

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MONICA'S CATHOLIC COMBINED SCHOOL

Neath Hill, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110482

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Finkenrath

Reporting inspector: Mr J G F Parsons
22546

Dates of inspection: 30th April – 3rd May 2001

Inspection number: 193089

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First and Middle School

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 12

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Currier Drive
Neath Hill
Milton Keynes

Postcode: MK14 6HB

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Dave O'Brien

Date of previous inspection: 3rd March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22546	Mr J F G Parsons	Registered inspector	Art and design History Physical education Modern foreign languages (French)	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
31713	Mr S Roberts	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23221	Mrs L M Parkinson	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	How well are pupils taught?
28046	Mrs C A Goodchild	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

17685	Mrs L R Spooner	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communicatio n technology Music Equal opportunities Special educational needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Monica's is a large urban Catholic combined school that caters for pupils between 3 and 12. There are 292 boys and girls in the main school and 37.5 full time equivalent children in the Nursery. The school is larger than other primary schools and it is larger than it was at the time of the previous inspection. It is over-subscribed and takes pupils from a wide catchment area. Many pupils travel considerable distances to attend school. The general attainment of the pupils is slightly above average on entry. Employment in the area is high, and at less than three per cent, the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. Vandalism is low. There are approximately nine per cent of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups and less than one per cent of pupils who speak English as an additional language. No pupils are at the early stages of language acquisition. On the special educational needs register there are slightly more than ten per cent of pupils, of these less than one per cent have statements of special educational needs. The majority of pupils with special educational needs are on the first two stages identified in the Code of Practice. Those on the later stages of the register have moderate or specific learning difficulties, for example, dyslexia.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Monica's is good at developing the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and science and offers a satisfactory education overall. It is a caring school with very good relationships underpinned by strong Catholic traditions. By the end of Key Stage 2 in comparison with national averages, over a four-year period, the trend of improvement has been above the national average. In the year 2000 national tests by the end of Key Stage 2 standards overall were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools¹. The quality of teaching is good overall and occasionally very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection. The satisfactory leadership of the headteacher and key staff together with the support of the governing body has enabled the school to make good improvement since the last inspection. However, a number of management issues are outstanding namely the lack of development of the Foundation Stage, information and communication technology (ICT) and the role of the co-ordinators. The combination of good standards in basic skills, good teaching and low pupil cost balanced against the areas for development indicates the school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils achieve good standards in the basic skills in English, mathematics and science.
- Almost half of teaching is good or better and it is good overall.
- Pupils across the school have very good attitudes, which are reflected in their personal relationships and they have a strong understanding of right and wrong.
- Underpinned by the Catholic faith, the arrangements for pupils' spiritual and moral development are very good.
- The procedures for ensuring the pupils' health, welfare and safety particularly child protection are very good.
- The great majority of parents consider that their children achieve well in this school.

What could be improved

- The Foundation Stage in Reception classes is not fully developed.
- Resources are inadequate affecting the standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, which are below those expected for pupils' age.
- The roles of the co-ordinators are insufficiently developed to enable them to influence teaching and learning in the classroom.
- The current timetable is inflexible and some lessons are too long.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected on the 3^d March 1997. There has been good improvement overall since the last inspection. There has been a satisfactory response by the leadership of the school and many new initiatives have been implemented recently. The school has effectively introduced assessment procedures so that teachers now have more information about pupils' prior attainment. This information is also used to enable teachers to plan more effectively. It is as a result of this improved planning that higher attaining pupils now achieve appropriately and make good progress. The roles of the subject co-ordinators have been developed so that they now have an overview of the curriculum and planning within the school. However, they have not been given the full responsibility for developing teaching and learning, and acting as a critical friend to other teachers. Curriculum development is satisfactory. There are schemes of work for every subject, which give appropriate guidance to teachers, and the school is well on track to fully adopt the Curriculum 2000 initiatives introduced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. However, the scheme of work for the Foundation Stage is not fully implemented, as planning in the Reception classes does not fully incorporate the early learning goals². There has been a marked improvement in the accommodation since the last inspection with the addition of purpose built Reception classrooms. The school has thoroughly reviewed the length of the school day and time spent on subjects complies with national guidelines. However, the structure of the timetable is such that some lessons are too long and there is a lack of flexibility. The school has the capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar school ²
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	A	B
mathematics	A	A	B	C
science	A	A	B	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards in the Nursery are particularly good and a strength of the school. In the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) the majority of children are achieving at least satisfactory standards overall although progress is slower in creative development, as the Foundation Stage is not fully implemented. In the year 2000 national tests in reading and writing, for pupils by the end of Key Stage 1, standards were in line with the national average but below compared to similar schools¹. In mathematics, pupils' standards were well below average, both nationally and when compared to similar schools¹. Results of teacher assessment in science showed that standards were below the national average and well below those of similar¹ schools by the end of Key Stage 1. Factors that contributed to the lower than usual results in mathematics and science were the weaker than average group and the over severe assessment made by teachers. The inspection confirmed this and found pupils' standards in all tested subjects were at least in line with national expectations and above in English. By the end of Key Stage 2 the school exceeded its targets in all tested subjects, in both 1999 and 2000. Results in English by the end of Key Stage 2 in the year 2000 national tests were well above the national average compared to all schools and above when compared to similar¹ schools. Results in mathematics were above those expected for pupils' age compared to all schools and in line compared to similar schools¹. Results in science were above those expected compared to all schools nationally but in line with similar¹ schools. The inspection found that standards in English and mathematics were at least above those expected for pupils' age by the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. The effective introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is an important factor in these good standards. The

inspection found standards are above those expected for pupils' age in science by the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. Using statistical information available, it is clear that compared to similar schools¹ pupils' progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is above average in all the tested subjects. In information and communication technology standards are in line with those expected for pupils' age by the end of Key Stage 1 but below average by the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 due to limited resources. By the end of both key stages and in Year 7 in all other subjects (design and technology, geography, history and physical education, art and design and music) pupils' standards are in line with those expected for their age. The exception is French (modern foreign language) in Year 7, which is above those expected for pupils' age. Religious education was inspected separately under section 23 provision.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have a very positive attitude to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in most lessons is good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Overall relationships and the personal development of pupils are very good.
Attendance	Good overall.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. In 100 per cent of lessons teaching was satisfactory or better, in 46 per cent it was good or better and in 5 per cent it was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection when 12 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. In both the Nursery and Reception classes there is a calm, purposeful, working atmosphere. The teaching and learning are based upon sound Foundation Stage principles and practice in the Nursery, but the teachers in the Reception classes do not yet fully plan to the early learning goals² in the Foundation Stage. Literacy and numeracy are well taught across the school. The teaching and learning in mathematics and English are good overall and teachers' skills have benefited from literacy and numeracy training. Examples of good teaching were observed in all three key stages and in Year 7. There were examples of very good teaching in the Nursery class. The good assessment and careful planning ensures that the teaching is good in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and in science. Good quality teaching makes a substantial contribution towards promoting pupils' enthusiasm for school, their positive attitudes towards work, and their quality of learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are covered. However, the Foundation Stage curriculum has not been fully introduced in Reception.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Pupils with special educational needs progress well as they move through the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good overall. Pupils who have English as an additional language are fully integrated and achieve at a similar level to their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good. Social development is good and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school's care of its pupils, and the support provided for them is very good. Assessment procedures are effective.
How well the school works with parents	Good. The school has a good partnership with parents. It works hard to involve and consult parents on issues affecting the school and their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The sound leadership of the headteacher ensures that the school has a clear educational direction. Together with all staff, the headteacher has a commitment to high standards, although the roles of the subject co-ordinators are not fully developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body is satisfactorily involved in holding the school to account and supports the headteacher and senior management team.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has very good procedures in place for tracking pupils' performance across the school, enabling the school to set targets and teachers to plan more effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources, including specific grants, are used well to promote pupils' learning and the school development plan is costed to ensure that the school's priorities are addressed in its expenditure.
Adequacy of staffing accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory. The school has a good range of well-qualified teachers, who have extensive expertise in many subjects, but there are insufficient support staff across the school. The accommodation is good and improved by addition of purpose built Reception classrooms. Learning resources are adequate overall, but there is insufficient ICT equipment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

33 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting (10 per cent) and 179 questionnaires were returned (54 per cent)

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parents agree that their children like school and are making good progress. • They agree that their children are well behaved and teaching is good. • They agree that the school expects their children to work hard and helps them to become mature. • Most parents consider the school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents do not consider that they are kept sufficiently well informed about their children's progress. • Some parents do not feel the school works closely with parents. • A few do not consider the school is well led or managed. • Some parents do not consider the school is providing a wide range of interesting activities.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The inspection found the quality of information given to parents and links with parents are satisfactory. Leadership and management are sound, and the provision of extra-curricular activities is good.

¹This is based on comparing this school with the results of schools with a similar level of pupils' entitlement to free school meals nationally.

² Early learning goals are the standards in 6 areas of learning that children in the Foundation Stage should achieve by 5 years of age.

