

## INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Boston

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120615

Headteacher: Mrs Kirstyn Doherty

Reporting inspector: John Messer  
15477

Dates of inspection: 17-20 September 2001

Inspection number: 192964

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Boston St Mary's RC Primary School Ashlawn Drive Boston Lincolnshire
Postcode:	PE21 9PX
Telephone number:	01205 362092
Fax number:	01205 352725
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jenny Hunter
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Registered inspector	Science Art and design French Design and technology Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9970	John Acaster	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20230	Jennifer Clayphan	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics English as an additional language Information and communication technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

23475	Karen Tomkins	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education Equal Opportunities	
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Herringston Barn  
Herringston  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT2 9PU

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This Roman Catholic primary school has 196 pupils on roll and is smaller than most other primary schools, though significantly larger than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are taught in seven classes. Children are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls. There is an almost equal number of boys and girls. This is the only Catholic primary school in the town and so pupils come from a wide area around Boston. A significant proportion of pupils, around 14 per cent, enter and leave the school part-way through the primary phase. Most pupils are from white English speaking backgrounds though around 8 per cent are from ethnic minority families. Seven pupils speak English as an additional language and several are at an early stage of English language acquisition. One pupil has a statement of special educational need and a further 34 pupils are entered on the school's register of special educational needs. This is broadly in line with the national average. Around eleven per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is below average. On entry to the school the children's attainment is slightly below that which is typical of four-year-olds and they are at widely varying stages of development.

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

This is an effective school with many strengths but also with areas for development. The leadership and management of the school are good and significant advances have been made since the appointment of the current headteacher two years ago but inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have not been resolved. Teaching overall is satisfactory. However an eighth of the teaching in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds is unsatisfactory. Standards are at least satisfactory in all subjects and by the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards in reading, mathematics and science that exceed national expectations of eleven-year-olds. The school provides good value for money. The school is well placed make further improvements.

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

- The strong and knowledgeable leadership of the headteacher has been effective in raising standards and has placed the school in a good position to forge ahead.
- Pupils enjoy reading and attain high standards; standards in mathematics are above average and, by the end of Year 6, standards in science are above average.
- Finances are used efficiently to improve the quality of education for pupils.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good and the behaviour of pupils is very good and these factors have a positive impact on learning.
- Very good links are made with the community and partner institutions and this contributes to pupils' personal development and helps to promote a secure learning environment.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is good and parents are particularly impressed by the high levels of care that the school provides for all pupils.

### What could be improved

- Standards in writing are not as high as they should be because skills are not taught systematically.
- There is an eighth of unsatisfactory teaching in the classes for seven to eleven-year olds mainly because work is not adjusted to meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- In some classrooms, the unsatisfactory monitoring of pupils' progress in lessons leads to groups and individuals making insufficient progress.
- The curriculum for the foundation stage is not planned effectively and national guidance has not been fully implemented.
- Computers are not used enough in lessons to support teaching and learning.
- When pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra learning support, they regularly miss being taught particular aspects of the National Curriculum.

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

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

Since the school was last inspected in March 1997 improvement has been good. The quality of teaching has improved and there is now a much smaller proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Across the school standards in design and technology have improved. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards in science that are now higher than they were. The quality of leadership has improved and the roles of subject co-ordinators have been further developed. Financial planning is now good and accommodation has been improved. A large number of new policies have been agreed and these help to promote clearer educational direction. Systematic teaching plans and methodical assessment procedures to record pupils' progress have recently been introduced, and the school now complies with statutory requirements for teaching each subject of the National Curriculum. The school development plan has been refined and is now an effective management tool. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is better than it was and there is now better provision for higher attaining pupils. The headteacher has initiated significant improvements over the past two years though there are still shortcomings in teaching mainly because tasks are not always well matched to pupils' learning needs. Attendance has improved.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A	D	D	well above average      A above average            B Average                      C below average              D well below average        E
mathematics	B	A	B	B	
science	A	A	D	D	

No comparable data for 2001 is available as yet but, this year, the school's National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds improved significantly in English, mathematics and science and were significantly better than national averages. The school set reasonably challenging targets of 87 per cent for the proportion of pupils expected to attain at least the national target of Level 4 in English and mathematics in 2001. There was a particularly high proportion of more able pupils in the group that took the tests in 2001 and the school exceeded its targets. Inspection findings show that the standards



currently attained by eleven-year-olds are average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Standards in all other subjects are average except in geography and music where there was insufficient evidence upon which to make judgements. Pupils' achievement from Year 3 to the end of Year 6 is satisfactory. From 1996 there was an improving trend in English until 2000 when results declined though this year they recovered to the highest levels the school has yet achieved. In mathematics and science the trends have been more erratic though 1999 and 2001 were years when the school's performance was significantly better than national averages.

In the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2001, the proportion of pupils who attained the national target of Level 2 exceeded national averages in reading, writing and mathematics though standards are still not sufficiently high in writing. Inspection findings show that pupils' achieve well in reading and mathematics and at least satisfactorily in other subjects. By the age of seven, pupils attain standards that are at least average in all subjects and in reading and mathematics standards are above average.

Children's achievement in the reception class is satisfactory and, by the end of the foundation stage, most children attain the early learning goals in the areas of learning specified in national guidance and higher attaining children exceed them.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to learn. They have very positive attitudes to the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good in and around the school and this has a positive impact on their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils mix well together and take the responsibilities given to them seriously.
Attendance	Attendance is good and pupils enjoy coming to school.

Pupils work and play happily together in a spirit of harmony. They are sensitive to each other's feelings and older pupils enjoy helping the younger ones.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	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.*

Although in the lessons seen half the teaching was good and occasionally very good, the teaching in one lesson in ten was unsatisfactory and in one lesson it was poor. Overall teaching is judged to be satisfactory and as a result most pupils achieve satisfactorily. Teaching is satisfactory in the foundation stage. In Years 1 and 2 most of the teaching is good and occasionally it is very good and pupils achieve well. In the classes for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6, whilst nearly half of the teaching is good and occasionally very good, an eighth is unsatisfactory and as a result pupils' achievement is more erratic. A particular strength of the teaching is that basic skills of reading, spelling and simple number work are soundly taught and the management of pupils is good. The teaching of literacy is sound and in numeracy it is good. In English teaching is inconsistent; nearly a half is good but in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds a third of teaching is unsatisfactory. In mathematics teaching is good though there is a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Where teaching is unsatisfactory it is mainly

because tasks are not adjusted to the particular needs of pupils. This means that groups of differing ability are not always appropriately challenged; for some the work is too hard and for others too easy. Teachers frequently do not assess pupils' attainment and progress during the course of lessons to check on levels of understanding and adjust their teaching accordingly. Computers are not used enough in lessons to support learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are taught well and make good progress. Effective booster classes are provided for pupils who need specific help to attain the standards of which they are thought capable. The most able pupils in the older age groups are withdrawn on occasion for special help to help them to attain standards that are appropriately high.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory though the curriculum for the youngest children is not planned according to national guidance.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good support is provided and pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision is made and pupils make good progress in developing their English speaking skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall good provision is made. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good and for cultural development it is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to understand values of honesty and they have a well-developed understanding of justice and fair play.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Particularly high levels of care are provided. The school has developed good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress.

The school fosters a close partnership with parents who are extremely appreciative of the support provided for their children. The school ensures that the National Curriculum is taught according to statutory requirements but in lessons work is not always adjusted to meet the learning needs of all pupils and therefore they do not all have equal opportunities to make the progress that they should. There is a good range of activities outside lessons that make a good contribution to pupils' learning opportunities. The part-time extra teachers, the visiting specialist teachers and the relatively large number of classroom assistants help to provide good learning support for all pupils.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides strong and able leadership. The roles of other key staff are clearly defined but many subject co-ordinators have not been in post for long enough to have made a major impact on improving standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body has been successful in fulfilling most of its statutory responsibilities. There are some minor omissions in the information that they are required to provide for parents.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school analyses its performance closely and takes action to make improvements. There is scope for further development in the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Money is used wisely to improve educational provision and the governing body ensures that the principles of best value are applied to spending decisions.

The headteacher has been successful in welding the staff together as an effective team committed to improving standards. An adequate number of trained teaching staff are employed and there is a good number of support staff to assist pupils in their learning. Accommodation is adequate though the library area, which doubles as a computer suite, is not easily accessible for research but there are plans to build a new library in the near future. There is no outdoor play area designed to improve learning opportunities for the youngest children. The governing body is closely involved in the work of the school and provides good support. The school is led and managed well.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and make good progress and behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and homework is appropriate.</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and to do their best.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• Activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no areas where more than a very small number of parents sought improvements. A small minority of parents do not consider that their children receive the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Parents give strong support and are happy with the education provided for their children. Although the quality of teaching is not always as good as perceived by parents, the inspection team support and share parents' other views. The amount of homework pupils receive is appropriate.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children's attainment on entry to the school is slightly below average. As a result of sound teaching most children attain the learning goals in all the areas of learning described in national guidance by the end of the reception year and higher attaining pupils exceed them. By the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6, pupils attain at least the standards that are typical of seven and eleven-year-olds in most subjects. Across the school pupils attain standards in speaking and listening and reading that are higher than would be expected but the standards attained in writing are not as high as they should be. Pupils make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily in the reception class. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well due to the mostly good teaching they receive. Pupils' achievement is more uneven in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds because teaching is less consistent. Standards are better than they were at the time of the last inspection in design and technology across the school. By the end of Year 2, standards are better than they were in mathematics and by the end of Year 6 better in science. The high standards that pupils attain in reading remain a strength of the school.
2. The National Curriculum test and assessment results for seven-year-olds in 2001 shows that a greater proportion of pupils than average attained at least the national target of Level 2 in reading and writing. In reading a large proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 3 standard. In writing a quarter of pupils failed to attain the standard that is likely to result in satisfactory attainment by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Writing is, then, a relative weakness and inspection findings confirm that this is the case. In mathematics the proportion of pupils who attained Level 2 was the same as nationally but the proportion who attained the higher Level 3 standard was considerably better than the national average. This year's results were significantly better than last year's in mathematics though much the same in reading and writing. The teacher assessments in science indicate that the school's overall performance was above average. Inspection findings largely confirm test results and show that standards are above average in reading and mathematics although in science the scrutiny of work indicated that standards are now broadly average. The difference between test results and inspection findings in science is largely because discussions with pupils and the scrutiny of work shows that there are areas of the curriculum, such as how devices work in different electrical circuits, that are not as securely understood as test results would suggest.
3. The school's performance in the National Curriculum test and assessment for eleven-year-olds in 2001 were much better than in 2000. In 2000 test results declined markedly in English, mathematics and science but improved in 2001 to return to the high levels attained in 1999. When compared with all schools and when compared with similar schools the school's performance was below average in English and science but above average in mathematics. There are as yet no national comparable statistics for 2001. The prior attainment of the groups that take the tests varies from year to year and in 2001 the group of Year 6 pupils comprised a higher proportion of higher attaining pupils than usual. This group did especially well in the tests for seven-year-olds in 1997. It was also the first group to benefit from having a class specifically for Year 6 pupils rather than a mixed Year 5/6 class. Results also improved as a direct result of the school's analysis of the reasons for the poorer results in 2000 and taking effective action. In 2001 the school exceeded its target of 87 per cent for the proportion of pupils expected to attain the national target of Level 4 in English and mathematics. Its targets for 2002 are 90 per cent in English and 97 per cent in mathematics. The target is especially challenging in mathematics though less so in English given the 2001 result of 96 per cent. In 2001, a greater proportion of pupils than nationally attained at least the national target of Level 4 in English. An analysis of the results, however, shows that nearly all pupils attained at least the expected standard in reading whilst a third of pupils failed to attain this standard in writing. Again then writing is a relative weakness and this is confirmed by inspection findings. Nearly all pupils attained the national target in mathematics and science. In mathematics just over a third of pupils attained the higher Level 5 standard whilst in science just over a half of pupils attained this standard. This is

reflected in inspection findings which confirmed that eleven-year-olds exceed national expectations in mathematics and science.

