

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST BRIDGET'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Egremont

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112348

Head teacher: Mrs Eileen O'Reilly

Reporting inspector: Mrs Pat Kime  
25350

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> April – 4<sup>th</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 192950

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Bridget's Lane Egremont Cumbria
Postcode:	CA22 2BD
Telephone number:	01946 820320
Fax number:	01946 820320
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W H Moran
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> March, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

OIN	Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25350	Mrs P Kime	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
			Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Art and design	How well are pupils taught?
			Geography	How well is the school led and managed?
			Special educational needs	What should the school do to improve further?
14083	Mr A Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
10347	Mrs R Rodger	Team inspector	English	
			History	
			Music	
			Physical education	
			Foundation stage	
			Equal opportunities	
18819	Mrs P Lowrie	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse (Education) Limited  
14 Enterprise House  
Kingsway  
Team Valley  
Gateshead  
NE11 0SR

Tel: 0191 4872333

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33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Bridget's Catholic Primary School draws pupils from a wide area, parts of which are socially and economically disadvantaged. About fifteen per cent of the pupils are non-Catholics. The number of pupils has risen by 30 per cent since 1996 and, from Easter 2001, the 189 boys and girls have been placed in seven classes, one for each year group. Twenty-nine of those on roll are children in the Foundation Stage (Reception). At 25 per cent, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year but, taken overall, is broadly average. Twenty-eight of the pupils, (15 per cent) started at the school after the Reception year and around half of these pupils have been placed on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs. The school has identified 57 pupils, nearly a third, as having special educational needs. This is above the national average. However, several of these pupils are simply slower learners. Only twenty-six of them have significant difficulties with five, an above average proportion, carrying statements of special educational needs. These pupils are not required to take the National Curriculum tests (SATs). Two of the pupils on the school's roll are also on the roll of a local special school. They are integrated into classes at St Bridget's for one day each week. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds or with English as a second language.

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

St Bridget's educates its pupils effectively in a caring atmosphere. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils have good attitudes towards school and learning and they are well behaved. They learn at a satisfactory rate and are now reaching average standards in most subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and the slower learners are provided for well. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils attain above average standards in English and history by seven years of age and standards in art and design are above average by seven and eleven years of age.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the slower learners is good. As a result, these pupils achieve well from their starting points.
- Teaching for the five to seven year olds is of an overall good quality.
- The school provides a good quality of care for its pupils and makes good provision for their personal development. Consequently, this aspect of their development, their attitudes to school and to learning and their behaviour are good, and relationships are very good.
- The school's good partnership with parents enables them to make a very good contribution to pupils' learning and achievement.

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

- The standards pupils attain in mathematics by the time they are eleven years of age; they are below the national average and Year 6 pupils are not doing as well at mathematics as at English and science.
- The checks on several aspects of the school's work are not sufficiently extensive or rigorous.
- The quality of planning for the school's development and further improvement is barely adequate.
- The classroom accommodation for the newly created seventh class is cramped.

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

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

Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection in March 1997 and the school has the capacity to continue improving.

- Progress on the key issues for action  
Sufficient progress has been made on all the matters identified as key issues for action in 1997. The provision for children in the Reception class has improved. They are now taught satisfactorily and attain satisfactory standards in areas of learning that were previously below expectations. There is no longer an issue of underachievement by higher attainers in English or science, but a little persists in mathematics. Pupils in the same year group now all cover the same work. The longer-term development planning has improved and plans are now costed. Nevertheless, further improvement is needed. The allocation of the budget has been suitably reviewed.
- Progress on other matters  
The standards now being attained in Year 6 are considerably higher than those achieved in the 1997 SATs. The quality of teaching has improved, particularly in the Foundation Stage; there is now very little unsatisfactory teaching.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	C	C	B
mathematics	B	D	D	C
science	D	E	E	D

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

- Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and, by the end of the Reception year, they reach the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning.
- The five to seven-year-olds in Key Stage 1 achieve well and, by the end of this key stage, they attain above average standards in English. In mathematics and science they reach a broadly average standard but are confident in their knowledge and understanding at this level. These standards reflect those achieved in the Key Stage 1 SATs in 2000 in English and are a little better than the SATs results indicate in mathematics. Standards in history and art and design are above average by the end of this key stage.
- In the Key Stage 2 SATs in 2000, as shown in the chart, standards were at least in line with the similar school's average in English and mathematics but below it in science. Taking the three subjects together, the eleven-year-olds achieved below the national average. Compared with similar schools, they achieved average standards.
- Standards in the present Year 6 are broadly similar to the test results in English and mathematics but higher in science, where most pupils are attaining the standards expected for their age. In view of their attainment on entry to school these standards represent satisfactory achievement by the pupils. Standards in art and design are above average by the end of this key stage.
- Standards in information and communication technology are average by the end of each key stage.
- In 1997 the school's Key Stage 2 SATs results fell. They were well below average in all three subjects tested. The results achieved in subsequent years show a clear trend of improvement from this low base in English and mathematics. The improvement in science has not been as rapid as that seen nationally but the current Year 6 are on course to do better.
- The school has set appropriate targets for the 2001 SATs.



- Pupils' achievement, taken overall, is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and the slower learners achieve well in view of their learning difficulties but the higher attainers do not always achieve as well as they could.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils like school. They work hard in lessons and participate keenly in school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; pupils are well behaved in lessons, around the school and at play but are unduly noisy at lunchtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Good: pupils are co-operative and tolerant and accept responsibility when it is given. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

- The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of the 45 lessons seen. It was better than satisfactory in 53 per cent, being good in 42 per cent and very good in 11 per cent. In only one of the lessons observed was teaching unsatisfactory.
- The greatest concentration of good and very good teaching is for the five to seven-year-olds (Key Stage 1), in particular, in Year 2. As a result, pupils learn at a good rate and achieve well in this Key Stage.
- There is less good teaching in the Foundation Stage (Reception) than in the classes for the five to eleven-year-olds.
- English and literacy skills are taught well and mathematics and numeracy skills satisfactorily.
- The teaching seen in art and design and music was good.
- Throughout the school, teachers maintain good order in lessons whilst maintaining positive relationships and they use the support staff well. Classrooms are orderly and pupils get on with their work with good concentration.
- Weaknesses seen in both unsatisfactory and satisfactory teaching include the use of inappropriate methods, insufficient planning and, at times, a rather laboured pace.
- St Bridget's meets its pupils' needs except on the very few occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the needs of the less able are met better than those of the more able, who, at times, are not sufficiently challenged.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; the curriculum meets statutory requirements and appropriate emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of educational visits and visitors and good links with the community. Except for a few minor timetabling anomalies, all pupils have equal access to what the school offers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; these pupils are fully included in school life. Good plans are drawn up to tackle their individual needs and they benefit from good support. Statements of special educational need are implemented effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; this provision is rooted in the school's Catholic character and its promotion of Christian values. This good provision underpins pupils' learning and achievement by helping them to develop positive attitudes, to behave well and to build very good relationships.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; there is a good level of care for pupils' well-being. Teachers' knowledge of their pupils enables them to provide very good support and guidance for them. Teachers keep good track of where pupils are up to in English, mathematics and science and use this information effectively. Assessment of learning in other subjects is less thorough.

The school has a good partnership with parents. They think well of the school and are enabled to contribute much to pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall; the head teacher is committed to raising standards. She has secured commitment and good teamwork from the staff. In several subjects the contribution of the subject leaders has a positive effect on standards and the quality of work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; governors are strongly involved in the school's life and properly informed about its work and achievements. They share with the head teacher a clear view of the sort of school they want to have and how it should develop. Governors do not contribute to planning for the future at as early a stage as they could. There are a few omissions of detail in the information published for parents by the governing body.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall; test results are analysed thoroughly and the findings are acted on. Senior staff check the quality of teaching well. Other aspects of the school's work are not checked rigorously enough; this leads to inconsistency. Plans for the school's future development lack focus.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall; the available funds are generally used appropriately and the principles of best value are applied well. The support staff are used well in Key Stages 1 and 2 but no suitably qualified support is provided in the Foundation Stage. The absence of a library and the arrangements for work with computers in Key Stage 2 limit some aspects of work in English and information and communication technology.

Staffing and the resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The accommodation is barely adequate for the number of classes.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They find the school approachable.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• They think the teaching is good, their children are expected to work hard and are making good progress.</li> <li>• They are well informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons, especially for the younger pupils.</li> </ul>

Nearly 60 per cent of the inspection questionnaires were returned and the vast majority of parents expressed a positive view of the school. The inspectors agree with most of the parents' positive views, though they judge the quality of teaching and learning to be satisfactory rather than good. The range of out of school activities is satisfactory and typical of that provided in most primary schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

##### 2000 national test (SATs) results

1 The eleven-year-olds achieved acceptable standards in English and mathematics but not in science. Their results were best in English. Overall, their results were broadly in line with the average achieved by pupils in similar schools. Similar schools are those across the country, where between 20 and 35 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; At St Bridget's, 25 per cent of pupils are eligible. In English, St Bridget's pupils' results were in line with the national average but above the average for similar schools. In mathematics the results were below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. In science, the pupils' results were well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. The mathematics and science results were brought down because a much smaller proportion of pupils achieved above the level expected for their age, than did so nationally.