³ Level 2 is the expected standard in the National Curriculum tests by age 7 and Level 3 and 4 are above and well above this standard. Level 4 is the expected standard in the National Curriculum tests by age 11. Level 5 and 6 are above and well above this standard.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the Nursery with overall attainment that is slightly above average, although there is a wide range of ability. This is confirmed by baseline tests that are used by the school. In the Nursery class, pupils make very good progress and are very well prepared for Reception. By the end of the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes), the majority of children are achieving good standards and at least attain and sometimes exceed, the early learning goals² in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Children are making satisfactory progress towards mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. There is slower progress towards the early learning goal in creative development. This is affected by the lack of planning to the Foundation Stage in Reception. Overall, children are well prepared for the start of the National Curriculum in Year 1.
2. The early learning goal² of communication, language and literacy is given a high priority. By the time the children are at the end of the Foundation Stage most have achieved this early learning goal² and a good number have achieved beyond this and are beginning to work towards Level 1. Pupils have the confidence to ask questions and offer comments.
3. By the end of Key Stage 1 in the year 2000 national tests, standards overall in reading and writing were in line with national expectations. In these tests 95 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2³ or higher in reading and in writing; results that were both well above the national averages of 84 per cent for reading and 82 per cent for writing. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3³ results was below the national averages at 22 per cent for reading and 3 per cent for similar schools¹. The development of basic skills starts early. For example, the development of the early writing compared to 28 per cent and 12 per cent respectively for the national average. This averaged out to pupils achieving standards overall in reading and writing that were in line with those expected for their age. However, compared to similar² schools, standards were below the national average in reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 1. In mathematics standards were well below the national average because of the small percentage achieving the higher Level 3³ or above. Only 19 per cent of pupils achieved Level 3³ compared to 25 per cent nationally. Standards in mathematics were well below average when compared to similar schools¹. Teacher assessment in science indicates standards by the end of Key Stage 1 that are below the national average overall and when compared to similar² schools, although the percentage achieving the higher Level 3² was in line with the national average. A combination of the lower than average attainment of pupils and the severe internal marking were considered the contributory factors to the dip in results in the year 2000 national tests by the end of Key Stage 1. In the previous two years in both reading and writing standards were well above average and in mathematics they were in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 1. The inspection found that by the end of Key Stage 1, standards in all the tested subjects were at least in line with those expected for pupils' age, with those for English being at least above average. This reflects both the priority given to literacy by the school and pupils' attainment over a period of time rather than the most recent test results.
4. The development of basic skills continues. By the end of Key Stage 1 the higher

attaining pupils are learning to read with expression. These readers retell a story succinctly and can read words such as '*multitude*' although they do not necessarily understand the meaning. There is a good system whereby these above average readers write small reviews of the books they have been reading in their home school diaries. The use of language, sentence structure, grammar, syntax and punctuation is developing well throughout the school. Pupils use a wide variety of adjectives and they become quite skilful in using connectives and writing more complex sentences to add interest. Many pupils begin to be very aware of punctuation by the end of Key Stage 1 and a good number try hard to use it correctly. The teachers build on this in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 and its use progresses well. Pupils' spelling is satisfactory but is weaker than the other elements of writing. By the end of Key Stage 1 in mathematics, the large majority of pupils have a secure knowledge of number and number operations. In Year 1, pupils demonstrate a good grasp of number operations to 10. By the end of Year 2, they understand place value to 20 with higher ability pupils working with numbers to 100. They are developing good mental strategies for finding answers to mathematical questions. This is because the school has ensured that the oral and mental aspect of lessons is consistently followed and is in line with the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy.

5. The national tests in English for pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 in year 2000 showed that 94 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4³ or above compared to 75 per cent nationally. This was well above the national average and above average for similar schools¹. In mathematics 84 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4³ or above. This result was above the national average but in line with similar schools¹. In science 97 per cent of pupils achieved the national average of Level 4³ or above compared to 85 per cent nationally. This result was well above the national average, but those pupils achieving the higher Level 5³ at 35 per cent was close to the national average of 34 per cent. Overall standards in science were above the national average but in line with similar schools¹. By the end of Key Stage 2 in all the tested subjects standards are above the national average and in line with those of similar² schools. The inspection found that standards in English, mathematics and science were at least above those expected for pupils' age by the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7.
6. The concentration on basic literacy and numeracy skills continues throughout both Key Stage 2 and Year 7. Across the school pupils' listening skills are very good and their speaking skills are good. Relationships in every classroom are such that speaking and listening skills flourish in a positive and supportive way. Pupils are particularly good when they speak spontaneously, for example, in group or class situations where there are question and answer sessions. By the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, average and above average pupils read with good expression and have developed an enthusiasm for books. They can often give good reasons for their choice of reading matter. Interest in reading non-fiction books is much less marked than interest in different types of fiction. Most pupils understand how to use the contents pages and glossaries in books but are unsure of the purpose of indexes. All pupils at both key stages are very aware of sounding out and building up unknown words. In mathematics the majority of Year 6 pupils already work confidently with number at the expected Level 4³ with approximately one third of pupils working at Level 5³. In the lessons observed, many pupils were confident in their recall of number knowledge. This is particularly well promoted in lessons where mental and oral sessions are conducted at a brisk pace, and teachers' questioning challenges and targets individuals and groups. However, this is not yet consistent practice in all classes in some of which the pace of lessons is occasionally too slow. In the lessons observed in Year 6, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of measurement facts and were confidently able to convert units of measurement.

7. Standards overall taken over a four-year period show that they are rising above the national trend by the end of Key Stage 2. There has been a good overall improvement in standards since the previous inspection. This inspection found that the school is good at raising standards in the basic skills. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well introduced. Standards in English and science are above those expected for pupils' age by the end of both key stages and in Year 7. In mathematics, standards are in line with those expected for pupils' age by the end of Key Stage 1 and above the expected standard by the end of Key Stage 2. In all other subjects (information and communication technology, design and technology, art and design, history, geography, physical education and music) by the end of both key stages and in Year 7, standards are in line with those expected for pupils' age. The exception is in French (modern foreign language) in Year 7, which is above average. Pupils' good speaking and listening skills are transferred to French and they speak with confidence and have a good range of vocabulary. In information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, the standard is below average because of the range and quality of ICT equipment. Teachers cope well with a computer suite, which is not sufficient to cater for half a class. The lack of opportunity for pupils to practise ICT skills negatively affects the standards in classes with larger numbers. This includes pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 by which time these skills should be well developed. The school is to remedy this resource issue in the coming school year.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress by the end of Key Stage 1 and some pupils progress sufficiently to be taken off the special educational needs register. Pupils make good progress by the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 because of detailed and effective provision. This is similar to the progress made by their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, all of whom speak English fluently, attain at a similar level to their peers across the school. Assessment results indicate that there have been significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls, where boys consistently outperform girls, although no evidence of differing performance was seen during the inspection. The school is fully aware of this issue and is addressing it effectively in mathematics but not yet in English or science. Standards in religious education were inspected separately under Section 23 provision for schools.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils display very positive attitudes throughout the school. They are keen to attend school and play a full part in its life, including extra-curricular activities. Most show enthusiasm and interest in their allotted tasks and are keen and willing to learn. They concentrate well in lessons and respond to teachers' questions in an eager but orderly way. Pupils are proud of the school and respect the materials and resources available to them in a mature manner. A few pupils, mainly boys, fail to maintain interest for the whole lesson and teachers take appropriate action to ensure that there is minimal disruption within the classroom.
10. Pupils in the Nursery are happy and settled, play well with others, and independently in self-directed play. They are given freedom to participate in a number of activities in a safe and supportive environment, which allows them to develop confidence and a respect for others. They take turns and help each other and are always willing to ask questions and express their opinions.
11. The school has effective procedures to encourage and promote good standards of

behaviour and this was observed at all times in and around the school. Pupils move about the building in a calm and considerate manner, always willing to hold doors open or let adults go first. During playtime boys and girls are at ease with each other and although naturally boisterous at times there was no evidence of oppressive behaviour. Parents are very happy with the standards of behaviour achieved in the school.

12. The personal development of the pupils is very good. They are given a good range of opportunities to take responsibility. Older pupils ensure that attendance registers are collected and returned to the classroom. Pupils were observed providing support in ICT and assisting in the Nursery, a task that they thoroughly enjoy. Pupils respect their teachers and learn from them to be kind, polite and courteous to each other. The school aims and the religious beliefs that are incorporated in school life are valued by pupils and parents, and are regularly referred to by the staff to maintain the established and the very high standards of personal development, which the school has achieved.
13. Attendance for the current year is 95.4 per cent, which is above the national average. Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and at individual lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The good quality of teaching has a significant impact on pupils' learning and achievements. The overall quality of teaching is good. In 100 per cent of lessons teaching was satisfactory or better, in 46 per cent it was good or better and in 5 per cent it was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection when 12 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Good lessons were observed at both Key Stage 1 and 2 and the very good lessons were seen in the Nursery. A major strength of the teaching is the good management of pupils which aids and supports the development of very good relationships that teachers establish with their pupils. The good teaching of basic skills is impacting significantly on pupils' achievements in literacy, numeracy and science and on the standards at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. All teachers have good subject knowledge. Across the school in some lessons, the plenary sessions, or the final gathering together at the end of a lesson, are not always effectively used to evaluate whether pupils have achieved the learning objectives of the lesson. In some lessons, the level of challenge and rigour is not sufficiently high to ensure the maximum rate of learning for a significant number of mostly high attaining pupils. For example, pupils are sometimes asked to colour in pictures on worksheets or stick worksheets into exercise books or other low-level tasks.
15. The teaching in the Nursery is frequently very effective. The quality of teaching was consistently very good resulting in children making very good progress. A key feature of the teaching in the Nursery is the way in which children are encouraged to explore, investigate and practise skills, due to the good planning and organisation of activities and intervention by all staff. Staff work as a team and the good recording of assessments of children aids the planning. Teaching in the Reception classes is never less than satisfactory and often good. The two Reception teachers work well as a team. They are good at explaining and demonstrating. The children know exactly what is expected of them. The key strength of the teaching in both year groups in the Foundation Stage is the very good and sensitive management of the children so that they feel happy and confident to come to school; thus securing a solid foundation on which to build their school lives.

16. Teachers in the Reception classes keep in mind the early learning goals² of the Foundation Stage curriculum but they plan to Key Stage 1 National Curriculum subjects throughout the year, which does not comply with current regulations. Planning to subjects rather than the early learning goals² at the beginning of the year affects the way in which children are taught and does not always match the way young children learn. This restricts progress especially in creative development.
17. In the rest of the school good teaching was seen in all the year groups and consistently in Year 5. The more effective teaching involves good organisation, very clear instructions, explanations and demonstrations, and follows established routines are followed so that pupils know what is expected. The level of challenge was appropriately raised in a Year 5 lesson in design and technology where pupils were designing a buggy, when good questioning challenged pupils to move forward in their thinking and to assess their own work as they progressed. Thus pupils became totally and fully engaged in the activity. The plenary, or final gathering together session, was well used in this lesson to assess how much progress pupils had made. The programme of homework in Year 6 is effective and promotes pupils' learning. Appropriate ongoing records of pupils' progress are kept by teachers and at Key Stage 2 detailed and thorough records are kept by the learning support assistant. All pupils are given equal access to lessons and are fully involved, including pupils with English as an additional language. At Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 in particular, teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers across the school take account of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs in lessons. There is an effective link at Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 between teachers and the learning support assistant and across the school between the special educational needs co-ordinator and teachers. This effective communication benefits pupils' learning.
18. In a significant proportion of lessons, learning objectives are descriptive rather than outlining what pupils are to learn. They are not always effectively linked to the final gathering together or plenary session. This makes the lesson overall less effective. The use of these sessions in lessons is a feature of the teaching in the majority of subjects, following the teaching style of the National Numeracy and Literacy strategies. These sessions are used well in literacy and numeracy lessons when learning objectives are clearly prescribed. However, they are not always used effectively in other subjects to draw together the threads of the lesson and to evaluate pupils' learning. This is especially so when learning objectives are not completely clear or sufficiently challenging. The result of the less effective use of this final session is that the teachers' evaluation of their pupils' learning is less precise. However, continuous assessment across the school is satisfactory overall with some good examples at Key Stage 2. The quality of marking in literacy is good; teachers use it to evaluate pupils' progress. However, marking is of variable quality in other subjects. Pupils' knowledge of their own learning is restricted because they are not aware of any personal targets set and are insufficiently aware of targets for their groups. Pupils in all classes show great interest in their lessons and concentrate well and it is to the teachers' credit that pupils maintain this enthusiasm through the school and into secondary education.