4. By the age of seven pupils have learned to speak with confidence and most express themselves well. Standards in speaking and listening are above average. Pupils have ample opportunities in class to practise their listening skills. Most pupils read for pleasure and several have a good knowledge of children's literature. Most spell accurately but little written work of any length is produced. The quality of many pupils' written work does not meet the expected standard. Standards of handwriting and the presentation of work are satisfactory. Pupils have a sound command of number and can recall simple number facts, such as those associated with multiples of two, five and ten, rapidly. They calculate with increasing confidence and enjoy mathematics. In science they have a good understanding of life and living processes and a sound understanding of the other strands of the subject. They know about parts of the body and the function of the main organs, understand how food relates to health and know what conditions plants need to grow successfully.
5. By the age of eleven pupils read a wide range of texts with appropriate expression and sound understanding. They talk sensibly about the books they have read. Their speaking and listening skills exceed expectations of eleven-year-olds. Most attain standards in reading which are in line with national expectations and a significant minority exceed this standard. Their achievement in writing is satisfactory and a minority write effectively and understand how to choose words carefully to achieve the best effect. By the age of eleven, pupils write in a wide range of forms, including letters, poems, instructions and imaginative stories. Most attain average standards in writing but many do not. They have confidence in their ability to manipulate number and enjoy the challenge of solving problems.
6. Across the school there is appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy but writing skills are not always taught systematically or with sufficient rigour and pupils do not develop satisfactory skills in this area. Pupils use the numeracy skills they develop effectively in other subjects, such as counting the number of paper clips attracted to a magnet and drawing graphs to show relationships in science. Across the school pupils approach scientific investigations logically and work systematically. They have a particularly good understanding of life and living processes. By the age of seven and again by eleven, most pupils attain at least average standards in most subjects. Across the school, standards in mathematics are above average, as they are by the end of Year 6 in science. Standards have at least been maintained and in design and technology, as well as science by the end of Year 6, have improved since the last inspection.
7. Pupils' achievement is mostly in line with what might be expected when their prior attainment is considered and a significant proportion achieve well and attain standards that are higher than would normally be expected. There is increasing recognition of the needs of the more able pupils who generally achieve satisfactorily. They achieve particularly well when they are withdrawn for extra support in, for example, mathematics but their achievement is constrained in classes where they are insufficiently challenged. An analysis of National Curriculum test results over the past three years shows that there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls and inspection findings also show no variations in the attainment or progress of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well as a result of early identification of their needs, effective management of provision for them, and good support by teachers and support staff. The standards attained by most pupils are at least as high as might reasonably be expected in most subjects except in writing where they are not as high as they should be. Overall pupils develop a well rounded range of skills on which to build future learning.

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

8. Pupils have good attitudes towards their school. They like the friendliness of the teachers. They find their work and the assemblies enjoyable. Several remark on the pleasant atmosphere, finding

it much more encouraging and happy than at their previous schools. They name the subjects they enjoy with enthusiasm. Pupils from ethnic minorities and those with English as an additional language are well integrated and have positive attitudes towards learning. Newcomers are warmly welcomed into the school. The various activities and clubs are well supported by all. Pupils miss not having hot dinners and would like additional large play equipment so that the rota for its use, currently necessary, could be avoided.

9. Pupils' behaviour overall is very good. They are willing and frequently polite. These good traits are fostered in the reception class and continue through the school. Most pupils listen attentively, do not shout out, and follow instructions promptly. They co-operate well in pairs or groups, and can be trusted to pursue their work without immediate supervision. They show pride in the work they have done. Playtimes are lively and happy, with pupils often enjoying the play equipment recently provided. School and personal property is respected. Pupils move about the school very sensibly. A few individuals have difficulty in maintaining concentration. This is addressed well by the school and does not impede the progress of the pupils' learning. The school has never had to resort to excluding pupils.
10. Relationships throughout the school are very good, and have a strong impact on pupils' personal development and attitudes to work. Teachers and support staff work very harmoniously together. All have caring relationships with pupils and there are high levels of mutual respect. This helps to produce a purposeful working climate in which everybody endeavours to do their best. Good emphasis has been placed on ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are treated equally and are well integrated. Personal development is good and improving. Pupils throughout the school show responsible attitudes and undertake their jobs seriously. Pupils in Year 6 are all much involved in helping to support the routines of the school and are often pleased to support younger ones. A sitting of the school council showed a spirited exercise in democracy. All present took a committed, vocal, yet ordered part, which made a good contribution to the development of citizenship. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
11. The standard of attendance compares well with the national average, being about one per cent higher. This is an improvement since the last inspection. As at the time of the last inspection, there is virtually no unauthorised absence. Almost all pupils arrive promptly ready to learn, and lessons through the school day usually start on time.

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

12. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Whilst just over half the teaching is good and occasionally very good, teaching in one lesson in ten is unsatisfactory. In one lesson teaching was poor but this was untypical. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection; there is now a much lower proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Most of the teaching for pupils in the foundation stage is satisfactory, over a quarter is good but there is a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is always at least satisfactory and in well over a half of lessons it is good and occasionally very good. In the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds the quality of teaching is good, and occasionally very good, in nearly a half of lessons but it is unsatisfactory in over an eighth. Overall teaching in most subjects across the school is at least satisfactory; in mathematics, history and information and communication technology it is good across the school and it is good in English in Years 1 and 2. Teaching in English is good in nearly a half of lessons but in a third of lessons for the seven to eleven-year-olds it is unsatisfactory. Throughout the school, the teaching of reading is good and pupils attain high standards. Writing is not taught systematically and by the time they leave the school the standards pupils' attain are not as high as they could be. There was insufficient evidence to form judgements about the quality of teaching in geography, music or design and technology.
13. The national literacy and national numeracy strategies have been successfully introduced. The guidance is used well and results in sound teaching of skills in literacy that contributes to good achievement in reading, speaking and listening. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of the

technical terms in language but writing skills are not well developed. The teaching of numeracy from Year 1 to Year 6 is good. Across the school lessons in literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily structured and planning includes clear learning objectives. These objectives are normally shared with pupils at the commencement of lessons and the class review progress towards its targets towards the end of the lesson. This review session helps to consolidate understanding and in most lessons is used by teachers to assess how effective learning has been. Such ongoing assessment is not common to all classes, however. In both literacy and numeracy lessons tasks are not always sufficiently well adjusted to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Teachers do not always evaluate pupils' learning as the lesson progresses to check that what they are teaching is fully understood. This constrains the learning of pupils and restricts achievement.

14. Teachers manage pupils well and ensure that high standards of behaviour are maintained. Teachers are well informed about the needs of pupils from ethnic minorities, several of whom are new arrivals, and use the pupils' own language for greetings in the morning and for registration. A purposeful working atmosphere is generated in most lessons. Teachers have good planning frameworks that help them to know what should be taught to each year group in each half term in each subject. These are used well to inform daily lesson plans but the learning objectives in daily plans are not always sufficiently precise and do not specify exactly what it is intended that different groups of pupils will be learning during the course of each lesson. Teachers are not always sure about pupils' prior learning and sometimes pitch the lesson at inappropriate levels. This results in tasks that are not always well matched to pupils' learning needs. In a minority of lessons, therefore, teachers are not sufficiently clear about the learning needs of particular groups of pupils. As a result they do not plan work that matches those needs and enables the pupils to learn successfully, achieve well and make progress. For example, in one English lesson, lower attaining pupils were given a descriptive writing task that was too challenging and they made little progress despite being supported by a classroom assistant. In another English lesson, the handwriting practice task made very little demand on higher attaining pupils and did not extend their skills.
15. Good teaching was seen in English in Year 5 in a carefully planned lesson on story writing. Whiteboards, felt tipped pens and board wipers were used well to enable pupils to re-arrange text easily. The objectives of the lesson were clearly explained in a measured way and good questioning strategies were used to check on understanding. The pupils were left in no doubt about what was expected of them. They learned how to structure a short story and understood how to consider different sections such as location, the development of features of characters, the main action and how to write dramatic endings. Pupils understood how to link the sections and learnt techniques, such as the use of short sentences to speed up the action. Here a very serious approach to the work in hand was promoted. The end of the lesson came all too soon and one pupil remarked, 'Doesn't time fly when you're enjoying yourself'.
16. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and help to foster effective learning. Basic skills are taught well in Years 1 and 2 though the teaching of writing is still an issue to be addressed throughout the school. Expectations of the quality and quantity of writing that pupils can produce are sometimes too low. Writing skills are not always taught systematically and rigorously to ensure that they are securely learnt. As a result of its analysis of test results, the school has identified writing as an area for development and has instituted a special writing week at the end of each half term to provide extra opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. Particularly good teaching was seen in art and design in Year 1 and in music in Year 5. In these lessons a good variety of activities captured pupils' interest, the pace of the lessons was brisk and teachers had high expectations of the standards pupils could achieve. Here pupils made especially good progress during the lessons.
17. Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning, especially for those pupils who require extra help. They work in close liaison with teachers to plan their work and keep careful records of progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. Support staff have access to pupils' individual education plans, take note of the targets set and follow good learning programmes designed to help pupils to attain their targets. Where support staff are given specific

responsibility to teach a specific group according to a specially devised programme, as in mathematics in Year 3, they rise to the challenge, take control of planning lessons, teaching the programme and recording progress. In such instances their contribution to the quality of teaching and learning is particularly effective. Extra teachers are employed to help both lower attaining pupils as well as higher attaining pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also receive good teaching. Specialist teachers visit the school each week to support the pupils and to advise teachers on what strategies to use in the classroom to enhance their achievement. As a result these pupils achieve well. The headteacher regularly teaches higher attaining older pupils who need support to attain appropriately high standards. An adviser visits the school regularly to help determine the best strategies to use with gifted and talented pupils. Satisfactory provision is made to meet their needs.

18. Teachers use most resources satisfactorily. An overhead projector was used effectively in one lesson and a digital camera captured interest and enhanced learning in one art and design lesson. Opportunities are missed to use computers in the classroom to support learning and they often remain dormant. The computers in the computer suite are used more effectively but generally the use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum is still developing. In several classes there is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets, some of which are poorly produced by hand, rather than providing imaginative opportunities for active learning. There were several occasions during the week of the inspection when lessons did not start on time and this limited the amount of work that could be produced. Homework has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. A reasonable amount is set for each year group. It includes spellings, number work and simple investigations that help to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.
19. Teaching is organised well so that pupils attain well in the National Curriculum tests. Test results are analysed to determine areas of relative weakness and the headteacher joins forces with the teacher of the oldest pupils to provide carefully targeted teaching to meet pupils' needs. The group of pupils that took the tests this year comprised a high proportion of higher attaining pupils. This, when combined with the effective teaching produced much improved performance in the National Curriculum tests, though the standards attained in writing were not as high as they could have been. The recent re-organisation of classes into seven distinct year groups, the building of a new classroom and the release of the headteacher from a regular class teaching commitment have also had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. There is now a good teaching and learning policy but teachers do not all share a common understanding of what constitutes excellent teaching. The quality of teaching is now better than it was. However, a quarter of the teachers were new to the profession last year and another teacher has only just joined the school. The headteacher has been in post for two years and has taken sound measures to raise standards of teaching. There has not, however, been a sustained period of consistently high quality teaching to make a strong and sustained impact on improvements in learning. The improved teaching has not yet, therefore, had a major impact on improving standards across the curriculum. Nevertheless the school now has a more settled teaching force and is poised to make further advances in the quality of teaching and learning.

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

20. The school has maintained the quality of its curriculum provision since the previous inspection. It provides a sound range of learning opportunities which are relevant to pupils' needs and meet statutory requirements. It has improved learning opportunities in various areas such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. It now provides well for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language. The school is not at present fully implementing the nationally recommended curriculum for the foundation stage, but plans are in hand to seek professional advice in order to update the provision. Planning does not take sufficient account of the 'stepping stones', as described in national guidance, that should be taken to reach the early learning goals. As planning for the youngest children is not sufficiently systematic, activities provided do not always match children's learning needs.



