

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whalley Range, Manchester, M16 8AW

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105543

Headteacher: Mrs C Page

Reporting inspector: Ted Wheatley
10013

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th June 2001

Inspection number: 193142

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whalley Road Whalley Range Manchester
Postcode:	M16 8AW
Telephone number:	(0161) 226 2767
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Cawley
Date of previous inspection:	13 th January 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10013	Ted Wheatley	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19430	Trevor Hall	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22790	Jane Pinney	Team inspector	English Art Music Under fives	
11528	Mike Wainwright	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	8 - 10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	10 - 11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	11 - 12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	12 - 13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	13 - 14
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	14 - 15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	15
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	16 - 19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20 - 31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is about two miles south of the centre of Manchester. There are 221 pupils in the school, including 30 children in the nursery. The school is broadly average in size with similar numbers of boys and girls. Pupil numbers have increased since the last inspection. The school has well above the average percentage of pupils from homes where English is not the first language, although very few are in the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the average. The percentage of pupils who have statements of special needs is average and the proportion on the school's register of special educational needs is well above average. Pupils come from mixed social backgrounds and on entry to the nursery their attainment is below average, overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school in which teaching is generally good and one third is very good. Standards are rising and the school provides a high level of care and attention to the academic and personal needs of all pupils. The school is very well led with clear direction on how it should improve further. Taking into account the costs of running the school, which are high, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are rising at both key stages.
- Teaching is good and one third is very good.
- The attitudes, behaviour and enthusiasm for school shown by pupils are very good.
- Leadership is giving very clear direction for improvement.
- The school makes very good provision for the varying academic and social needs of all pupils.
- The programme for personal, social and health education is very good.
- The provision for spiritual, moral and personal development are very good.
- The school promotes and enjoys very good links with parents and the community.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics and geography are below those achieved in other subjects at Key Stage 2.
- The very effective teaching skills seen in many lessons are not consistently shared between teachers.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, information and communication technology and investigative and problem solving learning skills across the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997 and since that time it has made good progress. Standards have improved in design and technology as a result of more effective planning of the subject. The support for those pupils with special educational needs, especially for those on Stage 3 of the Code of Practice, has improved. There has been satisfactory improvement in curriculum planning, so that there is proper continuity and progression for pupils as they move through the school. Statutory requirements for registration are now met. Since 1997, standards have risen and teaching has improved.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	E	D	A
Mathematics	B	B	E	B
Science	D	C	D	B

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

Pupils enter the nursery with poor literacy and numeracy skills and, by the time they enter Year 1, most have achieved the expected levels in the Early Learning Goals, although a significant proportion of pupils have not. In national assessments for seven year olds in 2000, attainment was broadly average in reading and writing, with a significant proportion of pupils performing above this, and above average in mathematics. In teachers' assessments in science, standards were broadly average. Compared to similar schools, attainment was well above average. There are variations between years, but overall standards are rising. In national tests for 11 year olds in 2000, the performance of pupils was below average, overall, and well below average in mathematics. The school did not achieve its targets for the year, but 2000 was an unusual year in that the school had been part of a reorganisation and had taken in a large number of pupils whose attainment was well below average. This had a significant effect on results, overall, although the attainment of pupils who have been in the school since the age of five was broadly average and better than their end of Year 2 national tests indicated. In previous years, standards had been broadly average and unconfirmed results for 2001 indicate that standards are close to average again. Compared with similar schools in 2000, standards were above average. The results obtained by pupils of different ethnic backgrounds were not significantly different from the general results. In other subjects, the standards reached by pupils are broadly average and above average in art and physical education. Over their time in school, pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They enjoy coming to school and show real enthusiasm for all of the activities and work the school provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in lessons and around school. They understand the school rules and respond well to them; they are mature and sensible.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect. They work well together, listen to each other and collaborate very well in classroom activities and when playing.
Attendance	Attendance is below average and is the result of the poor attendance of a few pupils. However, attendance has improved and the great majority of pupils attend regularly.

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.