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

19. The previous report stated that the school's curriculum was broadly based and balanced and that the Nursery curriculum covered the required areas of learning, although it was not planned under the specific headings. At Key Stages 1 and 2 and in

Year 7 the quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school is satisfactory overall. The curriculum meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum, including provision for health and sex education and the approved scheme in the Northampton Diocese for religious education, which was inspected under Section 23 provision for religious foundations. The provision for ICT is unsatisfactory due to the inadequate quality and range of resources. For those pupils in the Foundation Stage the quality of provision overall is unsatisfactory because at this early stage of development there is not yet a sufficiently well-linked planning system covering both the Nursery and Reception classes. Although boys tend to attain higher standards across the school than girls in the national tests, there is no evident bias towards them in the curriculum.

20. The previous report stated that the overall time allocated to teaching the National Curriculum fell slightly short of that recommended for pupils at all key stages and the time allocated to science at Key Stage 1 and mathematics at Key Stages 2 and in Year 7 was barely adequate. These issues have been dealt with, however, the revised timetable means that some lessons are of an inappropriate length for some subjects. In some instances this means that the pace of the lesson drops to fill the time available, leading to a loss of urgency in the lesson.
21. In the Nursery, planning of the curriculum to cover the recommended areas of learning prepares children well for entry to the Reception classes. All Nursery staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the educational needs of young children and this contributes well to the quality of teaching and learning. Staff in Reception have not yet updated the curriculum plans so that they take full account of the statutory early learning goals² for children. This restricts some aspects of the progress children might otherwise make.
22. At Key Stages 1, 2 and in Year 7 effective documentation and a designated co-ordinator support each subject and aspect. All pupils have full access to the school's curriculum. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and additional booster classes for those pupils who need extra help in order to attain the next level in the national tests. This operates during Year 6. Curriculum time is suitably apportioned to subjects, with an emphasis on English, mathematics and science. Subject leaders monitor other teachers' lesson plans to ensure full coverage in their area of the curriculum.
23. There is good provision for health education, which is taught through science and physical education, and includes sex education and drugs awareness. Satisfactory procedures are in place to ensure the early identification of pupils with special educational needs, all of whom receive an appropriate and balanced curriculum. Specific help is available in the form of a full-time learning support assistant at Key Stage 2. The school maintains an up-to-date register of pupils with special needs. The number of pupils identified on the register is low in comparison with the national average. Suitable individual education plans are in place with appropriate targets. Curriculum planning takes appropriate account of the needs of all pupils. Assessment information is used appropriately to set targets for improvement.
24. The school makes great efforts to provide a variety of experiences for its pupils. A range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, including athletics, cross-country, art and design, scouts and cubs and a maypole club, enriches pupils' learning. Educational visits to places such as Wimpole Hall, the Science Museum, the Black Country Museum and a residential visit to France are important and regular features of the curriculum. As the school takes form a very wide catchment the immediate

local community input is limited. There are very good relationships with the local secondary school with effective exchanges of information and regular meetings between staff.

25. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. There is a draft policy to support this aspect which are beginning to have an effect on planning and contains links with other areas of the curriculum. Well-planned daily acts of worship make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. For example, pupils bring their own short prayers which they read out whilst their peers listen respectfully. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect and meditate on a regular basis. All classes have a devotional focus with a candle and bible. Catholic traditions strongly underpin pupils' spiritual development and pervades all aspects of school life.
26. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is a draft policy to support this aspect and links are made with other policies, which support moral development. The school provides a safe, caring environment where pupils feel valued. Pupils are very good at listening to the views of others and show respect for views that are different from their own. Staff provide good role models for the pupils. The strong relationships in the school underpinned by its Catholic traditions, and the staff's positive management of pupils, give a good basis for moral understanding. Projects supporting charities such as Children in Need, Christian Aid, the Missionaries of Peru and Catholic Association for Overseas Development are undertaken each term. This gives pupils an opportunity to consider the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.
27. The provision for social development is good and there is a draft policy to support this aspect. Good relationships within the school help to form positive attitudes towards good social behaviour and self-discipline. Teachers take opportunities to foster appropriate values and to help pupils become aware of how their actions have an impact on others. Pupils are given responsibility for a range of duties around the school and in the classrooms, which they carry out willingly and reliably. However, pupils are not yet allowed the full range of responsibilities which they would be capable of taking given the opportunity. The residential visit to France for Year 7 supports personal and social development well. The curriculum and the school strong Catholic traditions affirm and respect diversity.
28. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory and there is a draft policy to support this aspect. Younger pupils learn about their school environment, whilst older pupils discuss for instance, the effects of earthquakes on Mexico City. They learn about other faiths, beliefs and traditions through religious education and, for example, during meditation time when children listened to a story about prayer shawls from the Jewish culture. A display on India helps to enrich the curriculum and provides a deeper insight into another culture. Various events and displays occur during the year to help pupils to understand the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of their society, although this was not particularly evident during the inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The procedures for ensuring the pupils' health, welfare and safety are very good. The arrangements for child protection are a strength of the school. The class and support teachers know the pupils, and many of the families well. They recognise their needs and give them good support and guidance. Pupils requiring special educational needs are identified at an early stage and their progress is closely monitored through the school years.

30. Teachers maintain information to tell them what the pupils have done well and also areas of their work where they may need help. Although still at the development stage, the tracking of pupils' academic progress in the English, mathematics and science is satisfactory with some good examples at Key Stage 2. Efficient assessment and monitoring procedures ensure that support is directed effectively to the pupils who need it most. However, the subject co-ordinators' role is insufficiently developed to enable them to fully monitor ongoing assessment procedures in the classroom.
31. The school complies with the statutory local education authority child protection procedures and all staff have received training in identifying possible abuse and unexplained changes in behaviour, this is very effective. Liaison arrangements with support agencies are well documented and known to all staff.
32. The schools' procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are appropriate. The qualities of persistence, application and self-confidence are readily identified and evaluated by the teachers. Significant personal development details are recorded. Overall, teachers and other staff have a caring approach to the personal needs of the pupils and this makes an important contribution to the harmony of the school. Satisfactory monitoring procedures are in place to support pupils' personal development. Good on-going records of achievement are maintained and used to assess planning requirements for pupils who have special educational needs.
33. The school's behaviour and discipline policy is well known to pupils and parents and has been successfully implemented throughout the school with effective results. The strong Catholic traditions ensure the procedures for eliminating oppressive or hostile behaviour are very good. Pupils are rewarded for good work and behaviour in the school, and have received praise for their obedience and attitude whilst on organised school visits. The school policy makes clear its intolerance of bullying, racial and sexual harassment, and any isolated incidents that have arisen have been dealt with promptly and firmly at source.
34. The headteacher works closely with the governors to ensure that the health and safety policy is regularly reviewed. Risk assessment to ensure pupils' health and safety has recently been completed and details recorded. Any shortcomings which may arise result in immediate action. There are no outstanding issues at present.
35. Attendance is good, the level of unauthorised absence is minimal and there have been no recorded exclusions during this academic year. The school complies with the statutory requirements for class registration but does not collate the data on a regular basis in order to monitor the trends of absence. Parents co-operate by advising the school at the earliest opportunity if a child will be absent and the secretary records the reason given.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. Parents are supportive of the school and the links between the school and parents have a suitable impact on pupils' learning. Those parents answering the inspection questionnaire indicated overwhelmingly that their children like attending school and are making good progress. Regular information letters are sent out which contain references to the curriculum and other school activities. The school provides two formal opportunities per year for parents to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher. Reports to parents are clear and useful and the opportunities provided for the exchange of information are sound. The school adopts an open house policy

and parents are welcome to visit the school at any time, by appointment, to discuss issues with the class teacher.

37. In an effort to further the established links with parents the headteacher and governors have introduced a citizenship policy with the aim of working more closely with parents and the broader community. The ongoing home-school agreement has yet to receive the full support of all the parents. A significant number parents who completed the questionnaire do not consider that the school works closely with them and they are not being informed about how their children are getting on. The inspection found no evidence to support these comments and found the school's communication with parents effective. It is apparent that because the school covers three main parishes in an extensive geographic area, the church provides an alternative communicating link for some parents.
38. The school has a strong and active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) whose members provide valuable support. In the Nursery, parents have helped the technology co-ordinator to re-equip the food technology area at no cost to the school budget. Through a variety of functions and activities the PTA has been able to provide financial support to enhance educational resources and also to assist in the maintenance of school equipment. Parent helpers are valued and welcomed into the school and have helped by hearing readers in Years 1 to 4. They have also provided assistance in the library, with cookery, sports and art and design activities. Volunteers for helpers on school trips are always forthcoming.
39. The homework policy is included in the school prospectus and the requirements are clearly defined. Homework for English, mathematics and science is scheduled and is regularly given to pupils but there is a lack of consistency in the marking, which is sometimes very brief or not evaluative. Reading books are taken home from the library and parents are able to assess their children's progress and report on it through the home/school book. This acts as a good line of communication between the school and home.
40. Parents of children with special educational needs are properly involved in identifying their child's individual needs. This helps them to provide the necessary support and regularly review their child's progress through close liaison with the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The headteacher manages the school efficiently, is a sound leader and works closely with all staff, particularly the acting deputy headteachers, to raise standards. She has a clear vision for the future of the school. The school is a harmonious community which is friendly and welcoming. Its strong aims and values, underpinned by the Catholic faith, give the school a sense of purpose that is reflected in its everyday life. Staff provide very good role models and have established very good relationships across the school. The strategies the headteacher and governing body have adopted in recent years have, on the whole, been successful. During the last inspection there were some areas for development identified. Included in these were:
 - improving the attainment of high attaining pupils;
 - the development of assessment procedures;
 - the development of subject co-ordinators' roles;
 - and a review of the length of the school day.