21. Not all pupils have equal access to the curriculum partly because they miss certain areas when withdrawn from the classroom for extra learning support and partly because the curriculum taught in lessons is not always sufficiently adjusted to meet the learning needs of all pupils. As at the time of the last inspection, the withdrawal of some pupils for additional support means that these pupils miss the same lessons each week for at least half a term. Examples were seen during the inspection of pupils missing key parts of geography and physical education lessons. There is little opportunity for these pupils to catch up on what they have missed so they are not receiving a fully balanced and appropriately wide curriculum.
22. The school has recently adopted the nationally recommended curricular planning guidelines for all subjects and integrated them into its good overall long-term curricular plan. This plan maps out the work that will be tackled by each year group in each subject. It successfully guides teachers' long-term lesson planning and promotes full coverage of all sections of the National Curriculum. As part of the school's self evaluation procedures there are plans for staff to assess the effectiveness of the subject plans during this year to ensure that all topics have been covered and that there is provision for the cumulative building of skills.
23. The school has been awarded the 'Investors in People' and 'Basic Skills Quality Mark' in recognition of the hard work put in by everyone, and is now working towards 'Eco School Status,' an award that recognises the contribution schools make to preserving the environment. This has a marked impact on pupils' understanding of current environmental issues as well as promoting citizenship. It is putting the national literacy and numeracy strategies into practice with increasing success so that standards are rising throughout the school. The curriculum is enriched by the provision of many extra learning opportunities. Pupils' learning is enhanced by memorable visits to such places as the Magna Science Park, the theatre and museums. Pupils in Year 6 spend an adventurous week in Wales where one of the main activities is orienteering. There are many visitors who expand pupils' horizons: the police and the fire service, a dance company, a local theatre group and residents from the nearby residential home who talk about their experiences of life. There are further extra learning opportunities provided through a good range of clubs that take place after school.
24. The school has worked hard to raise its profile in the town and parish. It plays an active part in the local education business partnership that has promoted the 'Partners in Maths' and 'Partners in Reading' projects. These initiatives have a marked impact on pupils' learning opportunities. Under the schemes employers release employees regularly each week to work with specific groups of pupils. Nurses, who visit the school in their uniform, not only share books with pupils but also discuss the nature of their jobs. Police personnel discuss the need for accurate measurements in their jobs, as when calculating speed and stopping distances, whilst employees who work in shops talk about calculating the correct change. One firm sponsors the recycling skip and pupils who are learning about pulleys visit the company to see the industrial system of pulleys and conveyor belts in action. This gives the pupils a valuable insight into how mechanisms work on a large scale.
25. The school has close links with the local residential home and senior citizens help pupils to gain an insight into what life was like in times past. The school choir sings in the local Music Festival and pupils take part in the Blackfriars Theatre group dramas. Trainee students in child care visit the school, which gives them useful preview of school life and allows them the opportunity to experience helping small groups of pupils. The school also has very good links, some newly in place, with other schools. It is piloting a link with local secondary schools which, it is planned, will involve discussions during this year on developing closer ties between primary and secondary establishments in Boston. The prime aim is to promote curricular consistency between the phases of education. The school organises many of the swimming and netball events in which local schools take part and this promotes both sporting and social development. As part of procedures to help pupils to settle readily into their secondary schools, a science project started by pupils in Year 6 in the summer term is completed when they are in Year 7 at secondary school. The reception teacher visits each playgroup for half a day, and children from the playgroups come into school several times during the term before they join school. This helps the youngest children to settle happily in school. Three pupils from the neighbouring special school,

- together with their support assistants, come for a lesson each week to help them to prepare for integration into mainstream education.
26. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' personal, social and health education. Provision is well planned through a programme that includes sex education and drugs awareness. Time is set aside to discuss and resolve individual problems and this typifies the caring ethos developed throughout the school. An annual residential visit for pupils in Year 6 offers good opportunities to develop personal and social skills.
  27. The school is firmly founded upon the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church and this contributes strongly to the pupils' good spiritual development. In particular, assemblies and masses make a strong contribution. There are other opportunities within the school's curriculum for reflection on spiritual matters, although they appear to happen more by chance than as a result of careful planning. Pupils in Year 5 had a magical moment when they heard sounds created by a combination of tambourine and cymbal bells, and Year 1 pupils were amazed at their first sight of a completed pictogram for which they had all contributed individual pictures. An incident that typified pupils' sensitivity, their caring nature and their feelings about life occurred in Year 6. The pupils had become quite attached to a large batch of small plants that the teacher had brought into school. They even concocted names for their plants. When asked to remove the plants from their pots to expose and examine the root systems there were cries of dismay and they had to be assured that the plants would not die if they were handled carefully. The plants were handled very carefully.
  28. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is also good. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' moral development and consistently make them clear. All the adults in school provide excellent role models by their courteous and considerate dealings with pupils and with each other. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and this is strongly linked to their social development. The school places high emphasis on each pupil doing his or her best. Good work is valued, as are politeness, helpfulness and effort. Some of the school's initiatives to broaden the school's curriculum have a beneficial influence on pupils' social development. For example, pupils take part in 'Ground Force Days' to care for the school grounds and this heightens their awareness of the need to protect the environment. Pupils are very aware of those people less fortunate than themselves and they regularly raise money for charities, some of which are chosen by the pupils, and some such as the Jalchatra Project in India and cancer charities that are chosen by the school. There are close links with the nearby special school and meeting children from there makes pupils more aware of the needs of others. Older pupils develop a mature sense of responsibility when acting as monitors or as helping with the younger pupils. The school has recently inaugurated a school council with pupils in Year 6 acting as representatives for each class, which has raised great interest and enthusiasm throughout the school. It promises to contribute well to their understanding of citizenship as the members state their intention of helping younger pupils and looking after their interests. Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, social and moral development have improved significantly since the last inspection.
  29. The school continues to make sound provision for cultural development. This is mainly through the visits to places of interest and the variety of visitors to school. The school raises pupils' awareness of other faiths through celebrating festivals such as the Chinese New Year, and by inviting Moslems, Jews and Hindus to explain facets of their beliefs. Pupils from ethnic minorities are fully integrated into school life. Pupils have good opportunities during the year to hear music from many other countries including those in South America and Africa as well as India and China. This is then developed further when they listen again to the music of the week in their dance lessons and compose dances that fit the rhythms and moods of the pieces. Pupils develop some knowledge and understanding of the work of famous artists and in one lesson on portraits in Year 1 pupils studied works by such artists as Renoir, Modigliane and Rembrandt. The youngest pupils in the school listen to stories from around the world and a child in reception took home a book about Jesus in Arabic, his home language.

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

30. The school is exceptionally caring and supportive of its pupils. Its arrangements for supporting their personal and academic progress have much improved since the previous inspection. Systems to assess and monitor pupils' work, which were previously unsatisfactory, are now good though they have only recently been established. Records are clear and are kept meticulously but the information they provide is not always used well by teachers when planning lessons. The educational and personal support and guidance provided assists pupils' achievements well.
31. Pupils' overall welfare is served well by alert and concerned management. The school provides very good welfare arrangements within a recently improved and attractive environment. A full set of up-to-date school policies has been produced and these help to maintain clear educational direction. Much attention is given to medical and first aid matters. Once aid has been rendered, jelly babies are used to good effect! Child protection arrangements comply with local requirements. Teachers know their pupils very well and respond to them as individuals. Pupils from ethnic minorities, several of whom are recent arrivals in the country, are supported well. They settle quickly and become well integrated. Additional staff support pupils on the register of special educational needs. Pupils who are identified as having particular emotional needs are offered professional in-school counselling. Some significant improvements to the individuals, and in some cases to the continuity of learning in their classes, have resulted.
32. Behaviour is promoted very well. All staff set good examples of dedication and concern for others, with high levels of respect. Christian values and a spiritual ethos are endemic within the school, and parents frequently make appreciative remarks about the caring environment that has developed in the school. The school's rules have been negotiated with pupils, and teachers' behavioural expectations are generally high. House points provide effective incentives. A well-understood and strong code of discipline is very effective: pupils do not like having to report in this connection to the headteacher. Staff consistently manage pupils well. Consequently any tendencies towards oppressive behaviour are snuffed out quickly.
33. Attendance is very well recorded. It is monitored effectively. Pupils are keen to come to school, and parents are assiduous in supporting this, so that there are very few attendance problems.
34. Procedures for plotting pupils' attainment and progress are now good. Teachers are working to a clear and comprehensive policy. Very detailed records are maintained across all subjects. Each class teacher has a class assessment sheet for each subject based on nationally agreed learning objectives. As each unit of work is studied, teachers record how each pupil has achieved in that area. The results of weekly tests in spelling and mental mathematics are also recorded. Monitoring pupils' progress is thus good, and discussions with pupils result in agreed targets in English and mathematics. The school uses the record of work covered well to assess and modify its long-term curriculum planning but assessments of pupils' differing stages of development are not always used effectively to inform short-term lesson planning.
35. Pupils' personal development is supported and monitored well, though less formally. Teachers and support assistants are constantly aware of the achievements or difficulties of all their pupils, and are concerned to meet their needs effectively. In the foundation stage, for instance, much attention is given to promoting good social attitudes and politeness. Confidence is very well supported throughout the school by the encouragement of staff and the warm learning ethos. The younger pupils are supported at playtimes by older ones. A system of 'reading buddies', where older pupils are paired with younger ones to share books, similarly promotes effective learning and development. By Year 6 all pupils have significant responsibilities. The recently-created school council, very well supported, is proving effective in fostering pupils' maturity, thoughtfulness and sense of personal value.
36. There are good induction procedures for all new arrivals at the school. Before they join the school, parents and pupils are welcomed by the headteacher who shows them around the building and introduces the class teacher. Staff seek guidance from parents of pupils with English as an additional language or those from different ethnic backgrounds so that staff are well

informed and able to communicate with the pupils. Teachers make an effort to use words from their pupils' first language to help pupils feel included. For example in a Year 4 class, two pupils from Zimbabwe are pleased to find the register answered in different languages and they are now teaching the class how to say numbers in their own language, Shona. The school celebrates a variety of different festivals such as the Chinese New Year and pupils from the relevant backgrounds play central roles.

37. The school analyses the results of some different groups of pupils, for example, the attainment and progress of boys and girls and of pupils with special education needs. This information is used to guide curricular planning. It has begun to plot the progress of higher attaining pupils in the same way but does not yet analyse the results of pupils with English as an additional language. In some classrooms, the unsatisfactory monitoring of pupils' progress in lessons leads to groups and individuals making insufficient progress.
38. Pupils in need of particular support are effectively identified and provision for them is good. They are given extra help both in the classroom and individually or in small groups outside the classroom. The school employs a significant number of support staff to work with groups of pupils with, for example, reading, speech and language difficulties or behavioural problems. Pupils in these groups make good progress. Two specialists visit the school each week to support pupils for whom English is an additional language and to advise teachers. Provision is good and these pupils make good progress as they quickly develop facility in speaking English. They also have special homework to develop their understanding. Home visits form part of the provision and parents are given appropriate advice. Detailed records are kept for all pupils who have extra learning needs and their progress is carefully monitored.

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

39. Parents and carers are extremely pleased with the quality of education that the school provides. They are full of praise for its very caring ethos and sense of community. The school is very open and communicative. Parents consider that it is very well led and managed. Their children are expected to work hard and there is general agreement that they are making good progress. Parents raise no points of concern or criticism. The school has the confidence of parents of pupils from minority groups who are pleased with provision for their children. The inspection team generally endorses parents' favourable opinions of the school.
40. The school's links with parents and carers are good. Communication between the headteacher, teachers and parents are open, warm and friendly and have improved since the appointment of the headteacher two years ago. Parents are welcome in school, feeling themselves to be part of the family. The headteacher and her staff are very supportive and are ready to discuss problems at any time. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress. They are invited to attend meetings to review provision, evaluate progress and set targets for further learning. Similarly the school works in close liaison with the parents of pupils who have English as an additional language. The specialist teachers visit parents in their home to advise on developing English speaking skills and on how parents can help by participating in a specially tailored extra homework programme. A small specialist room is used for teaching individuals and small groups of pupils who require extra support in their learning. Here a calm working ethos is established and highly skilled support staff work patiently through carefully structured and well planned lessons. Relationships are good and pupils enjoy attending such sessions, not least because they themselves appreciate the extra attention they receive and the progress they are making. Staff record progress and liaise closely with class teachers. These high levels of care have a positive impact on pupils' learning and contribute to a secure, effective learning environment.
41. The prospectus, governors' annual report, and frequent newsletters present much information very attractively. Parents remark on a general improvement in communication since the previous inspection. They are not, however, currently provided with routine information concerning the areas of work to be covered in the term ahead.

