work which is interesting and often of a practical nature. This supports the pupils' learning well and they find lessons fun. For example, one group of pupils with learning difficulties, who were finding the notion of tens and units difficult, worked very hard with a learning support assistant. They played a game investigating how tens and units work. During the session, their understanding of place value increased markedly. They enjoyed themselves and their learning was very good. This level of teachers' understanding of individual pupil's needs means that they challenge all pupils very well and this results in improved standards.

87. Progress in number work, including mental arithmetic, is very good. By the end of Year 2, pupils read, write and order numbers up to 100, and the more able pupils are confident to 1,000. They understand how to compare numbers to 1,000 and apply their knowledge to solve problems. They explain clearly the strategies that they use to work out answers in their heads and are inventive in the methods they use. By Year 6, pupils gain confidence and discuss and explain methodically, strategies that they use to find answers to a wide range of problems. In a lively lesson, Year 4 and 5 pupils ordered negative numbers, explaining how and why -30 was much lower than 9, for example. They transferred this knowledge to reading graphs of temperatures, using the Celsius scale, and testing their theories with thermometers. Learning in this lesson was very rapid as a result of the very good explanations given by the teacher and the structured way in which the work was presented to the pupils.

88. In work on shape, space and measures, progress throughout the school is very good. By the end of Year 2, pupils recognise and name accurately two-dimensional shapes, including hexagons and octagons. They begin to recognise the properties of three-dimensional shapes. In measurement, they estimate accurately objects which are 'more than', 'the same as' or 'less than' given standard unit measures such as metres and litres. Junior pupils name, and know the properties of many three-dimensional shapes, including cubes, spheres and cylinders. They measure accurately the area and perimeter of shapes and they are confident in reading scales.

89. Achievement in handling data is good. There are very good links made with information and communication technology when pupils use data-handling programs to display mathematical and scientific results as a variety of graphs. In Year 2, pupils made predictions in a science lesson. They recorded their tally of these predictions, practically on an abacus and displayed the results in graph form using the computer. This very well planned activity moved across subject boundaries. It enabled pupils to use their mathematical skills to make sense of their learning in science and to use information and

communication as a tool to enhance their learning. This type of work continues throughout the school and by Year 6, pupils automatically use their mathematical knowledge and understanding to handle data in a variety of subjects.

90. Teaching is very good and has a significant impact on improving standards and the very good learning which takes place. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively, with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' mental arithmetic skills. Lessons are planned well, with activities matched carefully to pupils' learning needs. Work is marked consistently and pupils are given encouragement and advice as to how to improve. The subject is managed well, although the leaders recognise the need to extend their role in monitoring teaching and learning. Resources are adequate and computers are used very effectively to support pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

91. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average. By Year 6, they are well above average. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those who have learning difficulties, make very good progress in their learning. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls. Pupils' factual knowledge is very good and their written work is of a very high standard.

92. In science throughout the school, pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well to support their learning. They read successfully to carry out research and write their findings in clear, legible and logical formats. Teachers are particularly good at developing methods for pupils to record their findings, concentrating on using good writing skills and where the focus is developing scientific understanding not writing reams of explanations. For example, work is often recorded in tabular or chart form to get to the essence of the scientific knowledge with minimum 'verbage'. This way of recording also means that pupils who have learning difficulties participate fully alongside their peers. They record their work simply and effectively, thus making very good progress and learning very well. Pupils also use their numeracy skills effectively to tally, predict and record numerical results. They use computers successfully to support their learning and present their findings.

93. Teaching and learning are very good. This has a lot to do with the school's effective method of managing the science curriculum. The school has a half-termly science topic. During the inspection the focus throughout the school was materials and their properties. Younger pupils experimented to find out which material, from a variety of six, would best insulate Teddy's hot water bottle. Year 3 pupils investigated properties of natural and man-made materials. Years 4, 5 and 6 explored what changes occur when some solids, such as salt, rice or sand, are added to water. Older pupils took this work a stage further and developed techniques to separate a mixture back into its original components. This way of working shows quite clearly how pupils' knowledge and understanding develops continuously and progressively as they move through the school. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to use the knowledge they have gained from previous work and apply it to the task in hand so that they gain a better understanding of the science involved.