All these areas for development have been satisfactorily addressed since then. The

exception is the role of some of the subject co-ordinators, which is not fully developed to enable them to monitor teaching and learning. Due to the recent temporary absence and turnover of key staff, the senior management team is not at full strength at present. This puts a heavy burden of administration on the remaining members of the team. Although they have coped well, this upheaval has slowed the implementation of the many recent initiatives, which the school has introduced.

42. Statistical information available on the National Curriculum subjects which are tested shows the progress that pupils make between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is well above average. One important factor in improvement is the effective assessment system, which has been introduced across the school. Using the detailed information gained, teachers plan in a more focused and effective way and the school sets future targets. Particularly effective is the identification of higher attainers by teachers to ensure that they plan for extension work for these pupils. Using this assessment technique the headteacher evaluates the impact on pupils' standards of any extension work which takes place. It also enables the school to closely follow the development of groups of pupils. Assessment is not used to track the development of individual pupils and give personal targets, except for those pupils who have special educational needs. This is the next stage of development in assessment.
43. Monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher has been introduced and she regularly observes teachers. There are written observations of teachers' work and these are used to feed-back on the effectiveness of lessons. It effectively enables the school to identify future training needs. This monitoring has been successful to a degree, in that it effectively enables the school to identify future training needs. However, greater emphasis on developing teachers' effectiveness in terms of pitching pupils' work more accurately to pupils of differing attainment and increasing pupils' productivity would benefit standards. The headteacher has delegated responsibility to subject co-ordinators to enable them to manage their subjects. Co-ordinators effectively monitor the coverage of the curriculum and act as a knowledgeable resource to other teachers. However, although they are given non-contact time, their role in monitoring teaching and learning through lesson observation and feedback to teachers is not fully developed.
44. The introduction of literacy and numeracy has been effective and has been an important reason for standards in the basic skills improving since the previous inspection. Literacy and numeracy, together with ICT, form the priorities for the current school development plan. The school has been successful in improving standards in literacy and numeracy but the lack of sufficient equipment, especially computers, has slowed the development of ICT. However, the resources are now available to upgrade and increase the range of computers in the coming school year. The introduction of the Foundation Stage for in Reception classes has not yet been fully implemented and, whilst standards are good especially in the Nursery, the Reception classes do not fully plan to the early learning goals, which is a statutory requirement. There also appears to be some confusion about the co-ordination of the Foundation Stage; the allocation of roles and responsibility is unclear for the co-ordinator of this age group.
45. The management of special educational needs is effective. The co-ordinator performs her administrative duties efficiently. She gives willingly of her own time to keep records up-to-date, writes individual education plans, meets with teaching staff, support staff and parents. She keeps meticulous records of the progress of pupils on the special educational needs register. She liaises very well with support agencies, particularly the health agencies, to ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement.

The governing body is kept fully informed of the effectiveness of the provision. This is gained through the co-ordinator and the designated special needs governor, who visits the school regularly.

46. The governing body provides sound support for the headteacher and holds the school to account. The close contact and the good relationship between the chair of governors and the headteacher is an important factor in the management of the school. The governing body has formed a number of committees to improve its effectiveness. This includes a performance management committee. This is required under a government initiative, to set targets for the headteacher's performance. However, the governing body does not fully comply with statutory regulations in terms of the Foundation Stage. Teachers in Reception classes do not fully plan to the early learning goals² in the curriculum of this stage of learning.
47. The school has reasonable systems in place to induct new staff. The headteacher acts as a mentor to new staff, including newly qualified teachers and quickly integrates them into the school.
48. Professional development and focused in-service to develop teachers' expertise is given a high priority. The school has continued an appraisal system for teachers and has adopted performance management systems as a replacement. These initiatives are incorporated into an effective school development plan. This gives a costed analysis of the school's future needs and gives a clear picture of the direction the school is taking with an appropriate focus on raising standards. At present there is an insufficient number of support staff across the school, especially in some large classes. However, the school has plans to appoint more of these staff in the next school year now that it has funds available.
49. The financial planning of the school is effective. The governing body has a committee, which oversees the school's expenditure. Through careful husbandry of resources it has been able to eliminate an approved but sizeable budget deficit over a three year period. All initiatives are prioritised in the school development plan. Subject co-ordinators are allocated finance to resource their subjects. By prioritising expenditure the school has been able to target priorities such as literacy and numeracy. This ensures that the focus is always on raising standards. Grants are appropriately used to support special educational needs and standards in the school. The very limited ICT resources are used satisfactorily within the school and the day-to-day financial control and administration of the school is also satisfactory. With the exception of the full introduction of the Foundation Stage all other statutory requirements are met.
50. There are sufficient teachers who are appropriately qualified for the age range of pupils being taught. Specialist teaching in French is provided for pupils in Year 7. There is an insufficient number of classroom staff to support learning in some of the larger classes. However, time is used well at Key Stage 2 for withdrawal group teaching to extend pupils' learning. The provision for special educational needs at Key Stage 2 is good and ensures pupils make good progress in their learning. A relatively new governor is in place who is regularly involved and informed of initiatives and has a good overview of special educational needs. The management takes full account of the Code of Practice. The school's approach to special educational needs is well organised. There is a policy that is followed and the progress of pupils is monitored as part of the school's tracking procedures. The strong Catholic traditions are very supportive of pupils with special educational needs. The school has a shared commitment to improvement for all.

51. The building is attractive and is very well cared for by the site manager, staff and pupils. The accommodation provides a good amount of shared working space. Some classrooms are not big enough for the larger classes and the hall is just adequate for whole school assemblies or for physical education lessons for the older pupils. The school has set up an information and communication technology suite. Whilst this provides a good resource area for learning, it is also used for access to classrooms and this sometimes interrupts lessons. The outdoor play area for the Nursery is of a good quality. However, there is no designated area for challenging outdoor play for Reception children. The school is well aware of this constraint and plans are in place to upgrade facilities. The inside layout of the building does not make adequate provision for pupils with physical disabilities as it contains two staircases. Outside, the site provides adequate hard play areas and a good amount of grassed land for games and other activities. At the time of the previous inspection, the under-use of the annexe was identified as a weakness. The school now makes satisfactory use of this facility, mainly for music lessons.
52. The range and quality of learning resources are adequate in all subjects except for ICT. Whilst the computer suite provides satisfactory opportunities to focus on skills development, there are insufficient computers to allow all pupils to have adequate access. The school library is organised effectively and provides good opportunities for pupils to browse or follow up research interests. There is a good range of fiction and information books which pupils use well to further their skills in reading. The good teaching, improved standards and the low cost per pupil balanced against a number of outstanding areas for development indicate the school offers satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. The governing body and headteacher should:
- comply with statutory requirements and fully implement the Foundation Stage and its curriculum;
(paras:1,16,19, 44,46,49,55, and 57)
 - raise standards in information and communications technology by improving the quality and quantity of equipment and particularly the number of computers as identified in the school development plan;
(paras:7,19,44, 49,52,71 and 118)
 - delegate responsibility to subject co-ordinators to enable them to:
 - fully manage their subject effectively;
 - monitor teaching and learning across the school.
(paras:30,41 and 43)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- Review the timetable to give greater flexibility and ensure lessons are of an appropriate length.
(paras:30,41 and 43)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	41	54	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	38	292
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	21
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	34

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	18	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	35	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (97)	95 (94)	95 (86)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	17
	Girls	17	18	15
	Total	35	36	32
at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (94)	97 (86)	86 (86)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	12	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	18
	Girls	11	9	12
	Total	29	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (76)	84 (88)	97 (88)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	18
	Girls	11	9	12
	Total	29	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (79)	84 (91)	97 (94)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	3
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	202
Any other minority ethnic group	9

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 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	29.2

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	38

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	461,903
Total expenditure	459,903
Expenditure per pupil	1,398
Balance brought forward from previous year	-30,000
Balance carried forward to next year	-2,800

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	330
Number of questionnaires returned	179

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	40	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	42	46	8	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	48	4	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	50	9	1	8
The teaching is good.	53	41	2	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	40	23	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	35	6	5	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	43	2	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	29	41	20	6	5
The school is well led and managed.	42	37	8	6	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	55	2	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	45	17	10	15

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents were concerned that the number of computers in the school was insufficient for pupils' use.

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

Personal, social and emotional development

54. Children enter the Nursery on a part-time basis when they are three years old. They move into full time education in the two Reception classes in September of the year in which they are five. Children start the Nursery and Reception classes with prior attainment that is slightly above that expected for their age. By the time the inspection took place, in the last term of the school year, the children had made at least satisfactory progress. The majority of children have achieved the early learning goals², and sometimes above, in all areas of learning other than. Children with special educational needs achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress.
55. The implementation of the new Foundation Stage in its own right as a key stage with its own curriculum has not yet been achieved. This is partly because this is the first year that all children have been admitted to the Reception classes at the beginning of the academic year and it is also the first year there have been two Reception classes. The Reception and Nursery teachers do not plan the school's Foundation Stage curriculum together and the roles and responsibilities for the Foundation Stage co-ordinator are unclear.
56. The quality of education and provision in the Nursery is very good and is a strength of the school. Planning in the Nursery follows the early learning goals² but does not yet take account of the stepping stones (part of the national guidance for teachers of this age group). Assessment is diligent and conscientious and supports teaching and learning.
57. Teachers in the Reception classes keep in mind the early learning goals² of the Foundation Stage curriculum but they plan to Key Stage 1 National Curriculum subjects throughout the year, which does not comply with current regulations. Teachers use individual subject schemes of work from which to plan lessons and this is reflected in the timetable which is subject orientated, rather than centred round the early learning goals². This planning to subjects rather than the early learning goals² affects the way that all children are taught and does not always match the way in which young children learn. This restricts progress.

Personal and Social Education

58. Children make a good start in this area of learning and by the time they are five they are confident to try new activities and speak in a familiar group. They concentrate most of the time and sit quietly when appropriate. They form good relationships, taking turns and sharing. They are learning to understand that there are rules and they obey them, at the same time understanding right from wrong.
59. Children respond well in the Nursery due to very good teaching and move around the activities provided, inside and outside the classroom, very sensibly. For example, at story time children remembered which of the three groups they were in, followed the right member of staff in an orderly fashion and sat down quietly. The activities in the Nursery are very well organised and staff continually intervene and interact with children to ensure their interest and motivation.