42. Pupils' progress is well reported. Three parents' evenings a year are now held. Parents' remarks in homework diaries are picked up by teachers. Annual academic reports have been improved and now include targets in English and mathematics. The quality of reporting is never less than satisfactory and is frequently good, showing close knowledge of the individual, concentrating on attainments, referring to targets, and giving pointers for improvement.
43. Parents and carers make a good impact on the work of the school. They ensure that their children attend regularly and on time to ensure the fullest benefit. They generally support their children's learning well at home, ensuring that homework is completed. They are pleased to work in partnership with the school. Several assist in classrooms, around the school, and in governorship. The Friends of St Mary's Association is run by parents, past and present, as well as staff. Its social activities are well supported, making a substantial contribution towards the school's communal ethos and its learning resources.

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

44. At the time of the last inspection there were significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school but this is no longer the case. The headteacher's leadership is a particular strength of the school. She has worked unstintingly since her appointment two years ago to improve management systems. Avenues of communication between the headteacher, staff, parents, pupils, governors and the wider community are now much more open, informative and effective. The deputy headteacher gives sound support and makes a good contribution to the school's well developed team-working practices. Policies have been reviewed and a wide range of new policies has been adopted that give good guidance and help to maintain clear educational direction. The roles of subject co-ordinators have been developed and staff are now clear about the extent of their accountability for standards in their areas of responsibility. The initiatives that the headteacher has introduced are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. A good formula for creating and reviewing school developments has been adopted and the school development plan has become a valuable management tool. It incorporates clear targets, defines responsibilities for developments and includes clear success criteria against which the school can evaluate progress towards the targets. Although the success criteria are clear, they do not always focus on how the effect of the action taken will be evaluated in terms of the extent to which standards have been improved. Good curricular planning structures have been introduced for each subject. These are presented in the form of an excellent curricular map that clearly states what each year group will be taught in each subject in each term. This map is closely linked to the school's assessment system. A clear, manageable assessment system has recently been introduced that plots each pupil's progress through each subject of the National Curriculum. This is a big improvement as assessment procedures were a particular weakness at the time of the last inspection. However, the good information collected on pupils' attainment and progress is not always used to inform teachers' planning. The school's good curricular planning structures help to ensure full statutory coverage of the National Curriculum.
45. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. All the key issues raised in the last report have been addressed and most have been fully resolved though there are areas, such as the roles of subject co-ordinators that require further refinement and the use of the good assessment systems to inform short-term lesson planning is unsatisfactory. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and offer good support. They are becoming increasingly involved in shaping the direction of the school. They are mostly successful in ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory duties, a minor exception being the information provided to parents, such as rates of absence which are not reported properly.
46. The headteacher and the governing body have successfully managed other developments that have had a significant impact on improving the quality of education provided. The headteacher is no longer constrained by a class teaching commitment and can concentrate more readily on developing an overview of provision across the school. The governing body have succeeded in funding the building of an additional classroom and in organising the school so that there are now seven classes, one for each year group. This has had a major impact on improving the quality of the pupils' education. Stronger bonds have been created between all associated with the school

so that a greater sense of teamwork has been established. Again this was lacking at the time of the last inspection. Good performance management systems have been introduced and are beginning to have a positive impact on the professional development of all staff. Appraisal systems help to identify areas where further training is needed and to set performance targets that are closely linked to pupils' attainment and the standards that the school achieves.

47. Teaching is monitored and evaluated in order to identify areas for development and to improve standards but the evaluation of teaching is not always sufficiently rigorous. Monitoring does not always specify with enough clarity the main areas for development. The quality of teaching has improved but there are still inconsistencies and there is a large proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in the classes for the older pupils. The inspection took place early in the school year and in several year groups classroom routines had not been sufficiently well developed. Undue anxiety early in the inspection meant that several lessons were not taught as confidently as they were later in the week. These factors adversely affected the quality teaching. However, not all teachers share a common understanding of what constitutes high quality teaching and the issue raised in the last inspection report, regarding the poor match of tasks with pupils' learning needs, persists in several classes. As a result, groups of pupils do not always make the progress in lessons that they should. Whilst a great deal has been achieved over the past two years, the school readily acknowledges that further developments are required. This is particularly the case regarding the role of subject co-ordinators in improving standards. The school analyses its performance in statutory and non-statutory tests and as a result has a good understanding of where improvement is required. The school employs a large number of classroom assistants and, in the main, they provide good support. Their performance is monitored and evaluated and performance targets are set. However they are not always deployed efficiently and their time is not always used well in class to support pupils' learning effectively. This leads to the inefficient use of their time.
48. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the governor with responsibility for developing and maintaining an overview of provision for pupils who need extra learning support, help to ensure good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The management of provision follows procedures laid down in the nationally agreed code of practice for pupils with special educational needs. Good individual education plans are devised and most include clear targets for improvement. The plans are used well to inform the teaching of these pupils and the work of the learning support assistants is a key feature of the good provision. Parents are fully consulted and records of pupils' progress and development are kept. With one or two exceptions, records are detailed and up to date though several individual education plans do not indicate what stage in the special educational needs process a child has reached. Support staff have full access to records and attend review meetings. Where appropriate, pupils are themselves involved in meetings to review their progress and set new targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator also supervises provision for pupils with English as an additional language. Provision is managed well.
49. The school manages its budget exceptionally well. Appropriate educational priorities are identified and the school manages to fund them successfully. The expenditure per pupil is less than the national average. A substantial sum of money has been accumulated to pay for proposed building improvements. All school accounts are meticulously maintained and properly audited. All specific grants, such as extra funding for pupils with special educational needs, are used for the purposes specified. The school secretary ensures that office routines operate smoothly and efficiently. The headteacher does not feel that there are any excessive bureaucratic demands made upon the school. Accommodation is adequate and is well maintained. The school library doubles as the computer suite and as a result the library is often difficult to access and is under used. The school has good plans to resolve this in the near future by building a new library whilst also extending the provision of computers when space is released from the old library. There is no outdoor area designed to promote the development of children in the foundation stage and limits their learning opportunities. The governing body has ensured that resources are adequate to support teaching and learning in all subjects. In view of the good leadership and management that is contributing effectively to the improving standards attained by

pupils, the improvements in teaching and the relatively low unit costs for each pupil, the school provides good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to improve standards further the headteacher, the staff and the governing body should:

(1) Improve standards in writing by:

- identifying the skills required to write effectively;
- introducing a programme of teaching writing skills in a step-by-step way from the reception class to Year 6;
- regularly sampling pupils' writing to determine progress and identify areas for further development.

(paragraphs 1, 12, 61, 67, 69)

(2) improve the quality of teaching by:

- clearly defining the criteria that result in high quality teaching;
- regularly monitoring and evaluating teaching against these agreed criteria;
- identifying the varying stages of development that pupils have attained as starting points for planning the next steps in their learning;
- ensuring that tasks are more closely matched to the learning needs of all pupils.

(paragraphs 13,14,19,44,47,85)

(3) monitor the progress pupils make in lessons to ensure that all groups achieve as well as they should.

(paragraphs 14, 37, 47)

(4) implement the nationally recommended curriculum for the foundation stage and ensure that lessons are planned according to the guidance.

(paragraphs 20, 53 )

(5) make sure that computers are used more effectively to support learning across the curriculum.

(paragraphs 18, 72, 79, 88, 92, 94, 97, 120)

(6) make sure that pupils do not miss being taught parts of the curriculum when they are withdrawn from lessons for extra learning support.

(paragraph 21)

Other less significant areas for improvement:

Timetables should be examined and adjusted to make sure that lessons are not over-long.

(paragraphs 86,91)

Lessons do not always start on time.

(paragraph 18)

There is no outdoor area that is specifically designed to promote the development of children in the foundation stage.

(paragraph 58)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

59

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

45

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	28	23	5	1	0
Percentage	0	3	47	39	8	2	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents nearly one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR– Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

196

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

22

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

35

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

7

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

19

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	18	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	18	18	17
	Total	30	30	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94(96)	94 (96)	91(96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	30	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (96)	94 (96)	94 (96)
	National	-- (84)	-- (88)	-- (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	14	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	13	11	13
	Total	30	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (83)	91 (83)	97 (89)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	10	11	11
	Total	27	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (61)	90 (72)	91 (67)
	National	- (70)	- (72)	- (79)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	158
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	28

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	313270
Total expenditure	299023
Expenditure per pupil	1574
Balance brought forward from previous year	3185
Balance carried forward to next year	17432

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	190
Number of questionnaires returned	65

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	17	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	29	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	32	9	3	0
The teaching is good.	80	20	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	22	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	91	9	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	22	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	75	17	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	85	15	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	80	12	3	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	18	2	2	12

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents give strong support and are happy with the education provided for their children. No common issues were raised in letters to the inspection team, which were mostly full of praise for the school.

## **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**

51. Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the year that they have their fifth birthday. The first contacts are organised sensitively so that children all visit the class several times in the term before they start school. They also come into the class gradually during the first two weeks of term. At the time of the inspection, there were 25 children in the class, a few of whom had only been in school for two days. One of the teacher's priorities at this very early stage of the school year was to settle children into school, begin establishing class routines and to develop appropriate patterns of behaviour. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of attainment from year-to-year but, overall, their attainment is slightly below expectations for their age. The last inspection found that children made sound progress during their time in the reception class and this continues to be the case. As a result of satisfactory teaching most children, including those who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily though many children achieve well in reading and in mathematics. They achieve at least satisfactorily in each of the six areas of learning in the foundation stage of education. These are:
- personal, social and emotional development;
  - communication, language and literacy;
  - mathematical development;
  - knowledge and understanding of the world;
  - physical development; and
  - creative development.
52. By the time they move to Year 1, most children reach at least the expected levels in all of these areas of learning and higher-attaining children exceed them.
53. Parents state that their children are happy to come to school, and they are indeed cheerful and confident as they leave their parents at the start of the day. The nationally recommended curriculum for the foundation stage has not yet been fully implemented and systems for plotting children's progress and assessing attainment have not yet been tied to the stages that lead towards the early learning goals in each area of learning. This means that, although the foundation stage teacher and her nursery nurse work closely together, they cannot be sure that all children have appropriate experiences at each stage of their progress towards the early learning goals.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

54. Teaching is satisfactory and sound opportunities are provided to promote children's personal, social and emotional development. Most children have had experience of a nursery before they come to school. However, they come from several different nurseries and need time to learn new routines and make friends. The teacher and nursery nurse work well to create a calm atmosphere and quickly develop good relationships with the children. As a result, children feel secure, are confident, show curiosity and most of them persist well when engaged in a task. Staff have very high expectations of behaviour. They establish good routines and consistently stress the difference between right and wrong. Children respond positively and work well alongside each other, or for short times in groups, for example when working in the role-play area. The classroom is bright and attractive. Children treat equipment with care and, when given the opportunity, enjoy choosing tasks. For example, during the inspection, two girls spent a lot of time in the book corner 'reading' to themselves. They are encouraged to become independent in self-help skills, such as changing for physical activities but at this early part of the year, still need support. Teaching is sound and the large majority of children are well on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of their year in the reception class.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

55. The teacher and nursery nurse have sound awareness of the need to develop children's vocabularies and sentence structure. Teaching is satisfactory overall though there are areas for improvement. The teaching of early reading skills is good but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their early writing skills. Adults model good speech patterns and encourage the children to talk about their ideas, but they do not always use questions that need a complete answer. Children listen attentively to adults, and well to each other. There is a good range of books available for children to share and they love listening to stories. There is no writing area to encourage the development of independent writing activities. There was little evidence in the samples of work of a love of writing manifested by the use of 'play' writing. The teacher uses games well to develop children's understanding of initial letter sounds in words and many children hear initial sounds clearly. Although the class was observed early in the school year, it was evident that some children had more knowledge than others, for example a few can write their names independently. There was no provision to extend these children who had to copy over their names like the rest of the class.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

56. The teacher plans a varied range of practical activities to develop children's mathematical understanding. Teaching is sound, and on occasion it is good. For example, the teacher helped children to count and start to understand the order of numbers up to five in several ways. They acted an elephant rhyme, recognised the numbers and counted on their fingers. However the several children who showed they could count further, some as far as ten, were not given activities that really challenged and stretched their understanding. The sand and water trays were not in use during the inspection, which limited children's opportunities to experiment and extend their learning. Samples of work by children in the reception class last year indicate that they had access to a wide range of learning experiences, made good progress and that the majority attained the early learning goals.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