2 In the 2000 SATs for seven-year-olds, pupils achieved above average standards. At this age pupils take tests in reading, writing and mathematics and their attainment in science is assessed by their teachers. St Bridget's pupils' results in reading were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. In writing their results were in line with the national average and above the average for similar schools. In mathematics, their results were below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. In science data is not available to compare pupils' results with similar schools. However, pupils' performance was well below the national average in all aspects of the subject.

##### Trends in SATs results and targets

3 In 1997, the year of the last inspection, the results of the Key Stage 2 SATs fell. They were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Since then the results obtained in English have improved at a faster rate than nationally so pupils have caught up. In mathematics the rate of improvement has been only slightly better than that seen nationally but, because standards were so low in 1997, this has not been sufficient to bring them up to average. In science standards, taken over the succeeding three years, have remained well below average.

4 The Key Stage 1 test results have fluctuated over the years, but taken over the three years they have broadly kept pace with the national rate of improvement.

5 The school has set appropriate targets for a slight improvement in pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in the 2001 tests. These targets are likely to be met.

##### The standards seen on inspection and pupils' achievements

6 Children start the school with broadly average levels of attainment. They make sufficient progress in their learning in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and achieve standards that are broadly in line with the expectations for their age by the end of the Reception year in all areas of learning. These are personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, and creative development. Their attainment is below the target for their age in the information and communication technology element of their knowledge and understanding of the world. Taken overall, children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory in view of their starting point and the present Reception children are set to attain the targets for the end of the year, the Early Learning Goals.

7 Pupils make good progress from five to seven years of age, in Key Stage 1. They make gains in their learning at a good rate and achieve well in relation to what they have learned by the end of the Reception class. This good achievement is the result of good teaching, especially in Year 2. The standards seen in Year 2 were above average for the pupils' age in English and history and art and design. In mathematics and science they reach an average standard and are confident in their knowledge and understanding at this level. In the other National Curriculum subjects, design and technology, geography, information and communication technology, music and physical education, pupils in Key Stage 1 attain average standards. These standards represent satisfactory achievement in these subjects.

8 In Key Stage 2, the seven to eleven-year-olds make satisfactory progress, making gains in their learning at a satisfactory rate and, taken overall, their attainment is average for their age. This represents satisfactory achievement. The Year 6 pupils are attaining higher standards in English and science than in mathematics. The standards seen in Year 6 were average in all aspects of English (speaking and listening, reading, and writing). In mathematics the standards seen were below average overall, because few pupils are attaining beyond the standard expected for their age and pupils' ability to use and apply mathematics lags behind their knowledge and understanding of the other aspects of the subject. Pupils are now attaining average standards in science. Standards in science are now better than those achieved in last year's SATs. This is due to improvements in the planning of work and checking of pupils' learning in the last eighteen months; they are now bearing fruit. Standards in art and design work seen were above average. In the other National Curriculum subjects the Year 6 pupils are attaining average standards.

9 Taken overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, pupils with special educational needs and the slower learners, who together make up around a third of the pupils, achieve well in the light of their difficulties. This is because there are good individual plans for their learning, which are implemented effectively, and these pupils receive good quality additional support from non-teaching staff. By contrast, the more able pupils at times do not achieve as well as they could. This is most marked in mathematics where they are not consistently set enough work at a level that challenges them.

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

10 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are all good and relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. These strengths stem from the high expectations of behaviour set by all members of the school community, including the pupils themselves, and they have a positive effect on pupils' learning and achievement. Parents recognise the good behaviour and rightly think that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. They know their children like school. Strengths in this aspect of the school have been maintained since the last inspection and the behaviour of children in the reception class has improved significantly.

11 Pupils enjoy coming to school and there is very little lateness. The vast majority have positive attitudes to learning and to the work they do in lessons. They are confident and well motivated; they want to learn. They take an interest in lessons, listening carefully to their teachers, asking and answering questions willingly, and offering their own ideas and opinions freely. In lessons, pupils settle to work quickly and stick at their tasks diligently, showing a high level of concentration. Pupils are usually keen to participate in other aspects of school life such as assemblies and extra-curricular clubs.

12 Nearly all the pupils are well-behaved and they act sensibly and responsibly. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning as lessons can proceed smoothly. Pupils conduct themselves well. They move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and play with a good degree of co-operation during outdoor breaks, when there is no sign of any bullying or isolation of individual pupils. However, during lunchtimes, pupils are unduly noisy. This has been recognised and some

steps have been taken to overcome the problem but, to date they have not achieved the desired effect. There was one fixed term exclusion last school year and there has been one so far this year.

13 Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils relate very well to staff and other adults and to each other. They are polite and courteous and very welcoming to visitors. They work well together, sharing resources, taking turns and listening respectfully to each other. Boys and girls of all ages mix and play well together at breaks and lunchtime. The vast majority of pupils consistently show respect for their teachers and each other. For example, pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated; this helps pupils develop tolerance and consideration for the needs of others.

14 The school gives high priority to promoting pupils' personal development and, as a result, pupils are learning a good range of social skills and developing into well-rounded individuals. Pupils support local and national charities and are developing an awareness of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. When pupils are given responsibility they accept it and respond positively. They work with a good degree of independence in lessons when they are trusted to do so with little direct supervision. Pupils make a contribution to school life as, for example, when they take some responsibility in the organisation of the annual health and safety week and older pupils act as "buddies" to newcomers. Pupils are fully involved in determining class rules.

15 Attendance rates are broadly in line with the national average. There is no unauthorised absence. Most absence is attributable to factors beyond the school's control. For example attendance was adversely affected by illness during the Spring term.

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

16 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers are teaching the right things effectively. As a result, the pupils, who enter school with broadly average levels of attainment, make satisfactory progress in their learning and reach average standards in most subjects, by the time they leave.

17 Forty-five lessons were seen. The teaching was at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of them. Teaching was at least good in 53 per cent of the lessons. It was good in 42 per cent and very good in 11 per cent. Two per cent of the teaching was of an unsatisfactory quality. The remaining 45 per cent of teaching was satisfactory.

18 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Then, the teaching in 15 per cent of the lessons, mostly in the Reception class, was of an unsatisfactory or poor quality. There is now much less unsatisfactory teaching in this class.

19 Overall, the school meets its pupils' needs and enables them to learn at an appropriate rate, except on the very few occasions when the teaching is unsatisfactory. The needs of the substantial minority of pupils who either have special educational needs or are slower learners are met well. As a result, these pupils make better progress, in relation to what they have previously achieved, than do the faster learners, who, at times, are not sufficiently challenged.

20 Teaching is most effective in Key Stage 1, (five to seven-year-olds) because there is a concentration of high quality teaching in Year 2. Pupils make good progress in their learning in this key stage. Teaching is of a satisfactory quality both in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and in Key Stage 2 (seven to eleven-year-olds). However, there is less good teaching in the Foundation Stage than in Key Stage 2. At the time of the last inspection one of the key issues for action related to improving the quality of teaching for children under five, now the Foundation Stage. Sufficient progress has been made on this issue.

21 All the teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and maintain good order in lessons whilst keeping positive relationships with their pupils. As a result, classrooms are orderly and

pupils concentrate well and get on with their work. For the most part, teachers make good use of the support staff and other adults, such as parent helpers. They brief them well so they are clear what pupils are to learn and work in close and effective partnership with the special needs support assistants. Just occasionally, additional adults are under-employed during whole-class teaching sessions.

22 Other features of teaching vary in quality from class to class. For instance, some teachers' marking is helpful to pupils, pointing out how well they have grasped the main points of the lesson and what they need to do to improve. In other classes, although teachers nearly always mark pupils work conscientiously and sometimes write encouraging comments, they give pupils much less guidance as to how to improve and occasionally they mark incorrectly. Similarly with targets for pupils' learning; in some classes, individual pupils or small groups working at a similar level have clear targets for the next steps in their learning and they know them. In other classes pupils' target sheets are not kept up to date and pupils are therefore not sure what they need to work on most. Equally, teachers' subject knowledge affects the quality of their teaching. When it is good, lessons tend to be taught better. For example, in a Year 6 art and design lesson, the teacher made effective use of a good range of prints of Picasso's work to stimulate and interest pupils and to help them appreciate the characteristic features of the artist's style. This approach, rooted in knowledge of the artist's work and a good understanding of the artistic elements within it, enabled pupils to develop their own ideas creatively and produce good quality work, without slavishly copying a picture of Picasso's. All the pupils became engrossed in their work and showed a good degree of perseverance.

23 When teaching is not so effective, one or more of the following features are usually present:

- the methods and organisation used are not appropriate, as when young children spend too long sitting listening and watching;
- the teacher's planning has not been thorough enough. For instance in one lesson, time was lost as the teacher tried to organise and display a selection of resources and visual aids. In another, too little work was planned for the allotted time and the final part of the lesson degenerated because the children were not sure what they were to do;
- at times, lessons proceed rather slowly because an unnecessarily long time is spent on introductions and explanations before pupils get down to their work.

24 The teaching of English is generally good, with teachers implementing the National Literacy Strategy well. A particularly effective example, revealing many strengths, was a Year 2 lesson about questions. The teacher ensured that the pupils knew what they were to learn and helped them to relate this to the work they had already done and to their learning targets. The different phases of the lesson linked together well so pupils built up and consolidated their understanding effectively. The teacher checked pupils' understanding continually and succeeded in being both challenging and supportive so pupils were confident to speak out but also had to make an effort. The pupils were interested in the lesson; they enjoyed learning and made progress at a good rate. The effect of the good teaching of English and literacy skills is seen in pupils' good achievement in the subject, which means that standards are now higher than what is expected, by the end of Key Stage 1, and in line with expectations, by the end of Key Stage 2.