60. In the Reception classes, it is impressive that children of this age change their shoes so efficiently and dress and undress themselves with minimal help. Children work as part of a group because they are given many opportunities to learn to do so. They help to clear away and pack up at the end of lessons sensibly and with care. Children have some opportunities to select and use activities independently when it is their group's time to choose and they choose between role play in the home corner, using construction equipment or sand. The opportunities for children to make choices, select and take some part in planning their work are limited. For example, when the children mix paints, their choice of colours is limited to three and alongside this activity there are no other painting activities or three dimensional creative equipment to enable children to experiment. The activities that children choose are not always related to the main theme or topic of the lesson. The planning of work in the lessons in the other areas of learning does not always allow children to make decisions as part of their work.

Communication, language and literacy

61. The development of communication, language and literacy is given a high priority and good progress is made towards this early learning goal. By the time the children are at the end of the Foundation Stage most have achieved the expected standards for communication, language and literacy and a good number have achieved beyond this and are beginning to work at the early stages of the National Curriculum. In both the Nursery and Reception classes, children learn to listen very well and speak clearly and confidently in differing situations. They respond to stories, songs and rhymes with enjoyment. They have the confidence to ask questions and offer comments. This reflects the good teaching in both year groups where all adults value and respect the children's efforts and manage them well. In the Nursery, interest in stories and literacy is promoted each weekend with the co-operation of parents. Children take home soft toys, guinea pigs *Alfie* and *Squeak*, along with a diary book. Parents write about *Alfie's* and *Squeak's* adventures and activities with help from their children and include photographs. When the children bring them back on Monday they recount their exploits. In the Reception classes the teachers introduce elements of the National Literacy Strategy during the year until by the summer term they are carrying out the strategy in full, which is effective. Teachers give clear explanations and all children know what is expected of them. Children's learning about how books work begins in the Nursery where they learn about authors and illustrators. Their knowledge of how books work and of language continues in the Reception classes where children can say initial and final consonants in some words and where some children can spell simple three letter words. Children are learning to form letters clearly. They learn that sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

Mathematical Development

62. By the time children have reached the end of the Foundation Stage many have achieved the expected standard for this area of learning and some have exceeded it. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory and children progress satisfactorily. In the Nursery children learn to recognise and name colours and to count to five. This knowledge of numeracy is reinforced when they are colouring and cutting such as when making leaves for trees. In the Reception classes, teachers introduce elements of the National Numeracy Strategy as the year progresses so that by the end of the academic year children are prepared for Key Stage 1. Children easily count and recognise numbers to ten and some to twenty. Others count beyond this. The majority of children recognise simple shapes and delineate their properties. They compare objects of differing sizes and use the correct language to describe these

differences. Higher and middle attaining children are working on addition and subtraction but some of the activities are not suitable for the way young children learn and so they do not understand their purpose. For example, some of the higher attaining children understand the concept of subtraction well and are able to explain it in a practical situation. However, they are not able to apply this knowledge to filling in the answers to pre-set sums because they are not yet at the stage of development where they understand the relevance and purpose of that type of recording.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

63. The children make at least satisfactory gains in knowledge during their time in the Foundation Stage in this area of learning. By the time they are ready to move into Key Stage 1 children have achieved the early learning goals² for this area of learning. In the Nursery, children are finding out about materials, exploring natural objects such as wood and trees and the quality of teaching is good. In the Reception classes the children continue to build on this knowledge by learning about the five senses, how to use them and how important they are. For example, children were taken on a walk around the school grounds to listen carefully to all the different noises. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Reception in this early learning goal. Children are making good gains in learning to use computers. In specifically designated ICT lessons they perform simple functions and use simple programmes but they are not yet able to use this knowledge in other activities in the classrooms because there is an insufficient number of computers. Children in both the Nursery and Reception classes build with a range of construction toys and through these activities select the pieces they want to use. However, other than construction toys, the range of materials and tools from which they can select to build and construct at any one time is restricted. Children are learning about their own culture and its effect on their lives, underpinned by the Catholic faith.

Physical Development

64. Overall there is sound provision in the Foundation Stage and good provision in the Nursery for physical development. In outdoor play, for example, children learn to move with confidence and in safety. They learn to move with control and co-ordination when travelling over, under and through balancing and climbing equipment. They develop an awareness of others' needs in a large and less restricted space. In the Reception classes, this facility is not yet available but the school is planning to provide an outdoor play area to give further scope for children's physical development. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and by the time children are five their gains in knowledge and skills are satisfactory. In both year groups, children develop their control of a range of small equipment such as glue spreaders, scissors, paint brushes and pencils. They use malleable materials and construction equipment with increasing control in physical education lessons. In the Reception classes the children learn that it is important to warm up and cool down when carrying out sustained physical activities. They demonstrate that they can throw, roll and catch balls, run and travel forwards, backwards and sideways. When activities are appropriate for the way young children learn they respond with interest. When activities are pitched too high for their level of development they become restless and do not sustain their interest.

Creative Development

65. Children make slow progress overall towards this early learning goal. They start well in the Nursery; they explore painting freely, explore colour, texture and shape when

making collages and teaching is good. They use their imaginations in role play and stories. In the Reception classes children learn to mix paints and continue to develop their imaginations in role-play. They join in favourite songs, show interest in the way musical instruments sound and are taught to hear and repeat simple rhythms in music lessons when the teachers use a commercial scheme. However, children have little opportunity to explore, respond and create their own interpretations of music. Progress slows in Reception classes by the time children are ready to move into Year 1. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Reception although planning does not provide a sufficient number of activities to cover the range of necessary experiences and skills in creative development. Another factor slows progress, that is the deployment of learning support assistants to intervene, interact and develop creative skills. This is not fully effective.

ENGLISH

66. The results by the end of Key Stage 1 in the national tests for the year 2000 show that attainment in reading and writing is in line with national averages. When compared to similar¹ schools the results in both reading and writing are below those expected nationally. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards have risen and pupils results are well above the national average and above compared to similar¹ schools. The standards of work seen during the inspection clearly indicate that attainment is at least above national expectations by the end of both key stages. Showing the priority that is given to the basic skills of literacy. The national tests show that boys are achieving better than girls are but there was no significant evidence of this during the inspection.
67. When children enter the Nursery, speaking and listening skills are slightly above what is expected for their age. They make good progress, these skills improve and they learn to communicate confidently at the Foundation Stage. By the time children enter Key Stage 1 their skills in literacy are above those expected, and testing confirms this. Pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs; make at least satisfactory progress in all aspects of language and literacy including those with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs progress at the same rate as their peers because they are given extra individual support which is particularly good at Key Stage 2. The good quality of teaching ensures that pupils' vocabulary develops well in relation to specific language requirements in individual subjects. In mathematics and science, pupils are taught relevant vocabulary which helps them to understand and explain the concepts involved in their learning. Throughout both key stages and Year 7, pupils' listening skills are very good and their speaking skills are good. Relationships in every classroom are such that speaking and listening skills flourish in a positive and supportive way. They are particularly good when they speak spontaneously, for example, in group or class situations where there are question and answer sessions. Speaking skills are not quite as good when in more formal and structured situations, for example, when reading a Shakespeare play out loud around the class.
68. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have favourite books and talk about the characters and plots. They are developing opinions about whether books are exciting and stimulating or not. By the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils have learned to read with expression. These readers retell the story succinctly and can read words such as '*multitude*' although they do not necessarily understand the meaning. There is a good system whereby these above average readers write small reviews of the books they have been reading in their home school diaries. This also supports the development of their writing. Average attaining readers tend to miss out words they cannot identify by sounding out. By the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, average and above average

pupils read with good expression and have developed an enthusiasm for books. They can often give good reasons for their choice of reading matter. Interest in reading non-fiction books is much less marked than interest in different types of fiction. Most pupils understand how to use the contents pages and glossaries in books but are unsure of the purpose of indexes. All pupils in both key stages are very aware of sounding out and building up unknown words but not all of the average and below average pupils use the meaning of the sentence or other strategies to work out unknown words when sounding out and building up words fails them. Pupils' ability and inclination to listen to themselves read and to hear and correct their own mistakes is also variable. Those pupils at both key stages and in Year 7 who are below average lack confidence and sometimes are unwilling to talk about the stories they have read. A fair number of pupils belong to the local town library as well as using the school library which helps them retain a continued interest in reading.

69. Appropriate teaching is impacting well on the standards in writing. The use of language, sentence structure, grammar, syntax and punctuation is developing well throughout the school. Pupils use a wide variety of adjectives and they become quite skilful in using connectives and writing more complex sentences to add interest. Many pupils begin to be very aware of punctuation early on in Key Stage 1 and a good number try hard to use it correctly by the end of the key stage. Teachers build on this in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 and it progresses well. Pupils' spelling is satisfactory but is weaker than the other elements of writing. This is partly due to the marking policy, which means that not all incorrect spellings are marked. Pupils take home spellings for homework but not all spellings are corrected by pupils in their books. The quality of handwriting is satisfactory overall but on occasions is untidy. At Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, however, the quality of handwriting and presentation is very variable. Books are untidy in a significant number of instances, as if pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to take pride in their work.
70. Pupils' achievements reflect the overall satisfactory but frequently good teaching in this subject. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Management of pupils is good. Pupils invariably work hard and sustain concentration even when, sometimes, lessons lack rigour and challenge. Where lessons are effective teachers give very clear explanations and instructions so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them; the content of the lesson is interesting, such as the 'fors' and 'againsts' of wearing school uniform; and learning objectives are clear to pupils. The introductions to lessons are usually very good. Later in the lessons, teachers do not always allocate differing activities to match the needs of the pupils, and when they do, the activities are not always pitched at the right level to challenge pupils to make them think really hard and push on at a faster rate. Teachers' understanding and use of the plenary, or final gathering together session in lessons, is variable. It is not always used effectively. Sometimes there is not enough time allowed for it to be used meaningfully. At other times teachers are unsure of the purpose of the session, and do not use the opportunity to gather together the threads of the lesson and to evaluate pupils' learning. Ineffective use of the final session is frequently linked to learning objectives not being made sufficiently clear to pupils at the start. Teachers do not always refer back to lesson objectives in final sessions in order to evaluate pupils' learning or to encourage pupils to assess their own achievements. However, overall, assessment is satisfactory. One of the three co-ordinators for English is trialling in her class at Key Stage 2, a form of on-going assessment and tracking of pupils in her class at Key Stage 2 which is effective. However, at present assessment is not used to set pupils' individual targets to enable them to improve their knowledge of their own learning. Assessment is used effectively to set targets for groups of pupils but these pupils are not fully aware of their group targets during lessons.