57. Children have very varied understanding of the world about them when they start school. Overall the teaching of this area of learning is unsatisfactory although a satisfactory range of activities has been planned. The teacher plans to build on what children know by providing a good range of topics to stimulate and extend them through the year. However in the session observed, teaching was unsatisfactory because the activity was organised in the form of a class lesson. This meant that opportunities were missed to encourage the children to observe closely and to discuss freely and that they spent far too long sitting down. Children looked at a range of fruit, felt them and many children chose to taste and compare tastes, but while they became more aware of the properties of different fruit, inevitably the children were not all fully occupied all the time. Children gain confidence in using the computer and start to use the mouse to operate programs. A group of children watching the nursery nurse make dough for teddy biscuits were very interested, but opportunities were missed to allow them to help with the weighing and stirring. Samples of work from last year show that children recorded a good range of experiences including sensitive drawings while they listened to music such as 'Summer Holiday' by Cliff Richard. The majority of children are set to attain many the early learning goals.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

58. There is a small and attractive secure area set aside for the children's use, but apart from a teddy bears' picnic class activity, it was not used during the inspection. The area is not well designed to promote effective learning and especially the development of physical skills. There are no wheeled toys and the equipment available is stored at some distance. This suggests that children are not having their full entitlement of constant access to large and small outdoor play equipment to help them develop confidence, for example in climbing and balancing. This restricts learning opportunities and limits children's achievement in this area of learning. The children join with the rest of the school at play and lunch times. Teaching is satisfactory and the teacher

provides carefully planned opportunities in the hall for the children to move freely within a large space and encourages them to suggest what to do next. Later in the year it is planned for them to use small and large apparatus. Children show increasing skill and control in the use of pencils and crayons. They start to twist and pat playdough into different shapes, and fit pieces of small world equipment together to form shapes that they enjoy talking about. Children are on course to attain the early learning goals.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

59. The home corner and a wide variety of small world and construction kits give children sound opportunities to develop their imaginations. Children engaged in conversation with each other while playing at families. There is a satisfactory range of activities and experiences planned throughout the year which include working with clay, making collages from a variety of materials, including pasta, and appreciating pictures by well known artists such as Van Gogh. The somewhat formal structure of the day however, limits the time when creative activities take place. For example, few opportunities for creative work were observed during the first part of the day and none during the long session about fruit, although fruit was later used for printing with paint. Children had used these prints as the scales of fish in a pleasing underwater collage. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory.

## ENGLISH

60. In comparison with national expectations, inspection findings show that, by the end of Year 2, standards are broadly in line with what is expected of seven-year-old pupils. While in reading, speaking and listening, pupils attain standards that are above average, about a quarter do not reach the standard expected in writing that prepares them to attain average standards by the time they are eleven. Overall, standards attained by seven-year-olds in English are average. This indicates that standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. In the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-old pupils in 2001, the school's overall performance exceeded national averages in both reading and writing. Teacher assessment of pupils' speaking and listening skills also shows attainment to be above national averages. Test results show that the school's performance in reading fell from 1998 to 1999, rose in 2000 and dropped slightly in 2001. In writing results declined from 1997 to 1999, improved slightly in 2000 and again in 2001, but did not return to the high levels of performance attained in 1997.
61. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English overall is average. As in the previous inspection, attainment in reading and in speaking and listening exceeds what is expected of eleven-year-olds but in writing it is significantly lower. A third of pupils do not reach the national requirements for writing by the end of Year 6. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-old pupils in 2001, the school's overall performance in English exceeded national averages because the strength of pupils' reading compensated for poorer results in writing. There was an improving trend from 1996 until 2000 when results declined but the results for 2001 are the highest the school has yet achieved. The school exceeded the reasonably challenging target for the proportion of pupils expected to attain at least the national target in 2001.
62. When pupils enter the school, their attainment in English is slightly below average. The teaching of reading is good in the reception class and children achieve well but the teaching of early writing skills is not sufficiently systematic and children, especially the higher attaining groups, do not achieve as well as they could. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good because the emphasis on developing vocabulary and teaching reading helps pupils' understanding in other areas of the subject. Achievement is sound in Years 3 to 6 though inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the unsatisfactory development of writing skills impede learning. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well when withdrawn from the class for extra help. The national test results indicate that most pupils' achievement is good in relation to their prior attainment in speaking and listening and reading but that, by the end of Year 6, achievement in writing is not high enough. In Years 1 to 6, the overall achievement of pupils from ethnic minorities and those with English as an additional language is good. Many come from families where good standards

of literacy in the home language have been established. Those newly arrived from other countries are welcomed warmly and quickly develop sound English speaking skills and as a result their skills in literacy develop well.

63. In most lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other and make appropriate responses. They understand and carry out instructions accurately. They are keen to contribute and speak clearly and with confidence in front of the class and in smaller groups. In a Year 1 history lesson, for example, small groups of pupils share their ideas and discuss their thinking when sorting and arranging a collection of toys into chronological order. The groups then successfully report their findings to the rest of the class.
64. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils read a range of books fluently, confidently and with good understanding. They use the punctuation to help them read with expression. Their enjoyment and understanding are very clear to the listener. They know many words by sight and correct their mistakes by taking note of the sense of what they are reading. They recall what they have read in detail and have firm views about the text. They express clear preferences about the books they like. Lower attaining pupils read the words of simple texts with a little support. Their reading is sometimes disjointed and lacking in fluency. They successfully use their knowledge of letter sounds and word building to tackle unfamiliar words without prompting to do so. They retell the story accurately and predict sensibly what might happen next.
65. In Years 1 and 2, pupils experience a range of writing activities including writing stories and reports. The stories of higher attaining pupils in Year 2 have a beginning, middle and end such as when writing stories based on the fable 'The Fox and the Crow'. They begin to use adjectives to describe characters and settings. In their writing, they use punctuation such as speech marks and brackets with some accuracy and spell most words correctly. They learn spelling conventions such as how to use a 'magic e' and thoroughly enjoy correcting their teacher's 'deliberate' mistakes. Lower attaining pupils construct simple sentences but the story structure is often incomplete and ideas are not logically extended. They use a story planner to help plan their stories but, as it is a new experience, find it difficult to transfer their ideas into their work. It is the school's policy to teach joined writing from Year 1 onwards and higher attaining pupils achieve this successfully by the end of Year 1. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 write with a clear, neat script but it is not always joined. Pupils have the opportunity to use computer programs to support the development of their writing skills.
66. Higher attaining pupils, at the end of Year 6, read challenging texts fluently and expressively at an appropriate level and show good comprehension. They show awareness of the listener as they read, observing the punctuation with good effect. They talk about favourite authors such as Dick King-Smith and J.K. Rowling and explain the kinds of books they prefer. They recall in detail what they have read. Lower attaining pupils read accurately, self-correcting as needed, but their reading is jerky and lacks fluency. They find it difficult to talk about what they have read or about the kind of books and authors they enjoy. Their comprehension of the text is not secure and they do not always appreciate the subtleties of humour or the author's choice of words.
67. By the end of Year 6, pupils have had experience of writing in a range of genres and for different purposes. These include poems such as clerihew, 'blurbs', newspaper reports, play-scripts, letters, stories and making an argument. Much of the written work in exercise books is short and often unfinished. However, all pupils now have regular opportunity to work on extended pieces of writing on a range of topics such as making an argument about the pros and cons of hunting, writing to the headteacher about school uniform or creating a dialogue between characters in a story. They sometimes plan the work to ensure that it has an appropriate structure and brainstorm ideas for enriching the vocabulary such as when Year 3 pupils suggested a variety of words to replace 'said'. On these occasions, the writing of higher attaining pupils is lively with an interesting choice of vocabulary. Little evidence was seen of pupils drafting their work and editing it so that vocabulary and sentence structure are improved and spelling and punctuation checked. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of grammar and punctuation. For example, they use and understand connectives and conjunctions and know about prefixes and suffixes. They identify main and subordinate clauses in a complex sentence. The best work



is written in a clear and neat cursive style but the standard of presentation varies and the handwriting of some Year 6 pupils is untidy and lacks control. In some books, targets are set to improve presentation but these are not followed through and little improvement is evident.

68. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve well. Teaching is inconsistent, though generally satisfactory, in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds; nearly a half of the teaching is good but it is unsatisfactory in a third of lessons. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is generally good. These pupils are supported well in class and when they are taken out for individual sessions or for work in small groups. Teachers plan lessons carefully and in the most effective ones, they are well structured and learning objectives are specific, clear and explained to the pupils. Teachers make links with other lessons so that pupils know what they are going to learn and can draw on previous experiences to help them. In the best lessons, there is a high proportion of direct teaching and the teachers have a bright and lively style. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils enjoyed being the experts and correcting the teacher's 'mistakes', making good progress as they did so. When teachers read expressively to pupils, it encourages pupils to do the same such as when pupils in a Year 1 class enthusiastically joined in reading a favourite book, 'I'm Going On A Bear Hunt'. In a Year 5 class the teacher realised that pupils were not fully understanding the work she had planned on commas and colons and adapted the lesson to take account of this and to secure their understanding before moving on to new work. When working on complex sentences, pupils in Year 6 all achieved well because the tasks they were given were stimulating and challenging but also achievable. Most teachers are skilful in using questions that allow the pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and give them sufficient time to explain their thinking. Pupils' answers are valued and their efforts praised.
69. In some less successful lessons the learning is not sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils or it is too difficult for lower attaining pupils. This impedes progress for these groups of pupils and they do not achieve as well as they should. For example, pupils in Year 6 copied out some of their earlier work as a handwriting exercise but did not know what they needed to do to improve their writing and consequently their achievement was unsatisfactory. In a Year 3 class, the descriptive writing task was too challenging for the lower attaining pupils and they could not complete it. In some lessons, pupils' understanding is not checked as the lesson progresses and they do not receive the help they need to be successful. In a small minority of lessons teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is not secure leading to incorrect information being taught. In Year 3, teachers are not always clear about what has been taught in previous lessons and this results in unnecessary repetition for the pupils. Some work sheets do not offer the pupils good examples of correctly formed letters and neat presentation. Throughout the school there is good emphasis on the technical aspects of writing but some lessons lack sufficient guidance on using vocabulary and story structure effectively.
70. There is a comprehensive whole school system for recording pupils' progress in all aspects of English on a regular basis. However the system is not yet sufficiently well established to ensure that pupils' levels of ability are well known to teachers as pupils move into a new class. The good systems that have recently been established to plot pupils' attainment and progress are not used by teachers to inform starting points for the next steps in learning. As a result some time is wasted re-assessing pupils at the beginning of a new year. In the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds, teachers set learning targets for groups and individuals but do not always monitor them rigorously enough to ensure they are achieved. Reading record notebooks are used effectively to promote the school's 'partnership with parents' approach to reading. Pupils are expected to read with an adult each evening and this has a very positive effect on their performance and progress.
71. Pupils' behaviour was good in almost all of the lessons observed and unsatisfactory in only one lesson. Most literacy lessons include a period of shared reading or writing in which pupils are generally attentive, keen to respond to the teacher's questions and anxious to have the chance to contribute their own ideas. They usually listen well to their teachers and settle to their tasks quickly. Occasionally pupils show real enjoyment, as when a group of lower attaining pupils in

Year 5 worked with a support teacher on a task that involved placing sentences in a logical sequence to make a story. Many pupils of all ages are keen and enthusiastic readers. They read confidently to the class and on one occasion to the whole school in assembly. The teaching in English supports pupils' moral and social development very effectively and makes a sound contribution to their cultural development. There was little evidence of plans to develop spiritual awareness through literature though several pupils find a spiritual dimension in the books that they read.