Teaching is good, overall. In one third of lessons teaching is very good and sometimes excellent and it is good or better in over three-quarters of lessons. In other lessons it is nearly always satisfactory and during the inspection was unsatisfactory in only one lesson. Teaching in English is very good and in mathematics and science it is good. In other subjects and in early years classes, teaching is generally good. In the best lessons, teachers are well prepared and have a wide range of activities to interest and involve pupils. The management of pupils is a particular strength; teachers establish very good relationships in lessons, respecting pupils' opinions and feelings and this has a very positive effect on how well pupils learn. Teachers work very closely with the classroom assistants and ethnic minority achievement service (EMAS) teachers to ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged and that work is presented in an understandable manner. Teachers assess pupils' performance thoroughly, give useful feedback and set targets to help pupils progress further. This is very effective and pupils' learning is good. In some lessons, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write independently and in some science and design and technology lessons investigations and problem solving situations are too controlled by teachers, not allowing pupils to find out for themselves.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of all pupils. There are no schemes of work for geography and history, but these are being written. Provision of information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory, overall, although its use in other subjects is limited.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is generally good; it is satisfactory in the early years. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and they receive effective support from teachers and classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The small number of pupils who are at the early stages of English language acquisition receive a high level of effective support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good, overall. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually within a Catholic context, moral values are set by very good example and social and cultural development provides many opportunities for pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a very high level of care for pupils, both academically and personally. Pupils' attainment is monitored very effectively and targets set to help them make progress. The school provides a very good level of personal support for pupils and their families.

The school works very closely with parents and has established effective relationships with homes that are having a positive effect on pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and she is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and other staff. The school is very well managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors play a significant role in planning the school's development and work closely with the headteacher and staff. Overall, they carry out their responsibilities well, although there are some minor omissions from the annual report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance very well and has a very clear picture of what it needs to do to improve. It has done much to raise standards, but has been a little slower on sharing the very good teaching skills seen.
The strategic use of resources	The school has extra funds from local initiatives. Staff and governors plan expenditure very carefully, fully exploring ways to obtain best value for all funds at the school's disposal.

The school is well staffed with experienced teachers and classroom assistants. Resources are satisfactory overall, although there are some shortages of musical instruments. Accommodation is satisfactory overall; there is no library and the computer suite has insufficient ventilation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • Teaching is good and children make good progress. • The school expects children to work hard and behave well. • Children behave well in school. • The school deals with parents' concerns or questions well. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. • Children become mature and responsible while at the school. • There is a good range of activities outside of lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small minority of parents do not think they are sufficiently well informed about their children's progress.

Inspectors are in agreement about the strengths of the school and also judged that the amount of information provided about pupils' progress is very good. At the meeting held for parents before the inspection there was wide support for the work of the school and praise for the headteacher and staff. There were some concerns, all from small numbers of parents, about incidents of bullying, lack of response to telephone messages left at school, inconsistencies in marking and homework and the lack of a library. Inspectors found that bullying is dealt with swiftly and effectively, the school follows up telephone messages as soon as is possible, marking is thorough and the provision of homework is generally satisfactory. Inspectors agree with concerns about the absence of a library; this is an area for development in the school improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils enter the nursery with below average literacy and numeracy skills and many have poor social skills. In all areas, they make good progress as they move through the nursery and reception and, by the time they enter Year 1, the majority have achieved the expected levels in the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Most pupils make good progress in developing personal and social skills; they cooperate with the established daily routines and behave well.
2. In national assessments in 2000, the attainment of seven year olds was in line with the national average, overall, and above average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the average Level 2 in reading and writing was well below average and was below average in mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils obtaining Level 3 or above was broadly average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics, a significant proportion of pupils performing above this. In teachers' assessment in science, standards were broadly average and the proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 or higher was well above average. Compared to similar schools, the proportion of pupils obtaining the average Level 2 or higher was above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. The proportions obtaining the higher Level 3 or better was well above average.
3. Pupils make good progress and this is confirmed from evidence collected during the inspection. In English, pupils' reading and writing skills are above average by the end of Year 2 because of the concentration on developing literacy skills. In most other subjects, pupils have opportunities to use their literacy skills and this has a positive reinforcing effect. Standards are broadly average in mathematics, with sound mental arithmetic skills and a willingness to take on challenging work. In science, pupils' knowledge and understanding are sound and there are many opportunities to develop practical skills. In other subjects, standards are much as expected for seven year olds; they exceed expectations in art and physical education.
4. For 11 year olds, in 2000, the performance of pupils in the national tests was below average, overall, and well below average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the average Level 4 or better was below average in English and mathematics and well below in science. For those reaching the higher Level 5 or better, attainment was broadly average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science. The school did not achieve its targets for the year, which were unrealistic for these pupils. 2000 was an unusual year for the school. It had taken in a large number of pupils from other schools, as part of part of a reorganisation and a significant proportion of these had attainment that was well below average, special educational needs and behavioural difficulties. This had a marked effect on the school's overall results. However, those pupils who were in the school for their end of Year 2 national tests in 1997 performed broadly in line with national standards and mostly better than was expected. Previously standards had been broadly average and unconfirmed results for 2001 indicate that standards are close to average again and close to the school's targets. Compared with similar schools in 2000, the school performed well; standards were above average. Overall, boys performed better than girls.
5. Evidence from the inspection shows standards to be in line with the national average in English and science and below in mathematics and similar to the unconfirmed results of 2001. In English, pupils' skills speaking in and listening, reading and writing are broadly average. Pupils read with enthusiasm and write willingly, taking care with the accuracy of spelling and punctuation. In mathematics, standards are below average, mainly because a significant number of pupils have not been in the school long enough to benefit from the teaching of numeracy skills that have been effective with other pupils. Mental arithmetic skills in particular are underdeveloped. In science, standards are broadly average, with many pupils having a wide range of knowledge about the topics they have been taught. However, investigation skills are underdeveloped. In other subjects,