71. There is no evidence of drama lessons on the timetable to promote speaking skills. The use of ICT by pupils in English is severely limited because of a lack of resources.
72. There have been good improvements in English since the previous inspection. Standards have risen. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been satisfactory. The school has adopted a commercial scheme which follows the National Strategy, from which to plan the language and literacy curriculum, rather than planning it directly from the Strategy itself. Management of the subject is satisfactory at present. There are three co-ordinators, one in each key stage. All are new to the school this academic year. One is a newly qualified teacher and one is a temporary teacher, but they are endeavouring to develop the subject and to work as a team, albeit informally. They have very recently created an action plan for literacy, indicating the high priority the school places on this basic skill.

MATHEMATICS

73. By the end of Key Stage 1, in the year 2000 national tests, standards were well below both the national average than that of similar¹ schools. This was mainly because, although a large majority of pupils attained the expected Level 2³, not enough attained Level 3³. However, this is not typical and the school indicated the group taking the test at that time was below the usual standard and that their own internal marking procedures may have been too severe. Also, this was not typical of the school's results in 1998 and 1999, which were in line with the national average. Certainly, the inspection found standards that were in line with those expected for pupils' age at seven and similar to the results in the national tests for the previous two years. The school responded to the dip in results by analysing and addressing the areas for improvement. The inspection found that a large majority of pupils are likely to attain Level 2³ with the proportion attaining Level 3³ at least in line with national expectations.
74. By the end of Key Stage 2, in the year 2000 national tests, standards in mathematics were above the national average. When compared to those of similar¹ schools, results were in line with the national average. The percentage reaching the higher Level 5³ was also above the national average but in line with the average similar schools¹. Taking the three years 1998 to 2000 together, the performance of both boys and girls exceeded the national average although boys significantly outperformed girls. The school acknowledges this and is focusing on raising girls' attainment. During the inspection, there was no evidence of any significant difference in performance between boys and girls.
75. By the end of Key Stage 1, the large majority of pupils have a secure knowledge of number and number operations. In Year 1, pupils demonstrate a good grasp of number operations to 10. By the end of Year 2, they understand place value to 20 with higher ability pupils working with numbers to 100. They are developing good mental strategies for finding answers to mathematical questions. This is because the school has ensured that the oral and mental aspect of lessons is consistently followed and is in line with the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Previously completed work shows that pupils have a sound understanding of doubling numbers to 20 and simple fractions of a whole. Higher attaining pupils work confidently with sets of three numbers in a triangle and calculate the change they should receive in a money transaction.
76. The previous inspection reported that attainment in mathematics by the end of Key

Stage 2 was below the national average. Significant improvements have been made since then. Pupils in the current Years 6 and 7 attain above the national average and most have made good progress during their time at Key Stage 2. As a result of effective levels of support, both in class and in withdrawal groups, pupils in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 with special educational needs make good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when progress for these groups of pupils was judged as satisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was providing insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics skills in investigational work. Evidence of work covered throughout the year indicates that this is now satisfactory. However, the school does not actively promote mathematics as an appealing subject through, for example, the creation of stimulating displays of pupils' work in the subject.

77. The majority of Year 6 pupils already work confidently with number at the expected Level 4³ with approximately one third of pupils working at Level 5³. In the lessons observed, many pupils were confident in their recall of number knowledge. This is particularly well promoted in lessons where teachers ensure that mental and oral sessions are conducted at a brisk pace, and questioning challenges and targets individuals and groups. However, this is not yet consistent practice in all classes where sometimes the pace of a lesson is too slow. In the lessons observed in Year 6, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of measurement facts and were confidently able to convert units of measurement. They worked successfully with converting fractions into percentages when handling data. However, they are not always expected to use the most efficient form of data collecting, such as tallying, and this results in some waste of time. The school makes effective use of assessment information to identify the level of support needed by groups of pupils in Year 6. This provides them with good opportunities to develop and refine their knowledge and skills before the end of key stage tests take place. Work in the pupils' books indicates that most pupils make good use of their number skills in problem solving and standards of numeracy are above average. They work accurately with long multiplication, convert decimals to fractions and have developed a good understanding of different angles in geometry.
78. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall across the school. It was good in almost half of the lessons observed in Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was observed and no teaching was identified as higher than satisfactory. Teachers in both key stages demonstrate a secure subject knowledge and teach basic skills well. Lessons are well organised and teachers promote good relationships and demonstrate effective pupil management skills. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is satisfactory overall. Frequently, lessons are conducted at a brisk and productive pace. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work. They are interested in mathematics and work with good levels of concentration. However, in a number of lessons there is a lack of pace and rigour and this results in pupils not doing enough work. This was also identified as a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. Overall, there is insufficient understanding of the use of the plenary, or final gathering together of pupils, as a focus on what has been learned. Although plenary sessions are used effectively by teachers at the end of some lessons, in other lessons they are too short or are missed out altogether. Evidence from previously completed work in books indicates that marking is not used consistently to provide pupils with a clear understanding of how they might improve their work or what they need to do next. Pupils' presentation of work is satisfactory overall but in some classes, teachers' low expectations result in poorly presented work.

79. A recently drawn up mathematics policy is in place. It provides a secure framework for teaching and learning but is currently in the early stage of implementation. The school satisfactorily addresses the National Numeracy Strategy in its planning and takes into account the needs of mixed age classes. Detailed assessment information is maintained to record pupils' attainments in mathematics but this is not always used effectively to ensure that all teachers are fully aware of the progress being made by individuals and year groups. Effective provision is made for pupils in Year 7 who need extra help with mathematics through well-planned small group work. There is a satisfactory link between mathematics and information and communication technology but insufficient use is made of mathematics in other subjects.
80. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the school's assessment results and has ensured that action is taken to address attainment issues. She monitors the quality of teaching and planning but evaluations from the monitoring process are not fully reflected in classroom practice. There is an insufficient number of classroom support staff across the school especially in the larger classes at Key Stage 2.

SCIENCE

81. By the end of Key Stage 1 in year 2000 tests teacher assessment indicates pupils' attainment was below the national average and for similar schools¹. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 on the basis of the national tests in year 2000 was above the national average and in line with similar schools¹. The inspection found by the end of Key Stage 1 that standards are in line with those expected for pupils' age. By the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 pupils' standards are above those expected for pupils' age. Standards are much higher than they were when the school was last inspected, when standards by the end of Key Stage 2 were below average. There has been a good improvement.
82. The overall improvement in standards is reflected in the good quality of teaching and good teacher knowledge of the subject. Pupils with special needs make good progress at Key Stage 2. Pupils with English as an additional language are fully integrated and achieve a similar standard to their peers.
83. At Key Stage 1 pupils acquire a sound scientific vocabulary and knowledge. Pupils understand that worms live in the dark and make holes which allow plants to grow. They describe the various parts of a worm and observe and record scientific findings in relation to the project. Pupils learn about how to keep healthy and which foods to eat. They know where materials come from and identify wood, glass, metal and plastic and are beginning to show an understanding of transparent and opaque. Pupils are beginning to understand the need for fair testing and conduct tests, using ramps, on the way different surfaces affect the speed of toy cars rolling down them. Presentation and layout of work is generally good and pupils are encouraged to draw and label. Higher attaining pupils write clear, detailed explanations, with carefully drawn and labelled diagrams.
84. At Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 pupils have developed good skills in how to conduct tests and experiments. This was used well during a lesson which focused on chromatography in order to identify the composition of inks. The pupils conducted these tests in mixed groups with great enthusiasm and a spirit of positive enquiry. In Year 3, pupils can explain how animals have adapted to different habitats and they know the difference between a home and a habitat. Year 4 pupils knew what a fair test was when learning that plants need leaves in order to grow well. They predict and

justify their hypotheses. Pupils make good progress across all aspects of science and pupils with special educational needs are afforded full access to the science curriculum either through differentiated tasks or teacher and peer group support. Literacy skills are well used in researching and recording and vocabulary is carefully developed. In Year 7, pupils were using ammeters in an investigation about how the length of a component affects electrical current flow. They used terms such as *'resistance to mean opposition to the flow of electricity'* with confidence and understanding. Number skills are used in measuring, calculating and data handling. Year 5 pupils are able to give their own definitions of solids, liquids and gases. Their work is well presented with good diagrams.

85. Pupils' attitudes to science are good at both Key Stage 1 and 2 and in Year 7. They respond positively to challenges set by their teachers. Pupils confidently put forward predictions, ideas and conclusions. Pupils co-operate and collaborate well, particularly in investigative work. Behaviour is generally good and pupils use equipment and materials sensibly. The level of investigative opportunities make the subject exciting and pupils co-operate willingly.
86. The one lesson seen at Key Stage 1 was good. At Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 teaching is sound. Teachers often demonstrate good subject knowledge. All teachers manage their pupils very well, and the good relationships they have developed with them means that the pupils carry out the experiments with proper concern for safety, care of materials and in good co-operation with other pupils. Teachers praise and encourage their pupils constantly.
87. In the previous inspection it stated that *'continuity and progression are lacking to some extent'*. The co-ordinator has recently reviewed the policy and introduced a nationally recognised scheme of work to ensure that progression and continuity are in place. The previous report also stated that *'there is no agreed whole school system for assessing and recording pupil progress'*. The subject is now well managed and there is ongoing teaching assessment at the end of each topic. In Key Stage 1 teacher assessments are recorded on yearly assessment forms and in Key Stage 2 end of year tests are also recorded. Resources are good and have recently been updated. The co-ordinator monitors the subject through observations, meetings and scrutiny of planning and samples of work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and, in the best examples, give the pupils guidance as to how they might improve. Often, however, marking only says *'well done'* without saying specifically what the child has done well in science.

ART AND DESIGN

88. Three lessons in art and design were observed during the inspection, although one was as part of an ICT lesson. Evidence is taken from these, talking to pupils, looking at teachers' planning and analysis of work displayed in classrooms and corridors. The standards achieved by pupils by the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and in Year 7 are in line with those expected for their age. There are, however, some very good features across the school, for example, landscapes displayed in the style of Vincent Van Gogh and other Impressionist artists such as Gauguin, Cezanne and Lautrec, which are of high quality. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection. However, there are now more opportunities for pupils to show imagination during lessons, a good improvement.
89. The provision for art is good and pupils have the opportunity to experience a wide range of techniques in art. In Years 1/2, for example, pupils use charcoal, pencil

crayons and pastels. They show dexterity using these and experiment shading in different ways. During the lesson pupils have the opportunity to try all these media, and some produce portraits including an excellent one in the style of Vincent Van Gogh's self-portrait. Pupils' self-portraits are recognisable and show good observational skills.