25 The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall. Teachers are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Every class has a daily "numeracy hour" following the recommended format and the majority of pupils are making progress at least at a satisfactory rate. However, teachers have yet to devise ways to ensure that the more able pupils make the accelerated progress of which they are capable. In some classes teachers rely heavily on worksheets which are not always matched as well as they might be to pupils' needs.

26 Teachers use homework satisfactorily to reinforce and extend learning and there is a good home-school reading partnership. However, there is little guidance for teachers regarding homework and the arrangements vary between classes.

27 The teaching of art and design and music was good in the lessons seen. In art and design, observational skills are taught well.

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

### **The curriculum: the learning opportunities the school provides**

28 The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets statutory requirements by covering all subjects of the National Curriculum. In all subjects pupils are offered an appropriate range of opportunities for learning but the time allocated to some subjects, such as science and information and communication technology, is barely sufficient to permit adequate coverage of the required work. Relevant links are made between work in different subjects and good links with the local community and a good range of educational visits and visitors enhance pupils' learning.

29 For the most part, pupils have equal access to what the school offers. However, there are a few occasions when the timetable arrangements mean that a small number of pupils regularly miss the same lesson. For example, some pupils in Key Stage 2 miss physical education every week to have instrumental music tuition.

30 At the time of the last inspection, there were two key issues for action related to the curriculum:

- to “ensure equal access to the curriculum in English, mathematics and science for Key Stage 2 pupils by planning and teaching the same curriculum content for pupils of similar age in different classes”. The very recent change to teaching pupils in single age-group classes for all subjects has resolved the issue of unequal access;
- with regard to children under five (now referred to as the Foundation Stage), to improve the provision by producing curriculum policies and schemes of work. Sufficient progress has been made on this and children in the Foundation Stage now follow a satisfactory curriculum. Nevertheless, scope remains for further improvement in the provision for these young children.

31 The school is implementing the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. All classes have daily literacy and numeracy hours. Teachers generally plan these sessions well. They follow the national guidance closely and are clear what they want pupils to learn in lessons. This planned work in English and mathematics therefore builds effectively on what pupils have already learned. To date, the implementation of the Literacy Strategy has been the more effective in raising standards.

32 The planning of the curriculum in other subjects is less coherent and the whole-school planning of some subjects is in a state of transition with some teachers trying out the nationally recommended programmes of work whilst others are still using the school's own plans. There is a satisfactory overall plan of what will be taught in each year. This is followed and all the content of the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is covered so pupils are taught the right things. The teachers each plan what they will teach in each subject but the quality of their planning varies. The class plans are checked by the teacher with responsibility for oversight of the curriculum but this checking lacks rigour, largely because there are many other claims on this member of staff's time. Sufficient attention is given to ensuring pupils cover all the necessary knowledge but more could be done to ensure that the demands on pupils build up progressively as they move up the school and to plan opportunities to assess pupils' learning as they complete each section of work.



33 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Good quality individual plans are drawn up to guide teachers and support staff in meeting these pupils' learning needs. Everyone understands the school's approach to supporting these pupils and they are fully included in school life. The non-teaching staff provide them with good and effective support in lessons, in small groups withdrawn from the classroom, and, at times, on an individual basis. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well in relation to their learning difficulties. Several slower learners are placed on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs and they also benefit from the good provision so they generally make good progress in their learning from their starting points.

34 The school's provision for faster learners and pupils who are gifted or talented, though satisfactory, is not as good as for the slower learners and those with special educational needs. This is because they are not always set work hard enough to really challenge them and take them on as far as they could go and, in lessons, some teachers more often give additional support to the slower learners than to those who could move on more quickly. Furthermore, the school does not identify gifted and talented pupils and draw up plans to meet their particular learning needs.

35 The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory overall. Pupils in Key Stage 2 can participate in a good range of activities, most of which are sporting or musical, but there are few out of school activities for those in Key Stage 1.

36 The provision for personal, social and health education is good. It is closely linked to religious education and is supported by the school's positive ethos, with very good relationships and good levels of care for pupils, and involvement in the life of the community.

### **Links with the community**

37 The school has been successful in forging links with the local and wider community and it has close links with the parish. These links make a good contribution to pupils' learning, especially in their personal, social and health education, and their developing understanding of citizenship. Members of the community contribute to the school through involvement in its life and work and through financial contributions. Representatives from various community agencies regularly visit the school and contribute to lessons. For example, a community police officer was observed giving a very good drugs awareness presentation to Year 6 pupils as part of education for citizenship. Local firms donate funds to the school run and contribute to the annual health and safety week, and a major local employer supports governors' involvement with the school. The school is closely involved in a joint programme with a local special school, whereby a few pupils from the special school are integrated into classes at St Bridget's for one day each week. Students from local colleges are well used in a support role to the benefit of the students and the school. There are informal, but good, links with local nurseries and playgroups. This helps to smooth children's transition to the Reception class. There are also appropriate links with the main receiving secondary school.

### **The provision for pupils' personal – including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

38 The school provides well for pupils' personal development. This provision makes a good contribution to pupils' good attitudes to learning and good behaviour that in turn contribute to classrooms being orderly places in which the pupils can and do learn.

39 The school nurtures the human spirit well. Its provision for pupils' spiritual development is strongly rooted in its Catholic character and its promotion of Christian values. Religious education and collective worship (assemblies) were not part of this inspection. Nevertheless, inspectors were invited to assemblies and were offered the school's plan of work for religious education and found that both these elements contribute positively to this aspect of pupils' development. In assemblies pupils are encouraged to reflect on Christian beliefs and values and to consider their own personal contribution to family and community life. Religious education concentrates on Christianity but also acknowledges the richness of contributions from other faiths. Pupils also learn about religions when

they study life in other countries in geography. Consequently pupils learn to respect non-Christian faiths.

40 Pupils' moral development is provided for well. The school promotes sound values and pupils develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The planned programme for personal, social and health education (Fully Alive) has a good focus on caring and respect and provides opportunities for pupils to consider moral issues and social dilemmas, such as saying no to drugs and coping with divorce. The values of honesty and fairness are strongly promoted and pupils are involved in drawing up class and school rules, which they understand and follow. Teachers set a good example in their concern for individuals.

41 The school's provision for pupils' social development is good. Much of this provision is rooted in the "Fully Alive" programme, which emphasises family life and the need for good relationships. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work together purposefully in lessons and extra-curricular activities and they encourage co-operation and respect in pupils' relationships with each other. Through sporting activities, including extra-curricular clubs, pupils learn about teamwork. Staff set a very good example of positive relationships, treating each other with courtesy and respect. Pupils have good opportunities to participate in residential educational visits which develop their social skills and growing independence. Older pupils undertake responsibilities and duties. For instance they act as monitors and contribute to pastoral care by being "buddies" to younger pupils. Three pupils represent the school on Copeland Junior Council and attend meetings and conferences. They consult with pupils in order to represent a "school view". Pupils support for charitable appeals and participation in local community events also help them to understand how individuals contribute to community life.

42 The provision for cultural development is good, with strengths in the local cultural aspect and scope for development in multi-cultural education. Work in history and geography provides good coverage of the local culture and heritage, supported well by a range of educational visits and visitors. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to learn about other cultures. For example, an actor comes into school in the role of a Viking and an Anglo Saxon and Victorian classrooms are set up so pupils can experience something of what it felt like to be part of a class in that period. Artefacts are used well to enhance pupils' awareness of, for example, life in Pakistan and Islam. Music and art and design provide a sufficient range of cultural experiences. Nonetheless, opportunities are missed. For instance, there is no whole-school plan to ensure pupils study an appropriately varied range of works of art.

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

43 Taken overall, the quality of care provided by the school is good and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievements. The arrangements for child protection, for ensuring pupils' welfare and for pastoral care are very good and the school's procedures are very effective. There are many strengths, but also some shortcomings, in the way the school keeps a check on how well pupils are getting on.

44 Pastoral care is given a high priority and the very good support and guidance given to pupils reflects the school's caring ethos. Staff know the pupils well. They have a good understanding of pupils' individual personal needs and all are approachable. They understand the school's pastoral and welfare procedures very well and implement them consistently and conscientiously. For example, there are very good arrangements for dealing with medical and emergency aid requirements. Staff provide very good vigilant supervision of pupils. Support staff for pupils with special educational needs make a particularly strong contribution to these pupils' confidence and progress.

45 Proper attention is paid to health and safety matters. The governing body and staff take health and safety very seriously and appropriate measures, such as regular risk assessments, are taken to ensure the school is a safe place; such matters are kept under review.

46 The school promotes good behaviour well. All the adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they set a good example, and pupils are involved in determining rules. The effectiveness of the school's approach is seen in pupils' good behaviour and tolerant attitudes and the absence of bullying or harassment. Although there is no policy for promoting racial equality, this is done satisfactorily through the taught curriculum and displays around the school.