standards are broadly average; they are above average in art and physical education and below in geography. In design and technology, pupils have good practical skills and illustrate and write about their work well, but their designing skills are underdeveloped because they do not have enough opportunities to work independently to solve problems in designing for themselves. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory, overall, although pupils do not develop their skills sufficiently through ICT work in other subjects.

6. Over their time in school, pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds achieve well. There are no significant differences between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds; the school works hard to ensure that all pupils are well supported. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with clear and attainable targets for learning. When necessary they also receive individual teaching of basic skills. Support staff work effectively in classrooms to identify the learning needs of pupils whose first language is not English and this has a positive effect on how well pupils learn.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are very good and have been maintained since the last inspection; parents support this view. They know that their children enjoy school and believe they make good progress. The Catholic ethos of the school is reflected well in pupils' behaviour and attitudes around school. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work. They maintain concentration very well and the great majority are industrious throughout lessons. Pupils are very willing to talk about what they are doing and work well independently. They contribute positively to short dialogues in lessons, for example, in a year two science lesson, on the purpose and meaning of health and safety signs. The pupils work well together in pairs or in groups, sharing ideas and equipment good naturedly. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated. They play a full part in all activities and are often seen to shine. This is because the teachers know their pupils well and provide for them accordingly.
8. Behaviour is very good. This is strongly supported by the parents. A small number of pupils have personal behavioural problems, but their conduct rarely causes interruption to the flow of lessons. Pupils know the codes of conduct and classroom rules very well and are clear in what is expected of them. Where lapses occur, all pupils know how serious this is. Particularly, instances of bad behaviour are viewed in an atmosphere of disappointment in which all share. Older pupils are familiar with the home school agreement. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
9. Personal development is very good. Pupils are tidy and very respectful of property, moving around the school in a very responsible manner. Pupils are very courteous to adults and to one another. They will cheerfully volunteer comment when passing by, for example, a 'good morning' or when asked questions, happily discuss their feelings about the school. Most pupils have mature attitudes to their work and play. They are good listeners and contribute well to the short dialogues during whole class sessions. They are very keen to celebrate one another's successes, for example, work examined at the end of lessons and at assemblies, applauding their fellow pupils volubly and cheerfully. Play is good natured and often exuberant. A very few pupils are boisterous and not always aware of others around them. Pupils assist in setting out and collecting in resources. Pupils thank lunchtime supervisors before returning to afternoon sessions. All pupils, even the youngest in the nursery, enjoy simple monitoring roles from the day they enter the school. These are enlarged as they move through the year groups. Pupils take their part in assemblies. Older pupils act as prefects taking responsibilities at lunchtime. They develop more independent work skills in preparation for secondary education.
10. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils have implicit trust and can confidently share their thoughts and concerns with more than one member of staff. Consequently, a very good rapport is evident between pupils and between pupils and all adults in school. It is clearly evident that most pupils are aware of what is going on around them. They show initiative and responsibility in dealing with any situations that arise, for example, in offering a chair to a visitor or in making sure others can see what is going on.
11. The under fives have a positive attitude to school. While many start school with poor social skills, they quickly learn to cooperate, establish relationships with other children and adults and join in the

many classroom activities. They work hard and concentrate well, responding well to the stimulating learning environment provided.