94. All staff place great emphasis on getting the pupils to think things through and use their knowledge from everyday activities to help them solve given problems. This was particularly evident when Year 5 and 6 were encouraged to use their previously gained knowledge of properties of materials such as sand, steel washers and polystyrene beads. Because they knew washers and beads would stay in a sieve, while sand would fall through, and that a magnet would lift the washers out of the mixture, they were then able to devise a plan to extract a variety of materials from a mixture while preserving their individual

properties. They worked in groups to do this which meant they had to share their ideas and work collaboratively. This had a very positive effect on their social development.

95. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they plan a very good variety of activities to extend and challenge pupils' learning. They focus on, and teach, the scientific vocabulary that pupils need. Hence, pupils explain their work accurately and talk confidently about soluble and insoluble substances. They understand the properties of a wide range of materials, talk about glass being opaque or translucent and know that wool is a better insulator than cotton. They understand the notion of a fair test and predict outcomes carefully. Throughout the school, science is a lively and dynamic subject. This results in pupils being curious, interested in how and why things work and they learn rapidly to a very good level.

96. The subject leaders lead the subject well. They are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They are aware of the need to monitor teaching and learning more thoroughly and have plans to develop their roles further. Resources are adequate and used well.

ART AND DESIGN

97. Standards, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, are better than those found in most schools. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection but evidence from the wide variety of high quality work on display and in pupils' sketchbooks, indicate that pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well throughout the school. The recently implemented scheme of work, based on a national scheme of work, promotes the development of practical skills and techniques, as well as the appreciation of the work of a wide range of artists. All pupils, whatever their ability, have access to the full curriculum and thus make very good progress.

98. Teachers' skills and enthusiasms inspire pupils to enjoy the subject and take pride in their work. In Year 1, pupils explored colour through mixing paint. They created a range of interesting shades and tints by adding black or white in varying degrees to a primary colour. In Year 2 the pupils made a mosaic with their fingers when painting Cinderella's coach. Guided by their teacher, they considered the work of Pablo Picasso and, using inks, oils, pencils and pens, they completed very good still life pictures. Following a visit to the museum, the pupils in Year 3 completed a collage of a Tudor Town, using materials and tissue to create an extra dimension. When studying the Egyptians, the pupils in Year 4 closely observed Egyptian artefacts which the teacher borrowed from the library. This enabled the pupils to focus on shape and detail and produce very good sketches. In Year 5, following an introductory talk about what is meant by 'still life' and looking at examples of still life images in the works of Monet, Renoir and Cézanne, the pupils arranged visually interesting articles. They used pastels and crayons to sketch their arrangements. They knew to put large pieces at the back and to create interesting overlaps between the objects. Their work shows good use of line and tone. Some pupils included light and shade into their sketches. Year 6 pupils used charcoal to very good effect when drawing in the style of Lowry. They used effectively coloured charcoal when they interpreted the style and technique of Henri Matisse.

99. The quality of work on display and in books and photographs, indicates that the quality of teaching is consistently good in all classes. The teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of the subject to provide high quality, interesting experiences from which the pupils learn well. All staff are encouraging and supportive of pupils and help them develop their ideas. Through careful presentation of the pupils' work, they raise confidence and self-esteem so that pupils take pride in their achievements.

100. The display of finished work in school provides a stimulating learning environment for all. There are very good cross-curricular links. For instance, pupils in Year 1 made three-dimensional shapes and used pastels to paint them. Older pupils used the word processor to write a list poem, and inserted suitable pictures. An example of this was when one pupil wrote in her list 'Happiness is Christmas wrapping paper' and inserted her own pretty and cheerful drawing of wrapping paper.

101. There is presently no co-ordinator for the subject and assessment is not fully in place. There is very good planning for each term's work. Resources are good and readily available to all staff. These include a good number of library books and photographic resources.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. However, there was only one lesson observed during this inspection and there was insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on pupils' achievement by the age of 11. Attainment at the last inspection was above average throughout the school.

103. All pupils achieve well. They learn designing and making skills through a series of well-organised topics, which are closely related to their work in other subject areas. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as they are able. They are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants, and benefit from working in groups of mixed ability and in some classes of mixed ages.