47 Pupils' attendance is monitored well and rapid action is taken if an absence is unexplained.

48 The school's arrangements for keeping check on how well pupils are getting on are good overall. They have improved since the last inspection and there are now several strengths in the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment:

- pupils' learning is assessed regularly and systematically in the National Curriculum core subject of English, mathematics and science. The results of these assessments are used to determine how pupils are grouped and to inform the planning of the next steps in their learning;
- in Key Stage 1, assessment procedures are thorough and they are used consistently. This contributes well to pupils' good rate of progress in this key stage. The impact can be seen, for instance in improving English standards;
- in some classes, assessment is used effectively as a basis for setting targets for each pupil's learning and these are reviewed regularly;
- pupils' SATs results are analysed and action is taken to overcome the weaknesses identified, for instance, problem solving in mathematics;
- the assessment systems for pupils with special educational needs are robust and effective; they exceed what is required;
- samples of pupils' writing are now collected and judged against the different levels of the National Curriculum. This is effective in clarifying standards and is making a contribution to the improvement in English. The approach has potential to be developed and extended to other subjects.

49 These strengths mean that, for the most part, the assessment of pupils' attainment and their rate of progress contributes well to their achievements. Nonetheless, there are aspects that could be improved. The available information on pupils' attainment is not always used as well as it could be. The analysis of SATs results has been commissioned by the school. It is thorough and raises many points that could be acted on to improve standards. However, key staff are not fully aware of all these points and do not balance the external analysis sufficiently with their own knowledge of the trends in pupils' attainment and their progress in lessons. The use of assessment information to set targets for pupils' learning is inconsistent. Many of the school's assessment procedures have been in place for only a short time and they are not all yet used equally consistently and effectively by all teachers. In some subjects, for example information and communication technology, several of the teachers are not yet using the newly introduced systems. There is considerable inconsistency in the use of assessment in Key Stage 2 in the non-core subjects of the National Curriculum; insufficient check has been kept on the extent to which staff follow agreed procedures.

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

50 Relationships between the school and parents are very good. The school enjoys the active support of most parents and they have a very positive view of the school. The vast majority of parents who returned the inspection questionnaire expressed a high level of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the school. The school's partnership with parents enriches the school's work and has a positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

51 Parents and other family members support the school in many ways and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. A good number of parents and grandparents help in classrooms on a regular basis and they are deployed effectively and briefed well by the teachers. For example, parents with information and communication technology skills are used well to support the teaching of this subject. The majority of parents ensure that their children complete homework and there is a good home-school reading partnership with parents and teachers communicating effectively. There is no formal parents' association but parents, teachers and pupils organise events on a class basis to raise funds to purchase additional resources for teaching and learning and for charitable purposes. A considerable amount of money is raised in this way.

52 Communication between home and school is good and parents receive generally good information about the school and its life and about how their children are getting on. Consultation with parents is extensive and it gives the school staff a good awareness of what parents think of the school's work. However, there are a few omissions in the governing body's annual report to parents, regarding disabled access and the date the next election for parent governors is due.

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

53 The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. Strengths are in the governing body's contribution, the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and the caring atmosphere created in the school. There are shortcomings in the way the school's work is checked and its effectiveness judged and in the planning for future development.

### **The contribution of the head teacher, key staff and the governing body**

54 The head teacher leads the school soundly but there are shortcomings in her management. She has given high priority to establishing a caring ethos and increasing the number of pupils and has achieved a good measure of success in both these areas. She has secured commitment and a good level of teamwork from the staff, all of whom want to raise standards. The staff work well together, relationships are very good and the school provides a caring and orderly environment for pupils to learn in. The head teacher is committed to raising standards and is sensitive to the school's reputation in the community. Her leadership is effective in giving focus to the staff's efforts.

55 The head teacher provides good leadership and management of the provision for pupils who are placed on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils achieve well in the light of their learning difficulties. However, this takes up much of the head teacher's time. Consequently, she does not maintain sufficiently close oversight of some other aspects of the school's work and is not in a position to know, for example, how consistently school policies are implemented. Inconsistencies in practice, variations in quality, such as those in the planning of work and the teachers' marking of pupils' work, and a few significant shortcomings have not been recognised and therefore are not dealt with.

56 This undermines the overall quality and effectiveness of the checks on the school's work. There are, nevertheless, some strengths in this area. For example, the monitoring of teaching in English and mathematics lessons is good and teachers have annual performance targets. The school has commissioned a thorough analysis of SATs results and taken effective action to address some of the issues it raises. For instance a greater focus on teaching writing is bearing fruit in improved

standards. The school has a written plan to guide its future development and improvement but it is of a barely adequate quality and is therefore not as effective as it should be in giving a steer to the school's work. It does not make clear what are the most important priorities either for the current year or for the next following few years. It sets appropriate targets but does not identify exactly what is to be done, by whom, and when, in order to achieve them. It is not clear who is to judge how effective action has been and the criteria for judging effectiveness are often too vague. Too much depends on informal arrangements.

57 The deputy head teacher works closely with the head teacher and supports her. She carries some management responsibilities and is active and effective in personnel matters, such as organising staff training. However, her contribution to the leadership and management of the school is limited by her full-time class teaching commitment.

58 Almost all the teachers carry responsibility for leading and managing work in one or more subjects. Their contribution to the standards achieved and quality of education is satisfactory overall, but varies between subjects. As often as not this is a reflection of the school's current priorities. Some subjects are "on the back burner" and in them the subject leaders do little more than check the necessary resources are available, collect in teachers' planning and update policies. However, in English and mathematics the subject leaders have made a good contribution by helping teachers to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively and checking the teaching of the daily literacy and numeracy hours. In English the effect is already evident in improved standards. In information and communication technology and art and design the subject leaders have improved the curriculum and provided useful guidance for teachers. The good staff teamwork means that changes are fully discussed before being introduced.

59 For the most part, the governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Several governors bring valuable skills and experience to their role. Governors know the school well and some are regular visitors who play a significant part in school life. The governing body and head teacher have a shared view of the sort of school they want St Bridget's to be; one where pupils' personal development is stressed and the ethos is as important as standards. Governors have a satisfactory awareness of what the head teacher and staff want to do in school in the future and they have the capacity to make a strong contribution to the school's future development. However, they are not as involved as they could be in determining the direction for the school's future development and, together with the staff, laying plans to fulfil this. Nevertheless, governors are well aware of the standards achieved and they challenge the school to improve. The governing body has allowed the number of pupils to increase without ensuring that there is sufficiently spacious classroom accommodation for them all. In the governing body's annual report to parents there are some omissions of information required by law.

## **The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

### Staffing

60 The school has sufficient teachers and a good number of special needs support staff. All are suitably experienced and qualified and they benefit from appropriate opportunities for further training to keep them up to date and meet the school's needs. For example, the support staff attached to pupils with statements of special educational needs are soon to embark on a substantial information and communication technology course. The school's commitment to continuing training to support all staff has been recognised by the award of Investors In People status. However, there is no regular qualified support staff allocated to the Reception class; support here is provided by students and voluntary parent helpers. Support staff who work with pupils who have special educational needs make a good contribution to these pupils' good achievement. The support given to newly qualified teachers and staff new to the school is of good quality.

## Accommodation

61 The accommodation is barely adequate for the number of pupils. At the beginning of the summer term, a week before the inspection, a seventh class was created, fulfilling the school's aim to have single-age classes throughout. However, the result is that the Year 5 pupils are accommodated in a very small classroom where there is insufficient room for practical activities. This shortcoming is compounded by the fact that space is already at a premium and there are no additional areas for practical work. This situation has not yet had a detrimental effect on standards but it has the potential to do so and, furthermore, to limit these pupils' access to aspects of the National Curriculum. The other classrooms are sufficiently spacious, though that for the Reception class is on the small side. There are other shortcomings in the accommodation:

- there is no school library. There are good collections of books in the classrooms but the absence of a central library limits pupils' opportunities to use information retrieval skills and to develop independent study skills;
- all the computers in Key Stage 2 are housed in a corridor and groups of pupils come out of lessons to work on them. This causes a degree of disturbance to lessons and pupils are distracted by other pupils and adults using the corridor as a thoroughfare. It also means that teachers undertake little direct teaching of information and communication technology;
- there is no suitable enclosed outdoor play area for children in the Reception class.

62 There is sufficient outdoor accommodation for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. There are two good sized hard surface playgrounds and the school enjoys free access to the adjacent secondary school playing fields. The award winning courtyard area provides an attractive place for quiet contemplation. The facilities and access arrangements for disabled pupils are satisfactory. The school is kept clean and is well maintained.

## Resources

63 The quality and quantity of resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory in most subjects. The resources for history, music and for English, other than the lack of a library, are good. The resources for geography and information and communication technology are barely adequate. In geography there are insufficient maps and few up to date atlases. In information and communication technology the school does not have suitable resources for work in the control aspect of the curriculum in Key Stage 2. However, it compensates for this shortcoming by providing opportunities for this work on residential educational visits. There are not enough resources for outdoor activities to promote physical development in the Foundation Stage.

### **The school's use of its resources**

64 The school makes satisfactory use of its resources to promote teaching and learning. For the most part, spending is planned to meet the school's educational intentions. There is a potentially good system of devolving budget surpluses to the subject leaders and in-house bidding for funds for resources in each subject. However, this is not clearly linked to whole-school planning for development or matched closely to priorities. Grants for particular purposes, such as special educational needs and additional literacy support are used properly.

65 The support staff for pupils with special educational needs are deployed very effectively and they make a good contribution to the pupils' achievement. However support staff are not allocated to the Reception class, where the teacher has to rely on students and voluntary helpers.