72. The school is adequately resourced with a range of both fiction and non-fiction books. There are good stocks of new reading books that are carefully organised but these are stored out of reach of the pupils limiting the opportunities for them to make independent choices. All classrooms have well stocked, accessible and usually well organised book areas. In some classrooms, topic books are well displayed to encourage pupils to browse and use them in their research. For example, pupils in Year 4 readily use books from the display about Ancient Egypt in their history lesson. Books in the library cover all areas of the curriculum but are not easily accessible as this area doubles as a computer suite. There are plans to build a new library later this year. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently in classrooms to support teaching and learning. In many lessons the computers were available but were not in use.
73. The school has a clear 'curriculum map' to guide its long-term planning. This clearly indicates opportunities for developing and using literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. Good examples were seen in history lessons for example. Higher attaining pupils in a Year 4 class took on the roles of Howard Carter, the Egyptologist, and an interviewer and used their speaking and listening skills very successfully to create questions and answers. A third pupil in the group acts as scribe and records the historical facts that emerge. Pupils in Year 6 use the Internet to carry out research on the religious beliefs of Ancient Greeks and report back this information to their peers.
74. The school has an up to date and clear policy for English and is implementing the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator who took over responsibility for the subject a year ago. She has carried out detailed analysis of the national test results and consequently identified writing, handwriting and spelling as priority areas for development. Inspection findings largely confirm this view. Extended writing lessons are now timetabled for all pupils in Years 1 to 6 and half termly writing conferences have been introduced at which all staff meet together to discuss and assess pupils' work. From this, the co-ordinator is developing a portfolio of examples of pupils' work to match each National Curriculum level of attainment to support all teachers in their assessments. The co-ordinator regularly monitors teachers' planning and scrutinises pupils' work. She has carried out a classroom observation in each class and has developed an action plan from her findings. These represent good improvements since the last inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

75. At the time of the last inspection, by the end of Year 2, pupils' standards of attainment were a little above the national average, and well above average by the end of Year 6. Since then pupils' performance, as indicated by the annual National Curriculum tests for seven and eleven-year-olds, has fluctuated. In the tests in 2001 for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6, the school's performance improved since the previous year and was above the national average. Inspection findings largely reflect test results; by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 pupils' attain standards that exceed expectations for their ages. Overall the above average standards found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
76. The school has identified the reasons for the improvement in results this year; there is a new head teacher and a stable staff, with a good understanding of the requirements of the national numeracy strategy, and this is now resulting in an atmosphere of purpose throughout the school. Improvements since the last inspection include better teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by skilled classroom assistants. Groups of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5

now have valuable 'springboard' sessions to help them raise their levels of understanding, and the head teacher gives extra challenge to the higher attaining pupils in Year 6 during the spring term. Teachers are starting to use assessments of the strengths and weaknesses in the national test results as a focus for teaching, and good assessment at the end of topics, gives them a clear idea of what pupils know and understand. There is considerable scope to improve the assessments of what pupils have learned at the end of one lesson in order to improve the planning of the next lesson and so have more appropriate expectations of pupils, especially of the more able.

77. The standards of attainment of pupils in the present Year 2 are slightly above average, and a significant number are already working within the expected level. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve well in number work, and are starting to understand the relationship between addition and subtraction to create 'families' of number facts. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported in lessons and when withdrawn from the classroom for extra help. Higher attaining pupils work with slightly larger numbers and show good ability to manipulate numbers mentally below twenty. Most have some knowledge of two-dimensional shapes. Analysis of work done in the class last year, shows that there was good coverage of topics and by the end of the year a majority of pupils were working a little beyond the expected level. Most pupils in Year 1 understand the idea of addition and they record sums to ten, while the more able pupils work beyond ten. Their attainment is a little above average.
78. The standards of pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 indicate that they are on course to attain standards that are above average by the end of the school year. Many are good at working out problems in their heads and they achieve well. They use their skills and knowledge effectively and make considerable progress in their understanding, as for example, in the use of brackets when solving problems which involve several stages. Analysis of work completed last year in Year 5 indicates that attainment was appropriate for their age and that they covered a satisfactory range of topics. From Year 3 to Year 6 pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are working confidently at the level appropriate for their year group. Pupils use their skills of measuring well in science as when, for example, plotting graphs to show rates of cooling when testing the effects of insulation. In history, pupils develop a sense of chronology as they study time lines and plot major historical events. Many are not good at reading scales, however, and in one geography lesson they found difficulty in reading thermometers. Although the use of numeracy skills across the curriculum to consolidate understanding is broadly satisfactory, there are shortcomings where teachers do not fully appreciate pupils' inadequate mastery of skills, such as those associated with measuring.
79. Across the school teaching is mostly good and this results in pupils' generally good achievement. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen but this was untypical. Teaching has been greatly influenced by implementing the daily mathematics lesson as part of the national numeracy strategy. Teachers use planning documents well, but there is only limited evidence to show that short-term planning is modified in the light of assessments done during a lesson. They do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to use information and communications technology in mathematics, and so the classroom computers are under-used. Teachers plan to emphasise key points in each lesson. They start lessons well by listing the learning aims to the class, and where these are clear and concise, this gets lessons off to a good start and helps the pupils to pay attention and concentrate. In the more effective lessons teachers use questions carefully to assess what pupils already know, and to stretch them towards new thinking and reasoning. Pupils usually answer confidently because they know that their answers are valued even when they are not quite accurate. The mental warm up sessions are appropriate to what the pupils do in the main part of the lesson. Classroom assistants play an important part in helping pupils keep in touch with this part of the lesson. Their presence helps pupils to listen closely and they sometimes quietly give another, simpler explanation of what the teacher has said to the class. This helps pupils who learn more slowly to keep up with the pace of the lesson and make good progress. They are enthusiastic and confident to try. In lessons where teaching is less effective, the pace of the lesson is not always maintained and when the pace slows pupils begin to lose interest. The use of imprecise language in several classes impedes clear learning by pupils.

Teachers do not always target the higher attaining pupils sufficiently so they are fully challenged throughout the lesson.

80. When they work in groups, pupils work together well. They share resources sensibly, concentrate hard and achieve as much as they can in a session. Many teachers have a good grasp of the subject so that during this main part of the lesson, they work skilfully with each group and ask questions to find out how well they are learning, while classroom assistants continue to give valuable support to pupils who learn more slowly. In the more effective lessons tasks were clearly and appropriately modified to suit different groups. For example, pupils in Year 1 used dominoes with differing sets of numbers to create sums to add up, and pupils in Year 6 had problems that were at four levels of difficulty when investigating the usefulness of brackets. However, analysis of work done throughout the school last year suggests that this does not always happen despite its focus in the co-ordinator's action plan.
81. Nearly all lessons finish well. In good lessons, teachers carefully review with the pupils what they have learned by asking appropriate questions which reflect the aims of the lesson. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not allow enough time to review the main points thoroughly. There was very little evidence of the regular use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning.
82. The management of the subject has improved over the last few years and now the leadership and management of the subject are good. Staff have been well trained. The co-ordinator sees teachers' termly plans but not their weekly ones and therefore is not aware of how teachers make short-term assessments. She has monitored teaching throughout the school and has developed investigation plans which are separate from teachers' usual planning. These are designed to improve the teaching of investigational skills and the practical application of mathematical skills. She has a file of assessed work and studies samples of work from each class on a regular basis. The results of the national tests are carefully analysed and used to pinpoint areas that need more careful teaching often in the form of class targets. Assessment of pupils' attainment when they enter school and tests for each year group form the basis for predictions of pupils' attainment through the school, and from an analysis of these, pupils who need it are given additional help. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## SCIENCE

83. As at the time of the last inspection, by the end of Year 2 most pupils attain standards that are typical of seven-year-olds. Generally pupils' achievement is satisfactory though there are areas where understanding is not fully secure. Pupils have a good understanding of living things and know which creatures lay eggs and which give birth to live young. They understand the differences between man-made objects and natural objects and what happens to everyday materials, like chocolate, when they are heated. The National Curriculum statutory assessments of pupils' work in 2000 showed that the school's performance was above average and a similar result was attained in 2001 but the scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that standards are not currently as high as indicated by the test results. Discussions with pupils and an analysis of their work indicated that there are areas for improvement. Many experience difficulty in describing their findings using scientific vocabulary though they are good at framing hypotheses. In a lesson on growth and change, for example, pupils in Year 2 considered that taller pupils may have been born bigger or may, over the years, have eaten more than their shorter friends. Their understanding of electrical circuits is limited though they do know which everyday appliances use electricity. Few can explain how to control variables to ensure that a test is conducted fairly so that results are reliable. Most have a good understanding of what causes motion and that both pushes and pulls are forces. They know that sound is caused by vibrations and that sounds get fainter as they travel away from the source of the sound.
84. Since the last inspection the standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 have improved significantly and now eleven-year-olds attain standards that are above average. This is reflected in the National Curriculum test results. In 2001 a higher proportion of pupils than average attained

the expected standard, Level 4, and over a half of pupils attained the higher Level 5 standard. Achievement is at least satisfactory and it is especially good in the classes for the older pupils. Pupils in Year 6 have a particularly good understanding of living processes. In one lesson, for example, they described the function of root systems and could explain why different types of plant have different root systems. They were able to set up an experiment to determine the quantities of water released from leaves due to transpiration and they knew that water and nutrients from the roots travel through plants, that plants absorb carbon dioxide and produce chlorophyll. A scrutiny of their work shows that they develop a good understanding of photosynthesis. This area of the curriculum is a particular strength due principally to the teacher's good knowledge and understanding of biology. Another factor that has resulted in the school's improved performance is the attention paid to all groups of pupils; much is expected of the more-able and average and below average pupils are supported well so that they are able to achieve success. Good links are made with other subjects. Pupils drawing skills are used effectively when creating detailed diagrams of plants and pupils draw neat graphs that plot, for example, the relationship between time and the solubility of solids in water at varying temperatures.

85. There are no marked differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are generally supported well and make good progress. In a Year 1 class, for example, a child with English as an additional language was provided with special individual support designed to ensure sound understanding of vocabulary associated with the five senses. This helped him to learn as effectively as most of the others in the class. However there are occasions when lessons are not pitched at the right level for all pupils and the tasks provided are not matched to pupils' varying stages of development. This occurred in a lesson in Year 4, which included measuring temperatures, where the material provided did not build effectively on pupils' prior learning experiences. As a result pupils struggled and failed to learn what was expected of them.
86. Teaching is satisfactory across the school though there are variations in teachers' skills. A quarter of the lessons seen were good but one lesson was unsatisfactory. Where teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject teaching is mostly good. This was especially the case in Years 1 and 6 and resulted in effective learning and mostly good achievement in these year groups. Teaching for the oldest pupils is better than for the younger pupils in the classes for seven to eleven-year olds and consequently the oldest pupils achieve well. Imaginative teaching about elements of the solar system was seen in Year 5. Here pupils assembled on the playground, took on the roles of sun, earth and moon and performed appropriate circular paths around the 'sun' at varying speeds. This promoted good understanding and pupils were able to explain with confidence that the earth takes 365.25 days to circle the sun whilst the moon takes 28 days to circle the earth. In Years 2, 3, 4 and 5, the subject is timetabled to take up the entire afternoon teaching session. The lessons in these year groups are too long. Pupils' interest is not sustained and the pace of learning slows. Teachers' plan activities carefully but the planning does not always take enough account of pupils' prior learning. In one lesson, for example, pupils were not sufficiently adept at reading thermometers to complete a planned activity. In another lesson on growth most of the activities, such as measuring leg length to determine if there was a correlation with height and placing a series of photographs in the correct sequence to illustrate the stages of human growth. One group was, however, completing a survey of the number of pets in their group. This activity did not relate to the learning objective and the learning of these pupils was limited because their understanding of growth was not extended. Lessons are successful where learning objectives are clear, such as, 'The children will be taught the function of the root and that different plants have different root systems'. Where such unequivocal learning intentions are shared with the pupils and learning is evaluated by all during a review session at the end of the lesson, learning is enhanced. There is a close relationship between the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Progress accelerates and pupils learn effectively where teaching is good and there is evidence of particularly good learning outcomes in Years 1 and 6.
87. In most lessons classroom assistants make a positive contribution to the quality of teaching. They provide good support for lower attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and

those with English as an additional language, especially when tasks have not been specially adapted to meet the varying learning requirements of different groups. In a few lessons, however, they were not always well deployed and were not actively involved in supporting pupils' learning. Relationships are consistently good between adults and pupils. Pupils enjoy the subject and good humour helps to sustain motivation. Motivation is heightened where pupils are engaged in first-hand investigations, as when they investigate magnets in an attempt to find out which kind of magnet is strongest and when they wash away the soil surrounding different plants as they explore root systems.