104. Teachers plan interesting activities so that, by the end of Year 2, pupils have experience of a range of materials and methods of joining, and of deciding which is most suitable for their use. Clear plans show the ideal finished product. The models made for the Christmas crib scene were good examples of this. Here, the pupils had evaluated their work as well as planning and measuring it. The pupils practise weaving and make owls out of pom-poms, attaching pipe cleaners for legs. They prepare and cook a variety of foods. All are aware of safe procedures for food and know, for instance, to wash their hands before and after handling food.

105. By the end of Year 6, the pupils build on what they have learned. Year 5 pupils produce very good pottery in the style and colours of Clarice Cliffe. In Year 6, the pupils design a circuit to control a three-way traffic-light system. The one lesson observed was very well planned and the pupils achieved very well. They designed an assessment sheet that gave a valid appraisal of a product. They showed great imagination in the products that they designed and named, for example 'Tropical Crystal Chewys'. They demonstrated their ideas using text and labelled sketches. Later, having used a basic scone recipe and modifying it to produce a new product, they made comparisons between the control scone and their own product, to determine what worked well and what could have been improved.

106. The subject makes a very good contribution to supporting and developing understanding of other areas of the curriculum, for instance English. The evaluation of products requires pupils to talk about their ideas and to compare and contrast their views with those of other people. Through discussions, pupils learn to justify their own views and clarify their design ideas. There is evidence that information and communication technology is beginning to make a good contribution to the subject. Teachers use software to enhance skills by using draw-and-paint programs. They use databases to provide a range of information sources and CD-ROMS to gain access to images, people, environments, to collect information and to present results. Overall, the subject encourages pupils to develop

a sense of responsibility; for example following safe procedures when making things. They learn about healthy diets and personal hygiene and the need to prevent disease from spreading when working with food.

107. There is a very good policy document which clearly sets out the schools policy and practice. The curriculum follows a national scheme of work and is adapted to suit the needs of the school. Planning is very good, with lesson objectives clearly stated and desirable outcomes for each unit of work. These aid assessment and ensure that pupils build on their knowledge, skills and understanding in a structured and progressive way.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Attainment in geography is good in both key stages. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

109. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. The pupils know about changes in the weather and they record observations using symbols which are correctly representative. They compare different buildings, such as houses, and learn how these buildings are built using a variety of materials. They keep an album of photographs, postcards and souvenirs collected by Barnaby Bear when he accompanies people on their holidays and day trips. Barnaby collects lots of interesting souvenirs and pictures that teach the pupils many things about other places, such as how he gets from Shrewsbury to his destination and what the people and scenery are like when he gets there. All these things help the pupils to compare their home area with other locations. However, the inspection team feels that Barnaby was a little too inexperienced to take the controls of the aeroplane which took him to Australia!

110. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils continue to achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, they have a good knowledge of how to use maps and atlases. A lesson in Year 3 taught the pupils how to locate other European countries in relation to the British Isles. Year 5 pupils learned to trace the development of a settlement using a series of pictures. This work provided a good link with history. From it the pupils learned how people change the landscape and how towns develop according to the influences of trade and industry.

111. Because of timetabling, there were insufficient opportunities to observe teaching to make a valid judgement on its quality but in the two lessons seen, both in Years 3 to 6, the pupils showed positive attitudes to learning. When asked about their work, they explained clearly what they had learned. They made positive comments about the usefulness of the resources they were given to help them with their work. In the Year 5 lesson, where some resources were being shared, pupils co-operated very well to share these resources. In the Year 3 lesson, pairs of pupils were organised in a way that enabled them to support each other's learning. In this way pupils who were unsure how to use an atlas, developed their confidence from the support given by pupils who were more familiar with the use of atlases.

112. A scrutiny of the pupils' work shows that they have covered the programme of study of the National Curriculum appropriately. The content of their work is enhanced by the quality of its presentation, which is of a good standard. The teachers' marking of books shows that there is satisfactory day-to-day assessment of the work but there are no formal assessments or records to show that pupils have achieved the targets set in the programme of study. Leadership of the subject has not been a priority for the school recently. Professional development for subject leaders is planned to be a main area of focus in the new school development plan.

HISTORY

113. Standards are good in both key stages. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve well and, by the ages of seven and 11, their attainment is better than that found in many other schools. These standards are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection.