12. Attendance is below the national average and has deteriorated since the last inspection. Authorised and unauthorised absence are both well above the national average. The problem of some families taking extended holidays during term time remains. A few families do not let the school know when their children are going to be absent. Regular attendance and punctuality are, however, constantly stressed. There is strong comment on high levels of absence in the school prospectus and in the governors' annual report. Individual levels are commented on in reports. Pupils enjoy competing for the class attendance cup. All these efforts are slowly bringing about improvements, with significantly lower levels of absence in the current year. Lateness is decreasing and largely confined to the same few families. Notwithstanding, the great majority of pupils enjoy school. They are early, greet their teachers cheerfully and look forward to their lessons. Registration is prompt and effective.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Teaching is good, overall, and has improved since the last inspection. In 31 per cent of lessons teaching is very good and occasionally excellent; it is good in 46 per cent and satisfactory in 22 per cent. It is rarely unsatisfactory – in only one lesson during the inspection.
14. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science teaching is good, overall, and it is very good in English. The teaching of literacy skills is well organised and teachers have a very clear understanding of the needs of all pupils and ensure that the work they do is well matched to their capabilities. Consequently, pupils learn well and express themselves well, both in speaking and writing. The stress on accurate terminology and use of vocabulary in all subjects makes a significant contribution to the way pupils learn. For example, in science, the insistence on the use of technical vocabulary in discussion and writing means that pupils express their understanding and knowledge well.
15. Teachers' expectations are high and are based on their extensive knowledge of pupils' learning needs. Marking, formal and informal feedback to pupils and the wide range of detailed assessment information teachers have, are used extremely effectively to set realistically challenging targets for pupils. These are often shared, so that pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them – they can usually tell you what their targets are in particular subjects, and how well they are doing. The good relationships between teachers and pupils means that pupils do not feel undue pressure from the targets they have and does mean that they take great pride in achieving them.
16. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and, in particular, is evident in their teaching of basic skills. Teachers generally have satisfactory ICT skills and some are very skilled.
17. Management of pupils' behaviour is very good. There are well established behaviour rules that are evident throughout the school and they are applied consistently by all teachers. Teachers handle difficult situations sensitively, patiently and firmly and, because they show obvious care, pupils respond very well. School records show that many of the pupils who came into the school as a result of Catholic schools reorganisation had disruptive and unacceptable behaviour patterns – these are not apparent now and those pupils have become absorbed into the culture of the very good behaviour evident throughout the school.
18. Teaching methods are generally good and most lessons include a wide range of activities that involve and interest pupils so that their concentration is maintained. Teachers take pupils' abilities and interests into account when planning lessons, so work is always well matched to pupils' needs. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, the use of shared reading, discussion, questioning, independent learning, reinforcement of new material and opportunities to review work covered had a marked impact on the high quality of all pupils' learning about common features of stories and knowledge of words that sound the same but have different meanings. However, in spite of this, there are too few opportunities for independent learning. For example, in an otherwise good design and technology lesson where pupils planned how to make slippers, they did not really have an opportunity to investigate or find out for themselves what the best allowance in size would be to ensure that a slipper could be worn comfortably. Similarly, in science lessons pupils predict and

discuss the outcomes of experiments, but teachers organise work so that pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations. The quality of information provided for pupils and the introduction of new vocabulary are good and, although there are opportunities for pupils to write independently, they are not frequent enough.

19. Teachers use homework well, to support children's learning, to encourage them to find out information for themselves and to develop their reading skills.
20. In the foundation stage, the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is mostly good. Children are managed very well and are provided with a wide range of activities that successfully capture and maintain their interest. A calm and purposeful working atmosphere is created and this promotes effective learning. The good quality of teaching is successfully raising standards when children enter Year 1.
21. All teachers are aware of those pupils with special educational needs and provide good support. A feature of many lessons is the good use of questioning which enables all pupils to be fully included and achieve success. Some pupils also receive effective individual teaching in basic skills. They enjoy these occasions, work hard and can see their increasing success. Support for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds is good. Support teachers work effectively with teachers and individual pupils in lessons to resolve learning difficulties.

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

22. The school provides a broad curriculum. All statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met at both key stages. Pupils are presented with a wide range of learning opportunities, which are relevant to their needs. This is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not always given sufficient opportunities to use their skills in ICT and literacy in other areas of the curriculum, particularly in history and geography. However, the school's sensitivity to the particular needs of their pupils means that there is very good provision in areas such as physical education. Pupils enjoy many different subjects, encouraging the large majority of them to attend school enthusiastically. The planning of the curriculum is satisfactory, overall, with some improvements made since the last inspection. There are still no schemes of work for history and geography, but the school is currently planning the completion and implementation of these. There is good provision for those pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and for pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. Needs have been identified clearly and pupils have individual learning plans, which contribute to their good progress. A feature of many lessons is the way in which teachers seek to include all pupils as fully as possible, giving opportunities for all to be successful. The needs of some pupils are met further by individual teaching of basic skills. This is good.
23. Provision for children in the foundation stage is good. The foundation stage is efficiently managed and the curriculum is well planned to include the learning objectives for all six areas of learning. There is good liaison between teachers, ensuring effective progression through the nursery and the reception classes. Teachers are reviewing the foundation stage curriculum to clearly identify specific skills to be taught in each activity.
24. The strategy for teaching literacy has been implemented satisfactorily. Good examples are seen of pupils' writing, which uses interesting vocabulary. However, opportunities to widen the range of writing experiences in subjects are sometimes missed, for example, in science and history. The absence of a library puts some limitations on pupils' independent reading. The numeracy strategy has been implemented satisfactorily. Teachers ask pupils about different mental strategies and there is good learning of multiplication tables.
25. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. There are games clubs, including competitive opportunities, art, computer and music activities and a wide range of visits and visitors into school. These provide additional enrichment to the curriculum. The school analyses its success and pupils' needs and takes action. All pupils benefit equally. An awareness of the need to provide a wealth of activities has led to a range of games provided in the playground. This contributes strongly to the generally very high standard of behaviour and respect that pupils have for each other.

26. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The school deals with matters of sex education, and drugs awareness with the support of outside agencies. The local football club supports work on drugs awareness and this is a reflection of the very good links the school has with the community. These include the church, a range of sporting links, business links, such as that with BUPA who provided a bicycle track and many others. There are also very good links with other schools, in particular the local high school. The link teacher from that school not only visits, but is involved with the work of the pupils, so that they know him very well.
27. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has been maintained since the last inspection. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Pupils have opportunities to explore the values of others, considering the lives of people such as Harriet Tubman. Pupils' own ideas are sought and valued and they are encouraged to applaud the efforts of their peers. Collective worship relates to values and beliefs and links Christian values to the pupils' own lives. For example, pupils are taught to understand that 'giving' does not necessarily mean the material; it means giving love and friendship. The headteacher and other staff, also, provide clear role models in this.
28. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils know clearly what is right and wrong. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with firmly, but in a way by which pupils can see that they have let themselves down. They want to show their best and thrive on praise. Pupils who have experienced problems in other schools sometimes display excellent behaviour. This is due to the caring and positive approach taken by the school.
29. Provision for social development is good. Pupils are aware of unspoken group rules. They collaborate very well at times, as exemplified by a girl and two boys working well together in a Year 5 dance lesson. In class, the very good behaviour stems from self-discipline, as a result of knowing what the teachers and their peers expect. All adults in school set fine examples; there is a strong ethos of respect and caring for each other. A leading basketball player provides a most positive role model when he talks about respect for self and for others, highlighting how the school cares. Although pupils are well mannered and responsible, being extremely helpful to visitors, insufficient opportunities are provided for them to take more responsibility and use initiative.
30. Provision for cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils visit museums and art galleries, the cathedral and the cinema. Parents visit the school to talk about different cultures. Links with sports groups and other schools also contribute to music, drugs education and aspects of social education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare, overall, are good, as they were at the last inspection. All staff are aware of the strict criteria to be observed in child protection. There are some minor health and safety concerns within the general framework of the school day, which are having immediate attention. Some broader issues have been brought to the attention of governors. The welfare of pupils is very evident. The school has good access to educational, medical and social agencies when required. This is an open school. The headteacher and staff are always willing to share any quick concerns with parents at the beginning and end of the day. Appointments can readily be made for more formal matters.
32. The school actively promotes regular attendance and punctuality as good habits to be fostered for the future. The need for improvement is acknowledged. Dissatisfaction with last year's levels of absence is clearly conveyed to parents in the school prospectus. There is a prompt daily check for any unexplained absences, particularly with a few families where there are suggestions of condoned absence. The educational welfare officer supports the school well with the few families causing regular concern. These good strategies are successfully raising levels of attendance in the current year.
33. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline are very good. An atmosphere of good authority is evident at all times. The policies and strategies for promoting discipline are very well structured. They are consistently applied in all classes and are very successful. Staff have very high

expectations, which brush off onto pupils. Where pupils have individual behavioural problems, these are the concern of staff. Pastoral care is constantly reviewed, generally with positive results. Occasional lapses in conduct and bad behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Parents are thoroughly involved immediately problems emerge. Bullying is rare and not expected.

34. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. All policies are prefaced by the school's strong mission statement as the secure basis from which strategies emanate. Adults in school provide very good role models for the pupils. They know all the pupils very well and support them according to their individual needs. Parents are pleased that teachers expect their children to work hard and do their best. They are very confident that teachers help their children to mature. Regular staff meetings ensure that pupils are very well supported individually and consistently as they move through the year groups. Lunchtime supervisors stimulate good interactive play with a good range of organised activities, particularly with the younger pupils. There are few raised voices in school. Encouragement of responsible attitudes is fostered from the day pupils enter the school. Daily opportunities are created for pupils to take initiative and responsibility. Pupils are urged to take care and pride in what they say and what they do. Good work and effort is praised before all the class, especially when significant personal achievements in learning are made. Assemblies are skilfully used to promote responsible attitudes to work, behaviour, relationships and decision making.
35. Any concerns about individual pupils are discussed and assessments are made of their needs. When necessary, pupils have individual learning plans, which provide targets to attain quickly. The pupils then move on with increased confidence that they can succeed. Regular reviews are made of their progress.
36. Assessment procedures have been improved since the previous inspection. They are now very good, are used very well to raise standards and are a strength of the school. The local education authority's assessment system is rigorously implemented at the beginning of the nursery and reception year and is used effectively to move children's learning forward. Arrangements for the statutory test and assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national procedures. As part of the school's strategy to raise standards, a well considered programme of annual tests is also implemented across other year groups. The tests are used to monitor progress in literacy and numeracy. The results are systematically collated and used very effectively to track individual pupils' progress across the school. Staff analyse the results thoroughly to identify strengths and weaknesses and make effective use of this information to plan improvements. For example, comprehension skills have been identified as a weakness and the school has now introduced a comprehension scheme to address this issue. Assessment procedures are also used well to identify higher attaining pupils and those who could, with extra support, reach higher levels. The information is used very well to guide target setting throughout the school.
37. There are well established procedures for teachers to exchange information about individual pupils at the end of each year and the information gained provides a good basis for grouping pupils and focusing teaching. Further evidence of pupils' attainment is contained in their record of achievement files, particularly in pupils' literacy and numeracy work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents view the school highly. They are pleased with what the school provides and achieves. They have implicit confidence in the headteacher and her staff. Parents comment on how welcome they are in school and the happy atmosphere that is evident.
39. The school successfully promotes and enjoys very good and effective links with parents. Most parents agree they are very well informed on all school matters. There are newsletters, supplemented by regular letters from the headteacher and staff, covering all activities and requirements of the school year. There is a good school prospectus with a very good mission statement. The governors' annual report conforms to requirements apart from a few minor matters which are having attention. The great majority of parents feel the school works very closely with them, although a few expressed some concern regarding information on their children's progress. The inspection team found the quality of information to parents about their children's progress is very good, as it provides annual reports conforming to requirements, giving details of pupils'

progress and what they need to do to improve. The school has an open door policy which all parents spoken to found very valuable for any daily matters that arise. Their children's profiles of work are always available to view. Consultation evenings are extremely well attended, when target setting is discussed. Parents and pupils are invited to comment on any curriculum priorities they wish the school to consider. There is a good attendance at curricular related sessions, for example, a recent mathematics session viewed as successful by those present.

40. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is very good. The home school agreement has had a very positive response. Home school reading records are well used by a number of parents, particularly in key stage one. A few parents loyally assist in classes. Their service is planned for and valued. Several more help with after school activities or with trips and visits. Parents are happy with the levels and quality of homework set. A very few express concerns. The inspection team found the levels of homework and marking comparable with those of similar schools. The Friends of Our Lady's Association, although small in number, is enthusiastic and growing in strength. It supports the school by running events, such as a Valentine Disco and a good Summer Fair, raising funds for extra resources. Parents enjoy the opportunities for attending a variety of school events, including assemblies, festivals and masses.
41. Parents of those pupils with special educational needs are invited and encouraged to meet with teachers when progress is reviewed. Many of them do so.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The school is very well managed and led by the headteacher and senior staff. The headteacher has a clear view of how the school should improve and this aim is evident in the attitudes and efforts of all staff in the school. There is a high level of commitment by all teachers and support staff and considerable collaboration between staff to ensure that the school runs smoothly and effectively. The ethos for success is particularly impressive and is enhanced by the strong Catholic environment of the school.
43. The school's priorities for development are very good and the areas for development identified by the inspection team are already elements of the school's improvement plan. The school monitors its own performance very well and plans well for improvement. There is, for example, a detailed analysis of pupils' attainment and targets based on this analysis have been set to aid lesson planning and teaching. Staff with responsibility for supporting pupils from ethnic minorities do so very well. They monitor pupils' performance, work with individuals and groups of pupils and support teachers in lessons very effectively. Their work is valued by the school and is made good use of in planning developments.
44. Teaching is observed by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and teachers receive feedback on what they need to do to improve. This has been successful; teaching has improved since the last inspection. However, the school does not make as much use of its identified very good teaching skills as it could, because there is no established means of sharing the very good practice among all staff. Nevertheless, there are strong informal links and all staff have performance management targets. There is a good level of support for staff coming new to the school and for other staff to improve, for example, their ICT skills.
45. Governors support the school well. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and take an active role in helping the school plan improvements. Several governors visit the school regularly, are well informed about its day-to-day functioning and have good relationships with the staff and pupils. There are a few omissions from the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus which are being dealt with; there is insufficient detail about pupils' attendance and absenteeism; information on disabilities is incomplete and there is no contact address for the chair of the governing body.
46. The school is well staffed with experienced teachers and support staff. The school has more staff than normally seen in schools of this type as a result of funds made available from Excellence in Cities (EiC) funding and the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Service (EMAS). This has had a particularly strong impact on the achievements of pupils from all ethnic minorities. Staff have been

suitably trained to meet the teaching requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