88. The management of the subject is good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator analyses the National Curriculum test results in great detail and highlights areas of strength as well as areas for further development in pupils' learning. Good liaison with other teachers helps them to focus on areas that have been identified as in need of extra input. Coverage of all the elements of the National Curriculum are promoted by a well thought out planning schedule that specifies precisely which parts of the curriculum will be taught to which year groups. This helps to ensure the cumulative development of skills, knowledge and understanding. A good system has recently been adopted to plot pupils' progress through the stages of the National Curriculum. Plans have been laid to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning by analysing pupils' work and by a systematic programme of lesson observations. This is designed to highlight areas for development and raise standards further. Resources are satisfactory and are, in the main, used well but there is little use of computers in lessons to support teaching and learning. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

89. As at the time of the last inspection standards are typical of seven and eleven-year-olds. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Examples of good work are produced in Year 1 and 2 but a scrutiny of work indicates that high standards have not been sustained consistently in the recent past. Pupils in Year 1 produce good self-portraits after contemplating the work of other portrait artists and after studying their faces intently in hand mirrors. They use paint a crayons sensitively and add fine detail to their work. The results are more typical of that produced by older pupils and actually capture much of the essential characteristics of the artists. Pupils in Year 2 observe their immediate environment with great concentration and carefully sketch part of the school grounds. They fill in missing sections of photographs taken in the school grounds and show considerable precision in matching colour and extending lines appropriately. They are good at examining a small part of a photograph of, say a hedgehog, and using their knowledge of texture, line and form to guess the subject of the whole photograph. Many find difficulty in recalling the work of famous artists or craftspeople. An examination of pupils' work indicates that learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Good links are made with other subjects, as when pupils in Year 1 listened to Prokofiev's 'Peter and the Wolf' and drew pictures based on their impressions. A reasonable range of techniques are taught and a satisfactory quantity of work is produced.
90. Pupils in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds are introduced to a broad range of techniques. Pupils in Year 3 study pattern and shape and work on symmetry links well with work on pattern in mathematics. They use natural materials such as wood, twigs, leaves and fir cones to create imaginative collages. Pupils study photographs on the theme of relationships and look at paintings such as Hockney's 'Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy' before painting their own interpretations. They enjoy their work and are pleased with their creations which are mostly typical of those produced by most eight-year-olds. After studying work by Klimt, pupils in Year 4 produce abstract work based on the theme of 'Journeys'. They grappled with the concept remarkably well and one boy produced an imaginative drawing of a journey conically down through a pond, revealing layer after layer each of which was interpreted differently. In Year 5 pupils create dramatic hand prints as part of their work with fabrics and create ingenious costumes that they wear in a parade as part of the Boston Carnival.
91. Throughout the school there is a connection between the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of pupils' learning. Teaching was good in the lessons seen in Year 2. One very good lesson on studying portraits was seen in Year 1 where the teacher had arranged a good

variety of inter-related activities. A digital camera mounted on the computer captured images of each pupil's face, another computer was used to create imaginary identikit pictures, large pictures of portraits by a range of artists, including Renoir, Modigliani, Rembrandt and Van Gogh, were studied and mirrors were used to study faces. The pupils were fascinated by the portraits of famous artists and were able to recognise differences in the styles of painting. This fired their enthusiasm for creating their own portraits. The teacher's high expectations of the quality of work to be produced encouraged great care and concentration. The results were remarkably good. In this lesson information and communication technology was used well to support learning but this is not generally the case. Scrutiny of work produced in the recent past indicates that such high standards are not achieved consistently and that teaching is typically not of the quality seen during the week of the inspection. Across the school most teaching is usually satisfactory. Where teaching is satisfactory there are still shortcomings. In one lesson technical terms, such as 'perspective' and 'abstract' were used with insufficient explanation of the meaning. In several classes the subject is timetabled for the whole afternoon session. This is too long a period, especially for the younger pupils. The impetus for learning is not always sustained over such a long period and the pace of lessons slackens during the second half of the afternoon. Teacher's planning is generally good and where plans specified precisely what skills were to be taught in a lesson, learning was enhanced because the goals were clear. Where teachers explained requirements clearly and in an unhurried, step-by-step manner, pupils gained a good understanding of what was expected of them and rose willingly to the challenges presented. This approach was seen in a good lesson on composition in Year 3 where pupils soon grasped the idea of horizons, backgrounds and colour washes. The good teaching capitalised on pupils' enjoyment of the subject and their eagerness to learn. The good teaching engendered a very serious approach to the work in hand and promoted the quest for high standards.

92. Over the last few years the school has had many pressing needs to address in other subjects and art and design has not been a priority for development. The co-ordinator is new to the school and has laid good plans to raise the status of the subject, including a carefully thought through arts week that is due to take place towards the end of this school year. A nationally recommended planning programme has been adopted to promote full coverage of the National Curriculum and a good system of assessment has recently been adopted to plot pupils' progress. Discussions with pupils indicate that they have limited knowledge and understanding of the work of artists and craftspeople and that this strand of the curriculum has not been taught systematically. There is also only a limited amount of three-dimensional work produced. There is little use of computers to develop greater understanding of pattern, colour or shape and little use of programs designed to create pictures. Research into the work of other artists and craftspeople via the Internet is also under-developed. The new planning and assessment procedures are designed to address these issues. A considerable sum of money has been spent on upgrading resources and pupils of work with good quality materials, such as sketch books and sketching pencils, and this helps to improve the quality of the work produced. Resources are generally used well and there are occasions when information and communication technology is used well to support teaching and learning, though this is not generally the case. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93. At the time of the last inspection this subject was not taught according to statutory requirements and represented a serious weakness in the school's curricular provision. Standards have improved significantly since 1997. The teaching of the subject now complies with statutory requirements and standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are typical of seven and eleven-year-olds. This represents a good degree of improvement. Only one lesson was seen during the course of the inspection and there was insufficient evidence in the work that pupils have produced in recent months and in teachers' planning to form secure judgements about pupils' achievement over time. A good range of work is produced. Pupils in Year 1 produce articulated puppets, whose limbs move because they are fixed with split pins and colourful finger puppets as well as carefully constructed cardboard houses that form part of their work on buildings. In Year 2 pupils design and make well designed glove puppets from felt. In Year 3 pupils use syringes as they experiment with pneumatics to make moving monsters based on papier-mâché balloons. Food

technology features in pupils' work; they design and make sandwich snacks in Year 3 and biscuits in Year 5. Good links are made with science when pupils in Year 4 use their knowledge of electrical circuits to design and make battery powered torches. Pupils use their writing skills well when framing written instructions on how to make things. In a lesson in Year 6 pupils were introduced to the technique of making a pattern from thin paper, pinning it to appropriate fabric, cutting out the shapes of the pattern before sewing them together to create a pair of slippers. The sequence of design, make, evaluate and improve artefacts is now becoming established.

94. Too few lessons were seen during the inspection to make judgements about the quality of teaching across the school but the lesson seen in Year 6 captured pupils' imagination. Here the teacher showed pupils how she had made herself a shirt from a paper pattern. Specific basic skills, such as creating a 'seam allowance', were explained and pupils were challenged to create a pattern based on designs for slippers that they had designed in a previous lesson. Pupils learned quickly and rose to the challenge of creating shapes for the component parts that would fit together appropriately. Throughout the school there is little evidence of pupils deconstructing objects to help them to see how they fit together. There was also little evidence of computers being used to support teaching and learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this subject and discussions indicated that they are keen to develop their skills further.
95. A nationally recommended planning framework has been adopted since the last inspection and this helps to ensure that statutory requirements are met. The framework forms part of the school's curricular map that clearly identifies what part of the National Curriculum will be taught in each term in each subject to each year group. A good assessment system has also been introduced recently that helps to plot pupils' progress through the stages of the National Curriculum. This is used well and indicates that the subject is now firmly embedded in the work of the school.

## **FRENCH**

96. Modern foreign languages are not a compulsory part of the National Curriculum but the school provides a short session of French teaching each week for pupils In Year 6. This helps them to develop a modicum of familiarity with the language before it becomes part of their compulsory studies at their secondary schools in Year 7. As the inspection took place at the beginning of the academic year, pupils had only been taught one previous lesson. In the lesson observed pupils showed a keen interest. They understood the basic vocabulary that the teacher introduced and responded confidently to questions. They know how to say numbers up to twenty in French. Pupils show enthusiasm for learning and behave sensibly in lessons, showing little self-consciousness as they attempt to repeat new words. They copied simple words about families accurately and enjoyed answering questions about how many brothers or sisters they had. It is appropriate that most of the work is oral though there is a reasonable element of written work to consolidate learning. As it was so early in the term, and as most of the work is oral, it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievement or about the standards that they attain.
97. The teaching of the subject is satisfactory though the teacher has little knowledge or understanding of the language and finds it difficult to present a good model of the correct accent for unfamiliar words. There is a fluent French speaker on the staff who gives assistance when required. Insufficient use is made of audio or video tapes or computers to supplement the teaching. Pupils are receiving an initial introduction to the language and this helps them when they continue their studies in the secondary phase.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

98. Only one geography lesson was observed during the inspection as this subject is taught for one and a half terms in each year and most classes do not currently have geography on their timetables. However, discussion with the co-ordinator and scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work indicate there is adequate provision for the subject.



99. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with the national expectations for eleven-year-olds. These standards have remained the same since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. As it was so early in the school year, there was insufficient evidence to form a judgement about standards at the end of Year 2.
100. Pupils in Year 3 recognise the main features on an Ordnance Survey map of the local area. They talk about the way in which different colours are used to represent the classification of roads. They know how to use a key to identify symbols such as marshland, windmills and lighthouses and locate these on the map. When using a street map of Boston they quickly find both their school and another local one. In Year 4, pupils study environmental problems and conduct a school noise survey to gain understanding of how decisions affect people's lives. They learn about settlements in Lincolnshire and the impact these had on the locality. Pupils use secondary sources of information such as maps, photos and reference books to find out about and compare different parts of the world.
101. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are building on their skills and knowledge as they study mountain regions and environments such as the Austrian and Australian Alps. They learn about the water cycle and consider the effect of different kinds of weather on landscapes, people and animals. When drawing plans of their classroom, pupils in a Year 5 class use a computer program to help them.
102. Insufficient lessons were seen to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in geography. Scrutiny of pupils' written work shows that pupils of all abilities often tackle the same tasks. As a result, the progress of lower attaining pupils is limited as they struggle to complete their work. In the lesson observed in Year 3, the teaching was satisfactory. The lesson was suitably planned with an appropriate structure and range of activities to support pupils' learning. Clear explanations ensured the pupils knew what they were to learn. A quick recap helped pupils returning part way through the lesson from additional support groups to settle. However, only one Ordnance Survey map was available for the pupils to study so while some pupils remained focused and keen to respond, a small group was unable to see and lost interest. The use of appropriate geographical vocabulary and good teacher knowledge helped pupils to interpret the map but the lesson was heavily teacher directed and too few opportunities were created for pupils to explain their thinking and demonstrate their understanding.
103. The school has a clear policy in place and has adopted the national scheme of work which is helping to ensure that the curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There has also been some improvement in assessment procedures. Record sheets relating to the scheme of work are now used in all classes to track pupils' progress and attainment. Resources are adequate and new ones have been added to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is some evidence of good links with other areas of the curriculum such as the use of computers to make plans of the classroom in Year 5.
104. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning to check that it matches the scheme of work and has observed teaching in each class. As a result, the need for additional resources was identified but there was no evaluation of the quality of teaching or targets set for future development. No formal monitoring takes place through scrutinising pupils' work so little information is gathered about the standards being achieved. However, the co-ordinator's current action plan refers to monitoring teaching and moderating standards. There has been no significant improvement since the last inspection. Computers are used to support teaching and learning but the use of information and communication technology is at an early stage of development and does not yet have a major impact on the standards that pupils attain. The school has recognised the need for further development and geography is a priority in the school's development plan for 2002-2003. Overall, the co-ordination of geography is satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

105. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils reach standards that are in line with the national expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
106. Pupils in Year 1 use topics such as 'Toys' to help them develop a sense of time and chronology. They discuss collections of soft toys identifying old and new ones and sorting them according to their age. Through their observations, they notice the differences between modern toys and older ones and they begin to give reasons for what they observe. For example, they suggest that a toy is probably old because it is very floppy and has a hole. Pupils in Year 2 show understanding of 'future', 'present' and 'past' when sorting words such as 'then', 'now' and 'recently'. They use pictures and photographs to identify differences and changes in household items and everyday life and begin to explain why things have changed. They record their findings in simple sentences and drawings.
107. By the end of Year 6, pupils have studied a range of topics including the Ancient Greeks, the Tudors, Invaders and Settlers, the Ancient Egyptians and Explorers such as James Cook. In Year 4, pupils have begun a topic about Ancient Egypt. They raised relevant questions and interviewed their teacher in the role of Howard Carter. This successful strategy led to higher attaining pupils working co-operatively in small groups as they took on the roles of Howard Carter, the interviewer and a scribe. They shared ideas and used reference books to learn more about the discoveries. In such lessons learning for most pupils is effective. Lower attaining pupils attempted to write a newspaper report but a small minority found this too challenging and made little progress.
108. In Year 6, pupils at the early stages of a project about Ancient Greeks, are given the opportunity to use a range of sources to research facts about the religious beliefs of Ancient Greeks. Higher attaining pupils used a family tree and reference books to trace information about a Greek god. They fed back their findings to the rest of the class, successfully sharing their learning with others. Pupils knew how to use the contents page and index of reference books and with support the lower attaining pupils used the Internet to seek information. Not all pupils found it easy to make notes and several copied complete sections from the books. Written work in exercise books shows that pupils of all abilities often tackle the same tasks and that this neither challenges the higher attaining pupils nor supports the lower attaining pupils. As a result, there is little evidence of in depth study where pupils make links across the different periods and societies studied.
109. Teaching in the lessons seen throughout the school was good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The scrutiny of work produced indicates, however, that expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining are not always sufficiently high. Teachers have a secure grasp of the subject matter and present the work in ways that motivate the pupils and help them to develop their enquiry skills. Lessons are usually well planned although occasionally pupils are not sufficiently clear about what they are learning. Teachers ask well-chosen questions so that pupils think hard and respond thoughtfully. In a Year 6 class the teacher skilfully links the pupils' research findings so that their contributions are valued and used to inform others in the class. Speaking and listening skills are well developed through history lessons when pupils are encouraged to talk about their observations in groups and to the class. Good links are made in some classes with writing such as when pupils in a Year 4 class use their knowledge of newspaper report writing to record information about discoveries in Ancient Egypt. There is evidence that information and communication technology, such as finding information on the Internet, is used, but the use of computers to support teaching and learning is at an early stage of development
110. The school has a clear policy in place and has adopted the national scheme of work which is helping to ensure that the curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and has clear cross-curricular links. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There has also been some improvement in assessing and recording pupils' progress. Further development is needed, however, to ensure that the information gathered is used by all teachers to inform future planning. Pupils make visits to places such as Lincoln, the Lincolnshire Life Museum and Boston

Guildhall. They join in a Tudor day at Blackfriars, dressing up and taking part in role play activities to extend their knowledge and understanding. Adequate resources are available.

111. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning to check that it matches the scheme of work. No formal monitoring takes place, however, through observing lessons or scrutinising pupils' work so little information is gathered about the standards being achieved or about staff development needs. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the last inspection. The school has recognised the need for further development and history is a priority in the school's development plan for 2002-2003. The co-ordinator has produced her own action plan which includes monitoring teaching and levels of attainment and auditing the resources. Overall, the co-ordination of history is satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be satisfactory for both seven and eleven year olds with some instances of pupils attaining standards beyond those expected. Since then the national requirements for the subject have been extended, so that the present pupils' satisfactory attainment in both age groups, in fact represents good improvement in standards. Across the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The majority of teachers have had additional training and both they and classroom assistants are now confident to teach at appropriate levels. At the time of the last inspection there was a technician on site but this is no longer the case. As a result breakdowns in the systems can cause great frustration. The school has started to install a computer suite and pupils have regular lessons on these new computers. However, it was found at the time of the last inspection that computers in the classrooms were used insufficiently and this remains true.
113. The standards of attainment of pupils in Year 2 are average. Two pupils showed satisfactory levels of competence in word processing when they wrote a story based on the fable about 'The fox and the crow'. Samples of work by pupils in Year 2 last year confirm that there is satisfactory knowledge of the keyboard and space key. Planning shows both satisfactory coverage and logical development of skills. Pupils in Year 1 are familiar with the mouse but some find difficulty in controlling it accurately since it is much smaller than the one they used in reception. They enjoy altering facial features to obtain a portrait which is very different from the one at the beginning, and they show good levels of understanding of the use of the cursor. They print their work independently.
114. The standard of pupils' attainment in Year 6 is average and they are working at the expected level. They enter and use the Internet independently by typing the address for an appropriate website, which they then skim for information, for example about life in ancient Greece. Teachers' planning and samples of work from last year indicate that coverage is indeed satisfactory, and that pupils' skills are developed progressively. For example, in a lesson in Year 3, in connection with their science, pupils learned to use a variety of fonts and sizes to make a list of springs used at home and in school. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils developed this knowledge effectively. They were confident to use a variety of font, size and colour to make a list of ideas to improve playtime which they centred independently before saving their work and logging off. Pupils in Year 5, learn to use 'logo' to draw a geometric picture where items have to be chosen, moved and altered, prior to putting a plan of their classroom on computer.
115. The quality of teaching was good in all the lessons observed. Teachers plan appropriately, often for half the class to work on the computers at a time. Teachers go over the learning aims clearly and, where necessary, they explain new techniques in simple language so that pupils are confident to try. Teachers and classroom assistants encourage pupils to work independently whenever possible and they respond well. They concentrate hard, discuss sensibly among themselves and help each other. Tasks are often linked to other areas of the curriculum. This both enriches those subjects and gives a practical purpose to using the computers. All pupils have equal access unless they are timetabled for extra work elsewhere.

116. The co-ordinator is keen and knowledgeable. She knows where the subject still needs strengthening and has plans in hand for improvements. New, nationally recommended guidance for planning has been adapted to suit the school's circumstances. She has monitored most teachers' work and sees medium term plans but not weekly ones. She sees samples of pupils' work at the end of each term which helps to identify areas for development. The co-ordinator has started create a computerised classification system for all the school's library books which will become operative as soon as the new library building is completed. Resources are satisfactory but will improve significantly in the next few months when the computer suite is completed.

## MUSIC

117. Standards of attainment were judged to be satisfactory for both seven and eleven year olds at the time of the last inspection. Due to the school's timetabling arrangements the inspection team were not in the school when most of the music lessons take place. It was not possible, therefore, to gather enough evidence from lessons to form judgements about standards across the school or the extent of improvement since the last inspection. Planning for each year group shows a satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum and that pupils have a wide range of musical experiences but there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about pupils' achievement. Plans state clearly which competencies are to be taught in order for pupils to build steadily on their skills in singing, playing a variety of instruments, making simple compositions and listening to pieces of music.
118. Two lessons were observed during the inspection, one in Year 1 and one in Year in year 5. In the lesson in Year 1, pupils attained standards that were in line with national expectations for their age. They sang clearly and sweetly and started to recognise the need for different expression depending on the subject of the song. They began to think about the pitch and volume of their voices, but had difficulties in total control. In the junior lesson, pupils also attained well in line with other pupils of their age. They controlled untuned instruments efficiently. They defined and compared sounds accurately using a wide, descriptive vocabulary, for example, 'grinding, rough, piercing, warm'. In assemblies, pupils sing tunefully, with good control and they enunciate clearly. There is a school choir which did not perform during the inspection, and a recorder group of mixed experience who had just had their first session of the year. All members are enthusiastic and keen to learn. All the beginners were able to play a short phrase while the more experienced pupils played accurately and with good, clear tone.
119. Teaching in Year 1 was of good quality, and in Year 5 it was very good. Where teaching was very good, the teacher had planned very carefully so that she used an interesting range of activities to explore how to make open and closed sounds with a variety of percussion instruments. This led the pupils who were initially unenthusiastic to concentrate well and try hard. The pace of the lesson was brisk, packed with activities. The teacher encouraged them to demonstrate to each other and this heightened their awareness of each other's performance and how to develop different effects. Because of the teacher's skilful presentation of the lesson, all pupils including those with special educational needs and challenging behaviour were fully included and deeply involved in the activities. By the end of the session the teacher had made the lesson into a riveting and highly valuable experience for all, where pupils had made very good progress in their understanding of how to make, listen to and talk about different sounds. In the lesson where teaching was good, the teacher had planned clearly with a good range of songs so that the lesson moved forward well. She explained and demonstrated the aim of the lesson simply so that her pupils quickly understood the need to think about expression while they sing and they were enthusiastic to try. Her classroom assistant noted those who had special ease or difficulty, and also helped everyone to maintain good concentration. The teacher led the singing unaccompanied which enabled her to keep eye contact with the pupils and gave them a sense of intimacy and being valued. They were confident to suggest that they should stand in straight lines to sing a song about a soldier at the end of the lesson. They performed with gusto and excellent sense of rhythm.
120. The co-ordinator is new in post this term and worked closely with her predecessor last year. She is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about her subject. She has already checked the teachers'

plans for coverage of topics and to ensure that there is smooth development of skills. She will have time during the year to monitor teaching, and is considering assessment procedures across the school. Several teachers already use an effective sheet, but they do not include self-assessment by pupils. Resources are satisfactory and are being updated to include more music from around the world. There is little evidence of computers being used to support learning. The co-ordinator has plans to invite a World Music group and a flamenco group into school in order to enrich the curriculum further.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with national expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is satisfactory and pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, attain average standards. Standards have largely been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils were observed in dance, games and gymnastics lessons.
122. Pupils in Year 1 show enjoyment and enthusiasm when moving to a lively warm-up tape. They respond well to the sad music of Samuel Barber's 'Adagio for Strings', moving slowly and expressively. To show anger, they stamp and make effective facial expressions. Most pupils use the space well but not all are able to respond quickly when asked to stop. In a gymnastics lesson, Year 2 pupils are attentive and keen to join in. They balance on one leg with reasonable control and find a good variety of ways to move along a bench on different body parts. Many perform forward rolls properly and they know how to land safely when jumping. They work hard and notice how the exercise has made their heart beats speed up.
123. Pupils build on their gymnastic skills in Year 3. They balance on a variety of body parts and using a balance beam, they show reasonable control while hopping, walking backwards and using their hands to jump from one side of it to the other. However, they are not clear about the meaning of transferring body weight in a sequence of movements. Pupils in Year 4 move imaginatively and with good co-ordination in a dance lesson focusing on slow and sudden movements. They become very absorbed and co-operate well in pairs developing a sequence of mirrored movements to the music 'In the Hall of the Mountain King'. Dance work in Year 5 is effectively linked to the science theme of 'Space'. Pupils show high levels of concentration as they build up a sequence of expressive movements to represent waking up in space and meeting a stranger. In a Year 6 games lesson, almost all pupils demonstrate careful ball control as they dribble a ball around markers with a hockey stick. Not all hold the stick correctly, however. Pupils work well in teams and in pairs passing the ball from one to another.
124. Across the school, teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. In the best lessons, teachers use a good range of stimulating activities that are enjoyable and encourage pupils to work hard. The pace of these lessons is brisk and pupils are actively involved. Music is well chosen, encouraging pupils to move expressively and thoughtfully. There is no longer an over-reliance on BBC programmes as reported in the last inspection. Basic skills are well taught in most classes so that pupils move and use apparatus with increasing control. Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum where this is appropriate. However, few opportunities were observed for pupils to evaluate and learn from each other's work and in one class insufficient attention is paid to the safety aspects of movements such as handstands and forward rolls. Occasionally, pupils are not sufficiently physically challenged by the activities planned in the lesson.
125. The school has a clear policy and has adopted the national scheme of work to ensure full coverage of the subject. This is supplemented by curriculum guidance materials from Doncaster Metropolitan University to ensure that the teaching of basic skills is fully in place. Pupils' attainment and progress is tracked and recorded in line with the school's assessment policy. These are all improvements since the last inspection. All pupils in Years 3 to 5 have regular swimming lessons as do those in Year 6 who have not yet met the national expectations for 11 year-olds. There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs available largely to pupils in Year 3 to 6. These include football, netball, athletics and short tennis. However there are no gymnastics or

dance clubs for younger pupils. The school takes part in a number of local tournaments including swimming, athletics, football and netball. An outdoor pursuits team has visited the school which was so successful that plans are in place for a second visit.

126. The newly appointed co-ordinator has made a good start in her role and the subject is being well led. She has introduced the curriculum guidance materials and monitors teachers' termly planning, offering advice as appropriate. As a result, teachers' confidence and expertise have grown. Resources have been audited and are now adequate, although there is a need to add to the large climbing apparatus in the hall. There is little use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning. The role of the co-ordinator role is under-developed and there is little monitoring of the quality of teaching or the standards achieved by pupils.