114. Because of the way in which the timetable works, few lessons were seen during the inspection. However, evidence from the pupils' books and on display around the school shows that the required content of the National Curriculum is covered. A display in the Year 1 classroom shows that the pupils learn how important holidays were to people in the past, just as they are today. It compares how people used to spend their leisure time with the pupils' own experience of holidays. The Year 5 pupils learned much about the culture of the Egyptians, following a visit to a museum, and Year 3 pupils linked their study of the Tudors to their home town. They did this by visiting the city centre to look for Tudor architecture. These opportunities for visits enhance the curriculum. The pupils' work is of a good standard and the quality of presentation seen, shows that they take pride in their work.

115. In the two lessons seen, one in each key stage, the pupils showed that they are interested in learning about the past. Their listening skills are good and they discuss well what they have learned. For example, in a lesson for Year 2 pupils, there was much interest in the living conditions of poor children in the Victorian age. The pupils were clearly saddened to think that many poor children had so little, and had to take jobs instead of going to school. From a discussion with them during the lesson, they showed that they realised how much better off they are as children now, than they would have been then.

116. Year 6 pupils show a keen interest in the changes to British society during the 1960's. From the lesson seen, they understand that life in Britain changed very much in the post-war years. They learn that some changes, such as those to fashion and 'pop' culture, resulted from improvements in the standards of living after World War II. From their viewing of a video showing scenes from sixties Liverpool, they draw good comparisons with their own experience of fashion and culture. Their understanding of the influences on change in society is good.

117. In the lessons seen, all the pupils showed that they have good attitudes to learning. They respond to the content of lessons thoughtfully, reflecting well on the information given. When asked about what they have learned, they explain clearly what they can remember of the topic.

118. The leadership of the subject is under-developed. Some aspects of subject leadership require greater emphasis, such as introducing a manageable scheme for the assessment of pupils' key skills of historical enquiry. Developing the role of the subject leader has a high priority in the school's own plans for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. At the last inspection, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils achieved standards which were below national expectations. Pupils now achieve above average standards. This is because the school gave high priority to improving resources and the skills of both teachers and pupils. All classes now have access to at least one computer and there are plans well in hand to increase this substantially in the near future when the computer suite is established. Teacher expertise has greatly increased through the support of the subject coordinator.

120. By the end of Year 2, pupils show confidence when using computers. This is because the teachers give very clear explanations and spend time directly teaching computer

skills. In one lesson observed in the infant department, the pupils in Year 1 showed a good understanding of the correct vocabulary associated with the computer. They talked comfortably about the hard-drive, space bar and shift key. They referred to the use of icons and how to move them by dragging the mouse. Using 'Make Town', the teacher taught the children how to find, add and name symbols when making their town. All pupils took turns to talk about the symbols and to place houses and roads in their town. Some needed assistance but a good number could complete these tasks unaided. Older pupils said that you press the 'alt key' to save your work.

121. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school. Year 5 pupils demonstrate basic logo commands on the computer. They draw a square using only a forward and right 90 degree command or only a backward and right 90 degree command. Because the teacher had clear lesson objectives and offered clear explanations, pupils were successful in completing the task set and used a 'turtle' to draw a square. They understand how to input the instructions and that the turtle will not move until they do this. By the end of the lesson, they understood that working out a suitable starting position in each case is crucial. Pupils in Year 6, use Desktop Publisher to produce their own newspapers. The newspaper includes a joke page, sports page and crossword page. It shows growing confidence in the skills and a keen sense of humour in the script.

122. Pupils have not been able to use the Internet and e-mail regularly. This is because until recently the server was not very reliable, plus there was only one computer with access to the Internet. The problem with the server has now been resolved and there will soon be a new computer suite. This will enable greater access to the Internet and electronic mail for all pupils.

123. Some direct teaching was seen during the inspection, but substantial further evidence was obtained from examining teachers' planning and pupils' previously completed work. In the lessons observed good and very good quality learning resulted from effective planning and preparation, which provided appropriate challenges for all pupils. Pupils with learning disabilities receive very good support from more able pupils and learning support assistants enabling them to achieve very well. Teachers used demonstrations very well, and took care to explain exactly what they required pupils to do. Teachers work very effectively with classroom assistants. Relationships are excellent and pupils work co-operatively and share resources well when required. Adults interact well with pupils, enabling them to gain confidence as they develop their skills. There are very good links with other subjects. Teachers make very good use of national guidance and their local authority scheme of work, to plan the curriculum.