47. Resources are satisfactory, overall, and are good for mathematics, ICT, physical education and special educational needs. They are generally satisfactory elsewhere, although there is a shortage of tuned percussion instruments.
48. The accommodation is satisfactory, overall. However, there is no library; the computer suite occupies the former library area and although there are plans for a new library, implementation has not started. Ventilation in the computer room is poor and the room is frequently extremely hot. Although some classrooms are too small for the numbers of pupils in classes, changes in numbers from September 2001 will rectify this.
49. Financial management is good. The school recently had an overspend, but increased numbers of pupils and a cautious increase in staffing has reversed this position so that the school now has a moderate financial reserve. Overall, the school has more funds than the great majority of schools in the country, but, taking into account the learning difficulties of a large proportion of its pupils, it spends them wisely on staff for the high level of effective support it provides. The school, through governors and administrative staff, monitors its own expenditure well and makes sure that available resources are used to meet the learning needs of its pupils. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. The school has a very good understanding of what it needs to do to continue its improvement. The school improvement plan is detailed, contains much of what the inspection team has identified and requires only fine tuning to focus on the issues raised. The quality of development and commitment to improvement is such that the school is well positioned to continue its improvement.
51. The school now needs to:
 - (i) Raise standards at Key Stage 2 in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - there is good pace to mental arithmetic activities (paragraphs: 5, 79);
 - work is consistently challenging (paragraph: 79);and in geography by ensuring that:
 - work is challenging for all pupils (paragraph: 96);
 - there is a scheme of work (paragraphs: 22, 95);
 - there are sufficient resources (paragraph: 100);
 - (ii) Improve standards of teaching further by sharing the identified very good practice with all teachers (paragraph: 44);
 - (iii) Improve pupils' learning by providing opportunities:
 - to develop and use literacy skills in all subject areas (paragraphs: 18, 24, 74);
 - to use information and communication technology skills in all subjects (paragraphs: 5, 22);
 - for investigation in science and problem solving in design and technology (paragraphs: 5, 18, 84, 93).

Minor issues that the school should also address:

- establish a library so that pupils can develop independent learning skills (paragraph: 24);
- minor omissions from the governors' annual report (paragraph: 45); and
- continue the work to improve pupils' attendance (paragraph: 32).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	27	46	21	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	191
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		122

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	72

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
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	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	16
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	25	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (69)	76 (65)	88 (96)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	16	16
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	25	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (69)	88 (85)	91 (81)
	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	11	22	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	9
	Girls	15	14	17
	Total	23	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (62)	67 (81)	79 (92)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	9
	Girls	14	14	16
	Total	20	22	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (58)	67 (77)	76 (81)
	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	3
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	95
Indian	0
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	42
Any other minority ethnic group	11

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	188

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	34

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	421 251
Total expenditure	375 288
Expenditure per pupil	1 822
Balance brought forward from previous year	- 9 875
Balance carried forward to next year	36 088

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	221
Number of questionnaires returned	115

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	21	3	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	69	27	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	30	1	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	34	4	2	3
The teaching is good.	80	18	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	28	8	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	22	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	17	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	58	36	3	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	70	26	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	23	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	37	3	0	4

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are pleased with the education the school provides and believe that it does so in a strongly Catholic atmosphere. Particular concerns were expressed by parents at the meeting before the inspection about bullying, occasional lack of communication in answer to parents' queries, inconsistencies in marking and homework, the lack of a library and support for borderline special educational needs pupils. The inspection team found that in general, bullying is well dealt with, parents' queries are followed up as soon as is possible, marking is thorough and detailed, provision of homework is satisfactory and all pupils' learning needs are addressed. Inspectors are in agreement with parents' concern over the lack of a library; the school has plans to establish a new library in the near future.