66 The governing body makes a good contribution to financial management and provides proper oversight of the budget. Governors have identified extending the small Year 5 classroom as a priority. Day to day administrative systems are orderly and they work efficiently. The school shares

a bursar with several other primary schools. The present bursar has only recently been appointed. She brings good financial and business knowledge to this role and has introduced rigorous procedures to audit and monitor expenditure. The administrator and bursar liaise effectively to ensure that timely financial information is available and spending is monitored.

67 The school applies the principles of best value well. It consults parents particularly well and it seeks competitive tenders for major spending. The newly appointed bursar is putting procedures in place to help achieve best value in all purchasing of services but it is too early to judge the impact of these measures.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68 In order to raise standards, the head teacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) raise standards of attainment in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 by:
  - providing more demanding work for the faster learners and ensuring that they spend more time on work that challenges them;
  - planning more systematically for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in all aspects of the subject and in other subjects.  
(paragraphs 8, 86, 89, 90, 93, 95)

In order to improve the leadership and management of the school, the head teacher and governors should:

- (2) monitor and evaluate the work of the school more thoroughly and rigorously and use the findings of this process to achieve greater consistency in the school's work by:
  - devising and implementing systematic procedures to enable the head teacher to keep a closer check on all aspects of teaching, the curriculum and the implementation of policies, and on the effectiveness of the school's work;
  - spreading the school's best practice more widely.  
(paragraphs 49, 55)
- (3) improve the quality of planning for the school's further development and continuing improvement by formulating a better quality plan to steer future development which:
  - is determined in consultation with the governing body;
  - is clear about what are the main priorities and what is to be done, when, and by whom, in order to achieve them;
  - identifies appropriate criteria for judging the effectiveness of any action taken in improving pupils' achievement and who will make such evaluations.  
(paragraphs 56, 59)
- (4) When funds allow, take steps to improve the accommodation so that all seven classes are accommodated in sufficiently spacious classrooms. \*  
(paragraph 61)

In addition to these key issues for action, the following points should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- improving the coherence of the whole-school planning of the curriculum;  
(paragraphs 32, 128)
- enriching the provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage;  
(paragraphs 20, 30, 69, 72-78)
- meeting statutory requirements in the governors' annual report to parents;  
(paragraph 52)
- adapting the timetable to eliminate situations when pupils regularly miss the same lesson every week.  
(paragraph 29)

\* The school has already recognised this issue in its development planning.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	42	45	2	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	189
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	47

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.2

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	12	14	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	12
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	23	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88% (68%)	85% (71%)	92% (71%)
	National	83% (82%)	84% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	11	9	10
	Total	20	18	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77% (68%)	69% (71%)	77% (61%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	12	10	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	9
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	16	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73% (79%)	68% (64%)	77% (68%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	11
	Girls	9	8	8
	Total	17	16	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77% (71%)	73% (68%)	86% (75%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	79% (75%)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	189
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	27

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	322,288
Total expenditure	324,049
Expenditure per pupil	1,821
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,647
Balance carried forward to next year	12,886

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	190
Number of questionnaires returned	111

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	41	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	41	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	45	5	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	41	6	3	0
The teaching is good.	60	38	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	38	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	30	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	43	46	6	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	46	47	5	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	41	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	40	10	3	14

## **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**

69 The foundation stage covers education from three years of age to the end of the Reception year. At St Bridget's, children start school at the beginning of the school year in which they become five, the Reception year. At the time of the inspection there were 29 children in the Reception class. They are taught by a qualified teacher who has regular support from parent helpers and students. However, no suitably qualified support staff are attached to the class.

70 When the children start school, most have experience of pre-school education at nursery or playgroup. Their level of attainment on entry varies but, taken overall, is broadly average for their age. They make satisfactory progress in their learning and achieve the standards expected for their age. Almost all the children have now exceeded the expectations for four-year-olds and the majority are set to achieve the national targets (Early Learning Goals) in almost all areas of their learning, by the end of the Reception year.

71 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, except in early work on information and communication technology and, on occasions, in other aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. Because the teaching is good enough, pupils' achievement, from their starting point on entry to school, is satisfactory overall in all six areas of learning.

72 At the time of the previous inspection, the provision for this age group was unsatisfactory and the teaching was not good enough. Children were not attaining the standards they should in personal and social development and aspects of creative development and physical development. There was a key issue for action to improve the curricular provision and the teaching. Sufficient progress has been made on this issue and the provision is now satisfactory; in all areas of learning the overall provision is at least adequate and there is much less unsatisfactory teaching so pupils now make satisfactory overall progress in their learning. Even so, there is still considerable scope for further improvement, by matching the organisation and teaching methods more closely to these young children's learning needs and their stage of development and by providing suitable opportunities for children to learn in the outdoor environment.

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

73 Standards and achievement in this area of learning are satisfactory. The key strengths are the level of interest shown by the children in their self chosen activities, particularly when they are taking part in role play in the domestic play area. The children sometimes show high levels of concentration and interest in their work. This was seen, for example, when effective involvement of adults in mathematical development lesson kept the children involved and interested in the calculations they carried out. However, generally the children are taught as a whole class, with all the children completing the same task, for too much of their time. For example, in a scientific activity the children became restive because they were required to sit, merely watching, for too long. The children's behaviour is satisfactory, although those with special educational needs, because of behavioural difficulties, find it hard to sit during whole-class sessions. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. An area for development is to allow children to take more responsibility for their own learning for example, by making some choices about their activities, and to become more independent.

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

74 Standards and achievement are satisfactory. The children have been taught as a whole class for literacy since the beginning of the summer term. They show a good understanding of the sounds made by each letter at the beginning of a word and they know the sounds of common letter blends,

such as “ch”. “Big books” are used effectively to teach reading and to give a good example of reading to the children. Consequently, children are confident to have a go themselves. Children read their “reading books” accurately, but they have little awareness of or interest in other books in the classroom. Staff do not make the most of the classroom reading area to promote a love of books and to encourage children to look at a wider range. The use of singing rhymes to teach letter sounds is a good feature which the children enjoy enormously. The inclusion of writing materials in the home corner encourages children to enjoy and see the purpose of writing. Additional staff are not regularly deployed to support learning in this area, but when they are good opportunities to assess children’s independent writing skills and communication skills are provided. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Group activities are well planned and take account of the wide ability range in the class. Adults are deployed effectively and make a good contribution to children’s learning. However, the way lessons are organised and managed means that the children spend too much time sitting altogether on the carpet. Children with special educational needs work away from the class for their reading activities. They are taught well and make good progress in their learning.

### **Mathematical development**

75 Standards and achievement are satisfactory. The children have a satisfactory understanding of numbers to 10 and the higher attainers are beginning to use numbers to 20, for instance to work out subtraction “sums” in a group activity. These more able children can write down simple addition and subtraction calculations. There is some good teaching in this area of learning. Additional staff are deployed effectively and in the lessons observed activities were matched well to the range of the children’s abilities. Practical apparatus is used to help children carry out calculations. However, although the practices seen during the inspection week were appropriate, examination of children’s work showed that some of them have been expected to complete calculations from very early in the year. This is generally inappropriate for most children. Children with special educational needs are well integrated into whole class mathematical work and supported very effectively by non-teaching staff.

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

76 This area of learning helps children to make sense of the world around them and lays the foundations for later study of science, design and technology, geography, history and information and communication technology (ICT). It was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to form valid judgements on all aspects of this area of learning. However, the evidence available indicates that standards, taken overall, are satisfactory. The children’s knowledge and understanding of early scientific concepts is sound but they do not achieve the standards they should in working with computers. Children have opportunities to work with computers but, for the most part, they use them without sufficient adult support. As a result, the children do not acquire the basic skills that would enable them to operate the programs available. In scientific work, the children are provided with opportunities to observe changes in materials, for example, how a jelly dissolves in hot water. They understand that when a substance is dissolved in water it changes its form and can no longer be seen separately from the water. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was unsatisfactory because the methods used were inappropriate and the children had too few opportunities to take part in the lesson and to learn by experimenting and discovering for themselves.

### **Physical development**

77 Very little evidence was available in this area of learning and insufficient to form a judgement on the quality of teaching. Nonetheless, the available evidence suggests that standards and achievement are satisfactory overall. The children achieve a satisfactory degree of manual dexterity. They use an appropriate range of small tools and equipment, such as glue spreaders, scissors and paintbrushes, with control. The children have a weekly lesson in the hall where they can move around freely, control and co-ordinate their bodies when moving and have the opportunity to balance and climb on apparatus. However, there are no other planned opportunities for this aspect of their

physical development as the school does not have suitable provision; there is no separate enclosed area for learning in the outdoor environment and no suitable large equipment or wheeled toys. Too little time is allocated to this area of learning.

### **Creative development**

78 Standards and achievement are satisfactory, as is the overall quality of teaching. Children have opportunities to undertake a suitable range of art and design activities, such as painting, collage and pattern making, and to engage in imaginative play in which they take on different roles. They enjoy experimenting with materials and different media. For instance they were excited by experimenting with mixing powder paints and water and discovering how combining two colours changed them. They tried hard to mix the colours they wanted to match natural colours. They delighted in exploring the texture of whipped up soap flakes. Children do not have sufficiently frequent opportunities for some aspects of this area of learning. For example, although role play and story making activities are available daily, painting is timetabled only once a week. Children gain most from their creative activities when adults work with them. This was clearly seen when they worked with a parent helper investigating the properties of paint mixed with soap flakes. The adult effectively promoted the development of their vocabulary and their ability to describe what they observed.