124. The very good management of the subject has been successful in raising standards. There are very good plans for further development of the subject in, for example, developing assessment opportunities and the new computer suite.

MUSIC

125. Good quality music plays an essential part in the life of the school and makes a major contribution to the spiritual development of the pupils. Well-chosen music is used particularly effectively in assemblies to extend pupils' knowledge of composers and musical styles. During the inspection week, Elgar's 'Chanson du matin' welcomed staff and pupils into the hall at assembly times. It was also used very well to provide a quiz for the pupils to find out what the title meant. Music contributes very effectively to the pleasant and thoughtful ethos of the school. Standards have improved since the last inspection. They are above the expectations of the National Curriculum throughout the school.

126. The school covers the listening and appraising and performing elements of the subject well, enabling pupils to reach good standards consistently. This was particularly evident in Years 5 and 6, when pupils listened to music of Lennon and McCartney as part of their 'Sixties project'. They took a great interest in the music and the words of the song, discussing what instruments had been used in the recordings and the effect they had on the mood of the music. They discussed the meaning of the lyrics, with very good understanding, and related their meaning to social changes taking place during the sixties.

127. Pupils receive a wide range of musical experiences and learn very well. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is very good. Pupils make good very progress in developing their musical skills. Teachers adopt an enthusiastic approach and encourage pupils to participate fully in lessons. They work with pupils to develop listening and performing skills, encouraging pupils to co-operate, persevere and enjoy their work. Pupils respond very well to the good levels of teaching and enjoy lessons.

128. Pupils sing well. They sing tunefully, with clear diction. Younger pupils sing a good variety of songs and rhymes. They enjoy familiar tunes and words. Older pupils sing more complex songs skilfully. Teachers use correct technical language in lessons. This means that the pupils discuss their work using accurate terminology, such as lyrics and chorus, and hence enhance their understanding of musical structures.

129. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to listen to a good range of music. They use these opportunities to encourage pupils to improve their listening skills. Consequently, pupils learn to listen carefully and form their own impressions about the music they hear.

130. The subject leader manages the subject well. She has a clear view of how she would like music to develop. Resources are good. They are used well and stored to be easily accessible for all classes. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development because they use their singing skills well in assemblies. It also adds much to pupils' cultural development, because they listen to music from other traditions and they use, and become familiar with, instruments from around the world.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. The pupils achieve well in both key stages and, by the time they reach the age of seven and 11, attainment is good. These standards represent attainment similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection.

132. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances attainment for many pupils. Clubs for netball, football, swimming and cross-country running are well attended and pupils are keen to represent their school at one or more of these sports. The teams have done well in competition with other schools and these successes help to promote greater interest in sport among the pupils. Inter-school sport contributes well to the pupils' good social development. Parents and governors support these activities very well, giving good encouragement to the teachers and pupils by helping to organise practises and competitions.

133. The curriculum for physical education is based on a nationally recognised scheme of work. It provides opportunities for a wide range of activities to give the pupils a good breadth of experience, including gymnastics, team games, swimming and dance. The importance of diversity of experience, so that all pupils can develop their skills and feel included, is emphasised in the subject policy. Attention to keeping the rules of the game contributes

incidentally to the pupils' moral development. They realise the importance of keeping rules so that the game can succeed.

134. The standard of teaching is good overall. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, learn the importance of setting out their apparatus for gymnastics safely. They know why it is important to warm up before they use the apparatus for vigorous exercise and they listen very well to instructions. They plan a sequence of movements well and show good co-ordination and balance in their activity. Little teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6 but, in a very good swimming lesson in Year 5, the pupils were very well taught in groups so that they could all be challenged to improve their skills according to their ability. Praise and encouragement are used very well so that all pupils feel that they are achieving. The celebration of pupils' successes makes a very good contribution to the positive ethos of the school.

135. Good leadership has given the subject a high profile in the school. By promoting the curriculum effectively, the subject leader has raised awareness among staff and pupils of the need to exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. For example, a 'Jump Rope for the Heart' activity taught the pupils how skipping can be good exercise for a healthy heart and also helped to raise money for a national charity. Older pupils have good opportunities to extend their skills and experience by taking part in challenging adventure activities at an outdoor education centre.