90. In Year 4, pupils use computers effectively to make a repeating pattern based on a paisley design. Pupils do much work on arranging the pattern as a design for wrapping paper. Other pupils are developing designs based on their studies of ancient Egypt, a good link with history. In Year 7, pupils learn perspective effectively by studying various landscapes and making their own, using torn sugar paper of different colours to show foreground, middleground and background. Other high quality work was seen, for example, pupils sketched owls, cats and snails effectively in Year 2. There are some very good examples of pencil sketches in Year 7, pupils drawing still life displays such as a shoe with great detail.
91. At the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, pupils use sketchbooks to record their ideas visually and these have improved pupils' observational skills. In a Year 3 class pupils drew children playing some of which recall the style of Lowry's pictures. Pupils show good skills with cutting and pasting and make informed choices when selecting materials. Pupils showed imagination when they fabricated collage pictures of houses by sticking different materials to paper. They used a rich variety of materials and fabrics. There is a good display of symmetry by Years 1/2 making a good link with mathematics. Pupils showed good dexterity in lessons and confidence using the materials. There was not very much three-dimensional work in evidence but the planning indicates that a self-hardening clay that does not need to be fired is used for modelling during the year. Pupils with special educational needs progress well and those with English as a second language achieve a similar standard to their peers.
92. In lessons the majority of the teaching was satisfactory, and in one lesson it was good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of pupils' work on display and in sketchbooks would indicate that teaching is probably satisfactory overall. In an effective lesson a teacher uses a wide range of materials and resources, in one good Year 1/2 lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to experiment using different types of shading with different materials such as charcoal, pastels and coloured pencils. All pupils experimented using these materials. This teacher showed good subject knowledge in the use of a variety of media and techniques for shading. In all of the lessons pupils were enthusiastic and enjoyed the subject. In the best lessons the teachers had good pupil management techniques and this enthusiasm was channelled into pupils' work keeping the lesson brisk and productive. Where lessons were less effective pupils were still enthusiastic but the lesson lost its pace, and pupils their productivity, as the task was not fully developed to challenge high attaining pupils. However, this was never to the point where the lesson was unsatisfactory.
93. The co-ordinator has a good subject knowledge and is an enthusiast for art and design. She is particularly interested in developing pupils' skills so that they can draw and paint effectively. She considers it important to give opportunities for pupils to experience as many different materials as possible. One way to achieve this is through a good provision for activities in the curriculum. She provides effective leadership for this subject, and the curriculum that the school uses is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work. Samples of pupils' work are kept to show how they progress, and the co-ordinator monitors work satisfactorily through discussion with teachers and by observing the quality of work displayed, although no formal subject monitoring takes place.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. The last time the school was inspected, standards in design technology were broadly in line with national expectations at both key stages. During the current inspection, it was possible to observe only one design technology lesson. Close scrutiny of pupils' work displayed in school and photographic evidence showing how the policy and scheme of work are used, discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator provided most of the evidence. This shows that standards in the subject are above those expected nationally for pupils by the end of both key stages and in Year 7.
95. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was good. The teacher had previously given the pupils a design brief to create a 'buggy', and the frames had been completed in a previous lesson. The teacher used his good subject knowledge to give the pupils guidance through the small developmental steps that enabled them to carry out the practical task of building a frame for their buggies, which would eventually be covered in card and painted. The pupils were provided with a range of quality materials and were enthusiastic about the practical aspects of the subject.
96. Measuring skills are well promoted. Photographic evidence shows Year 4 pupils weighing ingredients for Christmas cakes. Year 5 pupils could cut and measure accurately and make right-angled joints. They were able to consider their own designs and could distinguish between what worked well and what could be improved. Year 6 pupils made slippers using the brief of investigate, design, make and evaluate. In Year 7, pupils had designed and made wooden bird boxes for the outdoor environmental area. Year 3 pupils had made and decorated photograph frames that were free standing. At Key Stage 1 pupils had made and designed a variety of musical instruments, including drums and shakers.
97. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They are interested and show a high level of enthusiasm. They take pride in their work, which is always well presented. Pupils' behaviour in the lesson observed and the relationship between the teacher and pupils was good. Pupils worked well independently and co-operated sensibly when working in groups, sharing resources.
98. There is a designated co-ordinator for the subject. The policy was updated in November 2000 and a nationally recognised scheme of work is used from Year 1. Resources are satisfactory for the subject and additional resources to support food technology have been provided with help from the parent teacher association. The role of the co-ordinator does not yet include the monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the school and assessment is by outcome only. This slows the further development of the subject across the school.

GEOGRAPHY

99. The last time the school was inspected, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement by the end of Key Stage 1. Attainment was considered to be in line with pupils' age by the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. Standards in geography are now in line with national expectations at Key Stage 1, 2 and Year 7. All pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
100. Pupils throughout the school learn about a wide range of people and places. It is also evident that the development of mapping skills runs throughout their work. At Key

Stage 1 pupils learn about relationships between locations in the school and this work is extended to adding keys to simple base plans. They also develop strategies for identifying the physical attributes of different environments through story. In a project about Katy Morag and the Isle of Struay, pupils identify Scotland and the Highlands on a map. They are able to draw their own island, add features from a list and add a key for identification. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop their mapping skills further and can locate major features using maps and atlases. In Year 3, pupils can express their own views and are beginning to recognise patterns in the school environment. Year 4 examine the difference between St. Monica's and Maigiginya village school in Nigeria. They can also identify the village of Lavendon and its proximity to Milton Keynes, whilst in Year 5 pupils study India and the village of Chembokali. Pupils in Year 6 study the theme of rivers and it is evident from their work that they understand terms such as *'corrosion'* *'hydraulic action'* and *'traction'*. By the end of the key stage pupils have a sound geographical vocabulary. Year 7 study plate tectonics, the use of the Richter Scale and earthquakes in Mexico City.

101. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They are interested and show enthusiasm. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and the relationship between the teacher and pupils are good. Pupils co-operate sensibly when working in groups, sharing resources.
102. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and monitors the subject by sampling pupils' work and through discussions with staff. The quality of teaching is sound and lessons are planned appropriately. National Curriculum levels are used to assess pupils' learning and focus on map work. Effective subject documentation enables staff to plan appropriately to cover the required content, and to meet pupils' needs.

HISTORY

103. Attainment at the end of both key stages and in Year 7 is in line with that expected for pupils' age. This maintains the position across the school at the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress at both key stages, due to mostly good teaching. During the inspection, one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1 and one lesson at Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on these lessons, analysis of work, teachers' long-term and medium-term planning, the scheme of work, current displays, photographs and discussion with the co-ordinator.
104. In the lesson observed at Key Stage 1, attainment was sound; it is satisfactory in the work sample over the whole key stage. Pupils in Year 1/2 were discussing the various stages as they grew up from a baby to the age to their current age. One pupil demonstrated by growing from the floor whilst identifying the differences. Good discussion ensued as pupils identified the different behaviour of babies, toddlers and themselves. They demonstrated a developing sense of chronology and used appropriate historical vocabulary. Pupils were amazed by how much more they can do at their age than babies and toddlers. They observed that *'babies cry a lot'* and that toddlers *'keep falling over'*. By the end of the key stage, they plot events, such as growing up, on a time line.
105. By the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, pupils have a sound knowledge of the Anglo Saxons, mediaeval realms and of the Black Death. There are some good examples of writing at length and for different purposes in Years 6 and 7. Pupils write *'letters from an Anglo-Saxon'* and from *'a knight in Harold's army in 1066'* putting themselves into the position of these historical characters. This is a good link with literacy. On occasions when recording, too much use is made of work sheets, pupils colouring in

pictures and answering one word answers. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils started their writing lesson by saying in Latin '*good morning teacher*' or '*salve magister*' to set the tone of the lesson. A very good question and answer session ensued about Roman roads. To make pupils think deeply the teacher asked pupils to pose questions, which the rest of the class would answer. For example, '*are all Roman roads straight?*' '*Why are they straight?*' '*How did they build them?*' '*Did they use tar?*' Very effective discussion took place as pupils considered these questions and attempted to answer them. Pupils identify that roads were needed to transfer goods by carriage and for the Roman soldiers to have quick access to different towns. This aspect of the lesson was used as an effective basis for pupils' research.

106. Pupils' attitudes to history are good. They show interest, enthusiasm and involvement in their work. They are motivated and contribute readily to class discussions. They raise questions and listen with interest to what the teacher and other pupils have to say. Their relationships with their peers and with the teacher and other adults are good and, together with their good behaviour, contribute to learning. They are very interested in the past and demonstrate a developing sense of chronology. They show respect for the contribution made by others in discussion.
107. Teaching is good, overall, at both key stages. It was good in the lessons observed at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of history are good. They teach historical skills well and use methods that enable pupils to learn appropriately, with the result that pupils' acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills is good. On occasions, work is not finished in books and there is an over-reliance on worksheets, which reduces the opportunities for extended writing. Teachers' planning and expectations are good. The management of pupils is good and, together with the satisfactory use of time, support staff and resources, leads to good learning. Pupils apply good intellectual and creative effort to their work. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is satisfactory across the school and pupils are made aware of what they can do and how well they are doing; marking does not always make clear what they should do to improve further. All pupils make gains in learning, including pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils' learning is good, as a result of their interest and concentration, aided by their good relationships and behaviour. Homework is sometimes used to extend the work in the lesson.
108. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place. The scheme of work is based on guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. It is supported by adequate resources, which are readily accessible. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language is good. The curriculum is enriched by regular visits to places of historical interest, including Year 7 visiting Bayeux and the tapestry of the Battle of Hastings as part of their excursion to France to improve their French language skills. Pupils study photographs to compare life in modern and former times. Their historical knowledge, understanding and skills are developed through research on Romans, Ancient Greeks and Egyptians using CD-ROMs and the Internet to gain information.
109. The subject is well led by a co-ordinator who was absent during the inspection. However, the teacher covering the subject is also enthusiastic and interested in the subject. Attainment is beginning to rise, as standards of teaching improve. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is satisfactory. The monitoring role of the co-ordinator has been well developed and the co-ordinator is released for half a day a term to monitor teaching and learning and to feedback to teachers. The school has identified the need to increase the number of support staff to the demands