### **ENGLISH**

79 By the time they leave the school, pupils attain standards that are in line with the national average. The standards in the present Year 6 broadly reflect those achieved in the 2000 National Curriculum tests (SATs), which were above the average for similar schools. Standards are rising and pupils throughout the school are achieving well because they are taught well and consequently learn at a good rate. Standards have improved since the last inspection. In 1997 the standards achieved in the SATs by the eleven-year-olds were well below average. Since then standards have risen faster at St Bridget's than nationally so pupils' attainment has caught up to national standards. This is the result of good teaching especially in Key Stage 1, the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, good support for the slower learners and recent improvement in the leadership and management of the subject in Key Stage 2.

80 Standards in speaking and listening are high in both key stages. This is because, throughout the school, high priority is given to encouraging pupils to describe and explain what they are doing in small groups and to the whole class. Pupils are expected to listen and they do. In Key Stage 1, when given the opportunity, pupils retell familiar stories to the class. A typical example was the Year 1 pupils who told the story of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" clearly and confidently using a visual record of the key points of the plot as a prompt. Pupils in this class also benefit from recording themselves retelling stories and sharing this with others. Year 2 pupils answered questions as they sat in the 'hot seat' during a lesson on questions. Pupils in Key Stage 2 speak articulately about their likes and dislikes in reading as well as talking confidently about the lifestyles of coal mining families. Throughout the school pupils concentrate and listen attentively in lessons.

81 By seven years of age, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain high standards in reading and they have developed a range of strategies for working out unfamiliar words. The teaching of phonic skills is given a high priority throughout the school in order to help improve spelling and reading skills. These skills are particularly well taught in Key Stage 1, where teachers make very effective use of stories, rather than worksheets, to teach basic skills. As a result, pupils learn to apply these skills in their reading. They also make good use of the picture clues in story books to help them make sense of what they are reading. They readily reread sentences which did not make sense, sometimes using the context or sounding out the different parts of unfamiliar words. All through the school pupils follow a structured reading scheme which is designed to ensure progression in their acquisition of reading skills. They also have group reading books to read in lessons. These are often good quality children's novels. The older pupils enjoy group reading but are much less motivated by the

reading scheme books, particularly the Year 6 boys. This reflects the results of the 2000 Key Stage 2 SATs in which girls outperformed boys. The impact of this is seen in some careless reading and pupils not reading enough to achieve as well as they could. Staff plan few occasions to enthuse pupils for reading by celebrating authors or to promoting reading all through the school.

82 Raising standards in writing and spelling has been a priority for the school in the past year. Appropriate action has been taken and this is now having an effect. For example, last year no Year 2 pupils reached National Curriculum Level 3 in the SATs but this year the higher attainers are working at this level. Standards of spelling are good overall in Key Stage 1. However, the effects of the previous weakness in this aspect of writing persist at the top of the school and spelling standards are not yet high enough in Year 6. Pupils all have targets for improving their writing and this approach is beginning to have an effect in improving standards. Pupils use adventurous language in an appropriately wide range of writing tasks and they know and use the punctuation expected for their age; the higher attainers' punctuation is generally good.

83 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, often basing them on high quality children's books in conjunction with a commercially produced programme of work. They match work well to the different levels of pupils' attainment in their classes so that pupils of all abilities make progress in their learning. This good match of work to pupils' learning needs is underpinned effectively by the extensive systems for assessing pupils' attainment and keeping records of their progress. Teachers are enthusiastic and have a good knowledge of the subject and of the National Literacy Strategy and these strengths contribute to pupils' good learning. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously and teachers often make helpful comments so that pupils can learn from their mistakes and know what to do to improve. However, marking does not make much reference to whether pupils have reached the learning targets that have been set for them and are indicated on the covers of their writing books.

84 Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. Their individual education plans identify targets for improvement and generally they are checked regularly as they make progress towards meeting the targets. Pupils complete tests at the end of each year in Key Stage 2 and the results are analysed in detail in order to identify those pupils who, with a little extra support, are likely to achieve further. This is effectively helping to promote good achievement throughout the school.

85 The subject is well led and managed. The subject leaders have checked the quality of teaching in lessons and provided staff with written feedback. Lesson plans are checked against the requirements of the National Curriculum Programme of Study. Additional resources, both staffing and extra reading materials are helping to improve standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

86 The standards pupils attain, by the time they leave the school at eleven years of age, are below the national average but in line with the average attained by pupils in similar schools and therefore acceptable. An average proportion of pupils attain the level expected for their age but few exceed it. Nevertheless, taken overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The vast majority learn at a satisfactory rate in response to teaching that is of a satisfactory quality overall. The five to seven-year-olds in Key Stage 1 generally make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and the slower learners achieve well. The faster learners do not do as well as they could.

87 The seven-year-olds are attaining broadly average standards. The vast majority of Year 2 pupils, at the end of Key Stage 1, are attaining the level expected for their age (National Curriculum Level 2) in number and algebra, shape space and measures, and data handling and most are confident in their knowledge and understanding of the work. Pupils with special educational needs and the slower learners keep up well. For example, they have a sound understanding of tens and units and add and subtract one and two-digit numbers accurately. The faster learners, close to a quarter of the



class, cover the same work as the others and undertake some additional work pitched at a higher level. However, this is not sufficient for them to achieve as well as they could; they have not yet attained National Curriculum Level 3. Taken over the last five years, the Key Stage 1 SATs results have largely kept pace with the national rate of improvement.

88 The Key Stage 2 SATs results over the same period have been more erratic. Nevertheless, taken overall, they have kept pace with the national rate of improvement and since 1997, the year of the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory improvement in standards. However, this has been from a very low base and has not been sufficient to bring standards up to the national average.

89 Standards in Year 6 are similar to those indicated by the 2000 SATs results. As in Year 2, most pupils are working at the level expected for their age (National Curriculum Level 4) in most aspects of the mathematics curriculum. The faster learners undertake some additional work at a higher level but not sufficient for them to confidently attain National Curriculum Level 5. Most of the Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of number and algebra. For example, they understand that the position of each digit in a number determines its value and they use this knowledge in appropriate calculations, including long multiplication. They calculate percentages accurately and they are beginning to understand algebra at an appropriate level. For instance they undertake calculations, such as,  $30 + 30 + r + r = 180$  therefore “ $r$ ” = 60. These pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of shapes. They recognise reflective symmetry and identify lines of symmetry and they know the names and properties of several quadrilateral shapes.

90 Throughout the school, pupils’ ability to use and apply mathematics lags behind their attainment in other aspects of the subject. The subject leaders are aware of this shortcoming and several teachers are now doing more “problems” with their classes. These are generally linked to number and algebra. The school has yet to plan systematically for the provision of suitable opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics across all aspects of the mathematics curriculum and in other subjects.

91 The use of information and communication technology in mathematics is planned effectively. Pupils use computers to present data in several subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

92 The quality of teaching and pupils’ learning is satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 1, teaching is good. In this key stage teachers plan well so that lessons move gradually to harder work and pupils build their understanding of new work steadily. In the most effective lessons teachers are very clear what they expect the pupils to learn and share these “learning objectives” with them. They question pupils well and clear up misunderstandings. In a Year 2 lesson on multiplication “the penny dropped” for several pupils as a result of good probing questions and further explanation from the teacher. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and they pitch work at a demanding level for most. They use support staff and other adults well to help pupils and to keep them concentrating and working industriously. This means pupils get plenty of practice that builds up their confidence and they all keep up.

93 Teaching is of satisfactory quality in Key Stage 2. Several of the lessons seen were taught well. The teachers are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy effectively, often showing good subject knowledge and helping pupils develop efficient methods for mental calculation. They give good attention to mathematical vocabulary and use it precisely and accurately themselves. However, examination of pupils’ books shows that, in some classes, teachers depend rather too much on worksheets and textbooks and there is sometimes too little distinction between the work set for faster and slower learners. This contributes to the fact that the faster learners do not achieve as well as they could. Teachers in this key stage sometimes fail to take advantage of opportunities to check how well pupils understand their work. Equally, when they do check learning during lessons this is not balanced by also moving pupils’ learning on. Sometimes they use methods that do not keep all pupils fully involved in full class teaching session.

94 The quality of teachers' marking and the setting of targets for pupils' learning vary considerably. The best marking gives pupils clear pointers about how to improve. However, often, although teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and write encouraging comments, they give pupils little useful feedback. Occasionally, marking is careless and incorrect answers are ticked. In some classes, pupils are given clear and specific targets for the next steps in their learning. They know them and are well motivated to achieve them. However, in other classes, targets are not set regularly and this potentially valuable approach is not used effectively.

95 Teachers throughout the school have yet to find ways of ensuring that the faster learners make the accelerated progress of which they are capable. At present, although these pupils are set some challenging work, in several classes they spend a considerable amount of each mathematics lesson working below their capacity.

96 The school has shown a good degree of flexibility in meeting the needs of pupils with significant learning difficulties. These pupils are working at the right level for them and being enabled to achieve success so they keep a positive attitude to learning.

97 The leadership and management of mathematics are good. The responsible teachers have guided their colleagues effectively in the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and this is having a positive effect on standards. They have observed colleagues teaching and given them useful feedback and pointers for improvement. They have a sound idea of where improvements are still needed and plans for the subject's future development. They have looked at pupils' SATs papers to identify common weaknesses but are not aware of all the issues raised by the thorough analysis of test results commissioned by the school.

98 At the time of the last inspection there were barely adequate resources for practical work. This weakness has been remedied and there are now sufficient resources for teaching and learning in all aspects of the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

99 Pupils at the top of the school are now attaining average standards in all aspects of the subjects (scientific enquiry, life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes). This is an improvement on the results achieved in the Key Stage 2 SATs in 2000, when pupils' standards were well below the national average and below the average achieved by pupils in similar schools. Furthermore, standards are now higher than in 1997, the year of the last inspection, when pupils' Key Stage 2 SATs results were well below the national average.

100 Pupils in Year 2 are also attaining the standard expected for their age.

101 There are several reasons for the improvement which reflects rising standards throughout the school and means that pupils are now achieving the standards they should and are making satisfactory progress in their learning:

- the whole-school plan of work has been reviewed and, particularly in Key Stage 2, teachers are supported by using the nationally recommended programmes of work;
- a set of commercially produced textbooks and associated materials, including those for checking up on pupils' learning, has been purchased and has been used throughout the school for around eighteen months. This is providing a structure to the work and effectively ensures that pupils build systematically on what they have previously learned;
- teachers are paying more attention to teaching pupils the skills they need for scientific enquiry, for example, to undertake experiments that are fair tests and to draw relevant conclusions from their findings.

102 The Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of the nature of scientific ideas and talk about their work, explaining the results of their experiments at an appropriate level. For example, they confidently described the experiments they had undertaken to find out about plants, materials, forces and reflections. They explained how to make simple electrical circuits and how shadows are formed. The slower learners have covered the same work as the rest of the class but are less confident in their understanding of it. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning and achieve well; for the most part they keep up with the class.

103 The Key Stage 2 SATs results were poor on two counts. Firstly, a smaller proportion of pupils attained the level expected for their age (National Curriculum Level 4) than in most similar schools and very few pupils exceeded the expected standard.

104 Most of the pupils in the present Year 6 are working at the expected level. A significant minority have good knowledge and understanding of the work they have covered and are set to achieve a higher level. The Year 6 pupils have good knowledge and understanding about plant reproduction. They understand the processes of seed dispersal and pollination. They have a satisfactory understanding of physical forces. For instance, they have made an electro-magnet and know how it works. These pupils' experimental skills are satisfactory. They understand what makes a scientific test fair and they can devise appropriate experiments to test out hypotheses. They write up their experiments in a structured way and draw sensible conclusions from them.

105 The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and some good teaching was observed. In the most effective lessons, teachers used demonstrations and practical activities to help pupils understand new scientific ideas and therefore make good progress in their learning. For instance, in Year 4 pupils made "walkie-talkies" from string and plastic cups and experimented with them to learn about how sound travels. As a result, they understood about sound vibrating along a taut piece of string. In effective lessons, the teachers use questions well to lead pupils into thinking more deeply about what they observe, such as why there are no shadows when the sun is not out and why shadows change according to the distance of an object from a light source. They make good use of adult helpers to support pupils in practical activities so they work at a good pace. They enthuse pupils for learning so they want to learn and they work enthusiastically. Teachers are usually clear what they want pupils to learn in each lesson but, at times, they are over-reliant on the commercial materials. This sometimes limits the more able pupils as the extension activities they undertake do not take them on as far as they could. The marking of pupils' work is not as effective as it could be. It does little to tell pupils how well they are doing or to set targets for the next steps in their learning; this is most noticeable in Key Stage 2.

106 Although teachers cover all the required work, the allocation of time to the subject is less than in most primary schools. This means that pupils have limited opportunities to consolidate their learning by thorough coverage and regular revision.

107 The leadership and management of the subject are good and the action taken in the last two years to improve the curriculum and the standards pupils achieve is now bearing fruit. The subject leader provides useful support and advice to colleagues and a programme of staff training is in hand.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108 Taken overall, the standard of the work seen was above average in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, with strengths in observational work. Standards are higher than reported at the last inspection. Pupils benefit from much good teaching and they learn at a good rate. Their achievement is good, because they work hard and teachers often have high expectations for pupils' work.

109 Pupils in Key Stage 1 acquire a satisfactory knowledge of colour. They have mixed several shades of blue to produce paintings stimulated by Picasso's work in his blue period. They explain clearly how paler shades are made by adding white and darker shades by adding black. In this key

stage pupils pay very good attention to detail in their observational drawings and, as a result, produce good quality work.

110 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils identify key features of the style of artists they have studied. For instance, the Year 6 pupils know that Picasso's representations of the human form are distorted and in their own derivative work they capture this essential characteristic of his work well. They have a good awareness of the impact of colour and discuss this at an appropriate level for their age when comparing two contrasting paintings. They express considered views on their own work and that of famous artists, for instance, explaining what they like about Lowry's paintings. These pupils' observational drawings of musical instruments show good progression in drawing and observational skills from the standards in Key Stage 1. A key feature of work by Year 6 is pupils' ability to develop work from a stimulus, as when they studied pattern and created line drawings based on the designs on fabric samples. Some of the higher attainers' work is of a very high standard.

111 Pupils develop an awareness of the art of non-European cultures through work undertaken in conjunction with other subjects. For example, they study Islamic design and aboriginal art as part of geography.

112 The quality of teaching seen was good overall. Teachers' expectations for pupils' work are closely linked to their own knowledge of the subject. For example, in Year 6, the teacher's good subject knowledge enabled her to draw a personal response and good quality work from pupils by using a carefully selected range of examples of one artist's work.

113 Throughout the school, teachers help pupils to develop good observational skills. This was done particularly successfully in a very good Year 2 lesson in which pupils used charcoal to produce portraits of their classmates. The teacher had high expectations of what they could achieve. She used questions well to lead pupils on in their knowledge and understanding of light and shade and how to use tone to show contrast. As a result, pupils recognised, for example, that fringes create shadows on the forehead and, in their work, they made great efforts to accurately reproduce what they observed. They used a range of tones in their work and, in places, smudged the charcoal to achieve the effects they wanted. As a result of very effective direct teaching and the opportunity to experiment, they developed a good understanding of the potential of this medium.

114 For the most part, teachers give good attention to teaching pupils about important artistic elements, such as line, shape and texture in two and three-dimensional work. However, they do not always make the most of opportunities for pupils to work creatively and make a personal response; some of the work on display around the school lacks creativity, sensitivity and dynamism. Nevertheless, when the subject is taught well, these features are present because teachers use artists' and crafts peoples' work effectively as a stimulus for pupils' own work.

115 The leadership and management of art and design are good. The subject leader has provided useful guidance to teachers that helps non-specialists teach the subject effectively, giving appropriate emphasis to artistic elements. This has a positive effect on the quality of teaching and the standards pupils attain. Work throughout the school is checked sufficiently. Nevertheless, there is scope to improve provision in the subject;

- by ensuring teachers are fully aware of the work pupils have already done so time is not lost going over ground again;
- by providing more opportunities for pupils to work creatively;
- by keeping a closer check on standards and on each pupil's rate of progress;
- by ensuring that pupils study work by a wider range of famous artists.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

116 It was possible to see only one lesson. Additional evidence was obtained from scrutiny of pupils' previous work, including that on display around the school and in photographic records, examination of teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils.

117 Pupils attain the standards expected for their age by the end of each key stage and this represents satisfactory achievement.

118 Teaching in the lesson seen was of a satisfactory quality and pupils' achievement suggests that this is generally the case and that they make gains in their learning at a satisfactory rate. Teachers give suitable emphasis to all aspects of the subject.

119 Throughout the school, pupils undertake suitable design and make projects in which they make products for specific purposes and develop the skills necessary to make a range of products to a satisfactory standard. They cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum for design and technology and, as they move up the school, they use an increasing range of appropriate tools and materials. For example, in Year 1, they make finger puppets to illustrate their stories and in Year 2 make various foods and they develop their skills at cutting and joining different materials when they make models of buildings as part of their work on Africa.

120 Pupils learn about the designing process and the importance of learning from evaluating their finished products as well as how to make things. In the lesson observed in Year 3 several pupils adapted their designs for salt dough wall hangings when they hit snags during the making process. The Year 6 pupils have made models of various forms of transport used in Pakistan. They produced clearly labelled plans and followed them when making the models. However, their plans were not to scale. They comment on their designs and products, making sensible suggestions as to how they might be improved. Pupils understand that both the fitness of a product for its intended function and its finished appearance are important. The Year 3 pupils used a range of simple tools, such as serrated plastic knives to enhance the appearance of their wall hangings by decorating the surfaces.

121 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall, though design and technology has not been given high priority in recent years. The subject leader maintains an adequate overview of work covered throughout the school, by checking teachers' planning, and ensures there are sufficient resources for teaching and learning. However, she does not have a detailed knowledge of the standards pupils achieve, their rate of progress or the quality of teaching, on which to base plans for future development of the subject. It is hoped to obtain such information from observing lessons and then determining a programme of staff training but plans for this are not part of the whole-school development plan.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

122 It was possible to see only one lesson. Nevertheless, the evidence available from examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils was sufficient to form valid judgements on the standards pupils attain and the quality of teaching and learning.