of the curriculum especially in the larger classes. There is scope for an improvement in pupils' independent and imaginative writing linked with more evaluative marking, in order to improve attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2 and at Year 7 standards are below expectations. Achievement in the lessons observed in other year groups is broadly in line with national expectations. Attainment at the time of the previous inspection was judged as in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Although current standards would indicate a decline at Key Stage 2 since then, national initiatives over time have changed expectations of attainment.
111. The principal reason for attainment being lower than expectations at Years 6 and 7 is that although the level of resources is improving, the school does not yet have enough computers. As a result, these pupils have not had the benefit of long-term, regular access to enable them to build their skills over their time in the school. Whilst the relatively new computer suite provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their technology skills, there are insufficient computers to allow them to have adequate access. This often results in either too many pupils being gathered around individual computers or half of the class having to do other work until it is their turn. There are too few computers available in classrooms. This reduces flexibility in learning by limiting pupils' access during lessons. Teachers manage the resulting problems well. This is because the school has invested time and effort into providing skills training and this has resulted in good levels of subject expertise maximised to the benefit of the pupils. As a result, standards in years other than 6 and 7 are now broadly similar to those seen in other schools. The school acknowledges the need to increase the number of computers and other hardware, and has funds set aside for additional resources.
112. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can create and edit work in graphics programs. They use the mouse to click onto icons on the tool bar when controlling events on the monitor. They move images around the monitor, choose different types of lines for effect and colour-fill areas of the screen. Work done during the year demonstrates a satisfactory use of word processing, using different types of fonts.
113. Pupils at Year 4 are able to open a specific program and move images in order to repeat patterns. Year 5 pupils, working on spreadsheets, are developing good, independent control skills when operating the computers. They are confident when asked to open programs, know how to amend data on a chart and interrogate the information. Good opportunities to feed-back their observations in a lesson observed, demonstrated that their understanding of spreadsheet work is at a level appropriate to their age. The school acknowledges that the low number of computers has constrained skills development for pupils at Years 6 and 7. In order to ensure that pupils in these year groups have an adequate base for the further development of their skills, they are working in the earlier stages in the information and communication technology programme of study. This has resulted in pupils at Year 6 doing the same work as pupils at Year 5. The attainment of pupils in the lesson observed at Year 7 was below expectations of pupils of this age. This was because there were not enough computers to enable them to spend enough time developing their skills of accessing information on the Internet to an expected level.
114. Teaching was good in forty per cent of lessons and satisfactory in all others.

Teachers have a good understanding of the programme of study for the subject and, through taking up opportunities for training, are developing good levels of knowledge and skills. This results in good levels of learning when pupils are able to access the computers, where they work both productively and independently. As a result of the resource constraints, teachers often need to organise groups to allow half to work on the computers and half to do related work. This is well managed by most teachers. On one occasion, however, this was not successfully managed and resulted in some inappropriate behaviour because pupils were insufficiently engaged in the lesson and not provided with enough challenge.

115. The subject is led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Since taking up the post he has improved the level of resources and provided very effective opportunities for teachers to improve their skills. Insufficient opportunities are available for the co-ordinator to take full responsibility for the leadership of the subject through, for example, monitoring the quality of planning and teaching. The computer suite provides satisfactory accommodation for learning but is sited in an access area and this sometimes results in minor interruptions during lessons.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

116. Pupils learn French in Year 7 for one year in preparation for transfer to secondary school. They achieve well and reach a good standard in the time available. The majority are familiar with numbers up to 20 or more and with classroom vocabulary. They understand basic instructions in French. In the one lesson seen they showed that they could identify different amounts of French currency such as Ff. 5.20 and Ff. 4.90. They worked well orally in preparation for a visit the following week to Normandy. Their confidence improved noticeably as the lesson progressed and they have acquired good pronunciation of the language. Most Year 7 pupils are competent in posing a simple request in French and they demonstrate this by asking for different drinks or food they might wish to buy during their visit such as ice-cream, a burger or commercial soft-drinks and water. Pupils respond well when the teacher uses French for instructions and they show confidence in the language. By the end of the lesson pupils had learned the names of different drinks in French such as tea, coffee, mineral water and coffee with milk. Pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are good.
117. The quality of teaching is good. The school benefits from a well-qualified specialist teacher who is a fluent speaker. This ensures that pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic and that they know what they are expected to learn. The teacher is confident in the use of the language and uses a variety of methods to ensure pupils consolidate their knowledge. Lessons often including oral work, singing and other activities designed to encourage pupils to learn, such as role play and group work. As a result pupils enjoy speaking French and in the lesson observed a high level of concentration was sustained for most of the lesson, only towards the very end did some pupils lose a little concentration. The teacher offers a lot of encouragement and routinely tells pupils how they can improve.
118. Planning for the subject is good and based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by the headteacher, who previously taught the subject. There is a good supply of resources for French, allowing the teacher to provide a variety of learning activities. Opportunities for the assessment of pupils' attainment are based on good question and answer sessions that enable the teacher to determine pupils' progress and by the quality of their written homework which is set regularly. Pupils with special educational

needs are fully incorporated into French lessons and progress well, as do pupils who speak English as an additional language. Although ICT is not used during lessons, which are mostly oral, it is used to research background information for topics to be discussed. There are strong links with the local secondary school. As a result, secondary teachers come to the school to give sample lessons in French, German and Italian. Pupils visit the secondary school to help them make their choice of the options available. Since the previous inspection good progress has been made in developing pupils' oral linguistic skills.

MUSIC

119. Standards in music are in line with expectations at the end of both key stages and the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress. No music lessons were observed at Year 7 and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement on achievement. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Satisfactory opportunities are in place for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument through tuition by music service staff.
120. At Key Stage 1, teachers' planning indicates that all the required elements of the programme of study for music are covered. In acts of worship children listen to music, respond well to the mood it creates and sing hymns tunefully. By the end of the key stage, they clap simple rhythms in time to music. They have developed good skills in responding to music and are able to play percussion instruments maintaining rhythm and pulse. In the lesson observed, individual pupils enjoyed 'conducting' the class orchestra.
121. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 5 compose their own lyrics to a Caribbean tune. They are learning to respond to and use musical terms accurately. In the lesson observed, groups of pupils were keen to sing their compositions, and their performances were obviously appreciated by the rest of the class. By the end of the key stage, Year 6 pupils know that lyrics can be used to convey a mood or tell a story. Most listened attentively to extracts of music, for example, a piece from '*West Side Story*', and were able to express ideas about the meaning behind the song. Pupils learning to play the flute, clarinet and guitar made a good contribution to an assembly during the week and are achieving standards higher than those found normally.
122. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a secure understanding of the programme of study for music and the commercial scheme that has been adopted by the school. Good pupil management, relationships and organisation were particular features of the lessons observed. Pupils respond appropriately to the subject. They are well behaved and many are keen and interested. This was particularly so at Year 5 where the pupils demonstrated very good collaborative skills and high levels of confidence.
123. Resources for the subject are adequate. They are well organised and easily accessed in a central resource area. Satisfactory use is made of the annexe area for music. The co-ordinator provides on-going support for teachers but has insufficient opportunities to monitor the quality of planning and teaching. Music throughout the school makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. By the end of both key stages and in Year 7 pupils' standards are in line with those expected for their age and are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are fully integrated into all physical education lessons and achieve at a similar standard to their peers.
125. Pupils participate in a full range of physical education activities including athletics, gymnastics, dance, and swimming in Year 6. Although this is only for half a term due to financial constraints; the majority of pupils achieve 25 metres. In a Year 1/2 small games lesson pupils warmed up by running clockwise and anti-clockwise round the small hall, they showed good spatial awareness and did not collide with each other.

They experimented with various ways of passing a ball in groups. They showed reasonable skills, throwing and catching, and worked well together as a group making up the rules of the game as they proceeded. Some pupils dribbled then passed the ball to one another they showed good ball control and there was no significant difference between the skill of boys and girls. They worked well collaboratively and with partners made up routines, which they were proud to demonstrate to their class. The teacher and other pupils appreciated the efforts of others by pointing out what was good about their movements.

126. In a Year 3 athletics training lesson pupils used a range of floor mats to attempt different types of jumps, they worked out different routines including jumping from both feet, from one foot alternately, standing jumps and running jumps. Pupils were interested in investigating the variety of jumps they could do. One pupil who developed an effective version of a triple jump said he learned it from his older sister. In Year 1, pupils danced using a recording from the radio about *a magical journey around the world*, pupils developed balancing skills and good speaking and listening skills interpreting the lesson. Some of the high attaining pupils demonstrated to others in the class. Good development of control, co-ordination, balance and poise were evident in this lesson. In a Year 6 athletics training lesson pupils started warming up before the main part of the lesson by taking part in four or five groups to play a chase game called *circle dodge*. They understood that this process of warming up is important if they are not to hurt themselves when moving around the hall, they also know that this raises their blood pressure. Some pupils showed good co-ordination when learning the difficult skill of triple jumping with a partner in the main part of the lesson. There was a satisfactory improvement in skills during this lesson.
127. The quality of teaching is good in four out of five lessons, and is never less than satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use a full range of resources, from large gymnastic mats to small games equipment to teach pupils the appropriate physical skills. In the best lessons the teacher uses demonstration effectively to take the lesson forward. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher uses high attainers to demonstrate their interpretation of the music. Sometimes in lessons individual pupils will be chosen to illustrate a good technique, at other times a whole group will watch the routines of another. This all has the effect of raising standards by making it clear what the teacher expects.
128. The subject co-ordinator has a keen interest in physical education and is a keen hockey player, which is reflected in extra-curricular activities, which include a full range of sporting activities. Care is taken to ensure all pupils have a full physical education entitlement and pupils have the recommended time for the subject. The scheme of work used is based on the new Curriculum 2000 requirements, except for the use of information and communications technology in physical education, which is not yet planned in the school's curriculum. Physical education has had a low profile in the school in recent years, due to many other more pressing initiatives such as the introduction of literacy and numeracy strategies. Nevertheless due to the enthusiasm of the staff and pupils, the subject still plays a full role in the curriculum,

and standards have been maintained. The range of equipment and resources is satisfactory for a school of this size although the hall is rather small for the larger classes.