123 Standards are average with most pupils achieving what is expected for their age by the end of each key stage. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning; teaching is of a satisfactory quality and they are taught the right things. Consequently the pupils are achieving what they should. However, since there is often little difference in the level of demand in the work set for more and less able pupils, the standards attained are a better achievement for the less able than for the more able. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

124 The Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge about places and understanding of the differences between contrasting localities. They are familiar with the outline of the British Isles and they know they live in England. They have learned about Africa and know its climate is hotter than that in Britain and there are areas of rainforest and desert in the continent. They have a satisfactory understanding of the differences between town and village life. These pupils' mapping skills are developing soundly. They are beginning to use simple keys to identify different physical features on a map of Africa, such as mountains and forests and they draw simple plans.

125 Throughout the school, pupils develop their understanding of places effectively by studying other countries and the local area. They participate in a good range of educational visits in the local area, including some in the Lake District National Park and they undertake suitable fieldwork.

126 The Year 6 pupils have studied Pakistan. They know the location of the Indus valley and have a sound knowledge of the features of a river system, such as tributary, meander and delta. They know about similarities between life in Pakistan and Britain, for example, in sporting activities, and they compare life in a Punjabi village with that in Egremont. They have a satisfactory awareness of the differences in lifestyles between different groups of people in Pakistan.

127 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and this enables pupils to gain ground at a satisfactory rate. Teachers have sufficient knowledge of the subject to teach it at the right level and help pupils to understand the work. Some aspects of the work are taught well. For example, making a three-dimensional hill from papier mache has helped pupils in Year 4 to develop a good understanding of how contour lines on Ordnance Survey maps represent the height of land. Pupils' understanding of human geography also develops well. They learn to consider the needs of inhabitants and the effect of physical features on their lives. For instance, some pupils in Key Stage 2 have studied life in various Irish towns and villages. They recognise that although there are several attractions at Avoca (Ballykissangel) there are shortcomings in the services for local people.

128 The whole-school plans for work, though adequate, are somewhat fragmented and curricular planning is in a state of transition. Some teachers are following nationally recommended programmes of work and the work in their classes has a clear geographical basis. In others geography is "tagged on" to topics and the focus on geographical knowledge and skills is less strong. The effect of this was seen in a lesson in Year 1. The class topic was minibeads and the lesson was about minibeads that live in hot countries. The pupils undertook some appropriate research with adult support but opportunities were missed to help them learn more about the physical features of the hot countries, to learn their names and to recognise them on a world map.

129 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. Nonetheless, the subject has not been given a high priority in recent years. Informal systems ensure that the subject is taught satisfactorily and pupils learn what they should at an appropriate rate. However, there are no systematic arrangements to check pupils' learning and, although the subject leader recognises the need to take a lead in curricular planning, there are no plans laid to ensure this will happen. Decisions about what resources are purchased to support teaching and learning are determined by class teachers' requests rather than an analysis of need by the subject leader. This is an inherently flawed system and has led to some gaps in resources, which, taken overall, are only just adequate. There are few reference books; the school is dependent on borrowing books from the local authority's library service. There are few up to date atlases and insufficient maps for pupils' use.

## **HISTORY**

130 Standards in history are above average in Key Stage 1 and average in Key Stage 2. The better standards, in relation to the pupils' age, in Key Stage 1 are the result of some good teaching which enables pupils to achieve well. In Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, though standards dip in Year 5 because the work set is too easy for the pupils. The local area is used well,

notably to help pupils learn about the history of the mining industry. Pupils are encouraged to apply their literacy skills in the subject.

131 Teaching is good in Years 2 and 3. For example, pupils were helped to develop a sense of chronology as they linked their understanding of life in the local mining communities with national events and recorded this on a time line. Teachers use artefacts effectively to help pupils understand what life was like long ago. Year 2 pupils learned that lights in the past were very different to lights today. Teachers plan work to follow the nationally recommended scheme of work. This is effective in ensuring that pupils' learning builds up progressively. Pupils are encouraged to use their literacy and information and communication skills. For instance, Year 4 pupils have developed their research skills using the Internet in their study of the Ancient Egyptians. Pace in lessons is good and pupils are very interested in the artefacts used to help develop knowledge and understanding of life in the past.

132 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. It is intended to give priority to achieving more consistency in teachers' planning and their checking of pupils' work next term.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

133 Pupils attain broadly average standards by the end of each key stage. They are working at the level expected for their age in most aspects of the subject and they gain ground at a satisfactory rate. This represents satisfactory achievement as pupils build steadily on what they have already learned. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

134 The Year 2 pupils have satisfactory independent skills, control of the mouse and familiarity with the computer keyboard for their age. They use computers in work in other subjects, such as mathematics, and move confidently and independently through familiar programs by clicking on icons on the screen.

135 The Year 6 pupils have satisfactory computing skills and they use computers with a fair degree of independence for their age. They understand that computers can only process information put into them, so accurate results depend on accurate input. These pupils have satisfactory word processing and presentational skills. They select the size and style of print (font) to use, depending on the purpose of their work. For example, they produced attractive and eye-catching advertisements for climbing boys in history. They combine graphics from one program and text from another using the "clipboard" facility. They particularly enjoy using graphics programs and have produced some good quality work. They confidently write directly on the computer screen, sometimes working from rough notes. They edit their work on screen but lack knowledge of efficient, timesaving techniques, for instance, how to "cut and paste".

136 Pupils use computers competently to find things out. For instance, they use CD-ROMs and the Internet when undertaking historical research. They have sufficient experience of communicating by e-mail but they struggle to come up with suggestions of when ordinary mail might be more appropriate and the lower attainers are not aware that e-mail uses telephone lines.

137 Pupils undertake work that covers the full requirements of the National Curriculum. However, there are some shortcomings in the school's provision, particularly in Key Stage 2. The older pupils' experience of control technology is limited because there are insufficient resources in school; much of this work is undertaken during residential educational visits. In Key Stage 2 all the computers are housed in a corridor used as a "computer suite" and pupils work on them in small groups with non-teaching staff and voluntary helpers. This means pupils do not have the opportunities they should to decide for themselves when it is appropriate to use information and communication technology in their work. Teachers plan the use of information and communication technology in other subjects but still miss opportunities in mathematics and science, particularly for applying pupils' data handling skills.

138 It is not possible to form an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. This is because the school's arrangements, particularly in Key Stage 2, mean that much of the work is undertaken under the supervision of non-teaching staff and parents, who are well-briefed by the teachers. However, the standards achieved show that teaching is effective and it enables pupils to develop the skills they should and make steady gains in knowledge and understanding of the subject.

139 There have recently been some good developments in the leadership and management of the subject. A structured programme of work, supported by commercially produced materials, has been introduced. This supports non-specialist teachers effectively and contributes to ensuring a satisfactory balance in the work pupils undertake. Systematic procedures have been introduced for assessing pupils' rate of progress and keeping a record of the work they cover but they are not fully "up and running". Nevertheless they have the potential to provide valuable tools for checking how well pupils are getting on and guiding the planning of the next steps in their learning.

## **MUSIC**

140 Pupils reach average standards by seven and eleven years of age. This represents satisfactory achievement. In the lessons seen pupils made good progress in their learning in response to good teaching.

141 Pupils in Key Stage 1 varied the speed at which they played percussion instruments and created a short composition which they played to the class. In Key Stage 2 pupils build effectively on what they have already learned. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils responded to a piece of classical music, saying how they felt when they listened to it. They learned about how sounds are arranged to achieve particular effects. Pupils in this key stage perform their own musical compositions tunefully and with a sense of rhythm.

142 The quality of teaching and learning observed was good. For instance, teachers used probing questions well to encourage pupils to clarify and express their responses to music. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and the pupils rise to them. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrate into lessons and they achieve as well as their classmates.

143 The quality of provision for music is enhanced by a good range of instrumental tuition provided by the local authority's specialist staff. Pupils also have opportunities to sing in two school choirs and to take part in musical performances. These activities make a valuable contribution to the attainment of those pupils who take them up. Pupils also learn about music from different cultures. For instance, they have participated in workshops to learn about African music.

144 The leadership and management of the subject are good. Full coverage of the National Curriculum requirements is ensured as the school uses a commercial whole-school plan of work. Teachers' planning is checked and informal observations of lessons have been undertaken. The subject leader has provided support to non-specialist colleagues. The subject is well resourced.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

145 Pupils achieve average standards. In the lessons seen, which were in dance and games, pupils were working at levels that were in line with the expectations for their age. All pupils, including the Reception class children, have swimming lessons and, by the time they leave the school, pupils successfully swim 25 metres. Pupils undertake a range of work that covers all the National Curriculum requirements but scant attention is given to some aspects. This is a contributory factor to standards being less high than reported at the last inspection.

146 The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The teaching seen in Years 1 and 3 was particularly effective and, as a result, pupils made good progress in their learning in these lessons. For example, the Year 1 pupils made rapid progress in developing their throwing and



catching skills, as they eagerly co-operated with each other in pairs. In the games lessons seen, teachers generally provided an appropriate period for warming up and skills teaching, followed by games in which pupils had suitable opportunities to apply the skills they had learned. Pupils enjoy the subject. Links with other subjects are made. For instance, in Year 5 pupils learned to dance in the Tudor manner as an extension of a history topic.

147 Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader is involved in a county-wide scheme to develop the role of the physical education co-ordinator. Sound plans are in place to promote the subject, including by having more visiting specialists working with staff and pupils. Where this has happened in the past, for example, for rugby coaching the pupils have been very appreciative and enjoyed the games played.