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

52. Provision for children in the foundation stage is good. Although attainment is variable, a significant number of children enter the nursery with poor skills in language, numeracy and social development. On transfer to the reception class, assessments indicate that, although they have made good progress in the nursery, attainment in language and numeracy remains below average. However, children continue to make good progress and by the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the great majority have achieved the expected levels in the Early Learning Goals that are deemed suitable for children of this age.
53. The foundation stage is efficiently managed and the curriculum is generally effectively planned to include learning objectives that promote all six areas of learning. The nursery and reception teachers liaise frequently, ensuring that there is effective planning for progression from the nursery to the reception. This is having a positive impact on children's learning. The teachers are currently reviewing the planning of the foundation stage curriculum and are aware that at present there are some areas for development in the provision. For example, in the nursery, insufficient attention is paid to the stepping stones required in order to reach the early learning goals. In the reception class, short term planning does not always clearly identify the specific skills to be developed within each activity.
54. In the foundation stage, the quality of teaching is good, overall, and never less than satisfactory. Children are managed very well and are provided with a wide range of activities that successfully capture and maintain their interest. A calm and purposeful working atmosphere is created and this promotes effective learning. The good quality of teaching is successfully raising standards when children enter Year 1.

Personal and social development

55. Many children enter the nursery with poorly developed social skills. However, progress is good and children quickly become used to the class routines, such as when they confidently join in morning prayers and begin to establish relationships with each other and with adults. They make their own choice of activity and mostly persevere until it is completed. In the reception class, children are developing a degree of independence and are also beginning to work together effectively as a group. This was evident when they set up apparatus during a physical education lesson, carrying the equipment quietly and sensibly with the minimum of supervision.
56. The staff provide for the children's personal development very well by giving useful opportunities for children to develop their independence. For example, each morning, nursery children register themselves as they enter school, by writing their names on a strategically placed board. Children's opinions are listened to and valued. Effective measures have been established to support children on entry to the nursery and reception classes. Teachers and support staff work together most effectively as a team to create a stimulating and secure environment and children are happy to come to school.

Communication, language and literacy

57. By the end of the foundation stage, attainment in communication, language and literacy is in line with national expectations. In both the nursery and reception classes the children enjoy listening to stories and will readily share books with adults. They are often to be found completely absorbed in listening to a taped story through headphones, following the story in a book at the same time. In the nursery, most children are aware that print carries meaning and is read from left to right. By the time they end the reception year, the majority of children are launched onto the school reading scheme and can read a number of familiar words. They are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to sound out words that are unfamiliar to them. Higher attaining children can identify the title, author and illustrators of books. Children interact with others, as when they become involved

in role-play in the class "clinic". In the nursery, most children listen carefully and make the appropriate response and are able to clearly express their needs. By the end of the reception year most children participate well in class discussions, many confidently expressing themselves in complex sentences. For example, after listening to the story of Goldilocks, one child confidently stated, "you shouldn't go in somebody's house when there's nobody there". In writing, nursery children enjoy mark making and are beginning to copy under adult writing. In the reception class, most children are able to write a few familiar words independently. Higher attaining children refer to word charts to spell unfamiliar words.

58. The teaching of language is good and children achieve well. Relevant elements of the literacy hour are used well in the reception class. In both classes the teachers talk constantly with the children, effectively developing their powers of self expression. Understanding of initial sounds and commonly used words is reinforced through rhymes and stories. Staff encourage children to think of themselves as writers whatever their stage of development. For example, in both classes, supplies of pencils and crayons are readily available to the children to use. Children are encouraged in their reading development by taking books home to share with their parents.

Mathematical development

59. Children make good progress in their mathematical development and by the end of the foundation stage, attainment is in line with national expectations. In the nursery, most children are able to recognise and order numbers to ten. They know the name of common two-dimensional shapes and can make comparisons between large and small, thick and thin. Almost all children show an interest in numbers as they join in with number rhymes and songs. In the reception class, most children can count in twos. They are able to count one more and one less in simple practical addition and most can correctly compute and record simple addition sums. Higher attaining children demonstrate developing understanding of number as, for example, they discover how many different ways of making eight are possible.
60. Staff use a range of resources and games for the development of children's understanding of number well. For example, reception children are well motivated and make good progress in their learning as they hang pairs of socks on a washing line to practice counting in twos. In their number activities, when children are closely supervised by adults, they learn well, through the use of questions that are well tailored to their individual needs and the reinforcement of mathematical vocabulary. In the nursery, ongoing assessment is used effectively to provide activities that are suitably challenging to individual needs. In the reception class, lesson planning does not always allow for pupils' different capabilities. This sometimes results in tasks being too difficult for some children, which limits their progress during the lesson. However, in all lessons, children are very well managed and positive relationships have been established, so children are keen to work hard and give of their best.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. Children make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and, at the end of the foundation stage, most have achieved the expected standard for this area of learning. They are beginning to gain knowledge of the world around them through a wide range of activities and attractive resources. In the nursery, children are given good opportunities for exploratory play as they investigate wet and dry sand and water. Reception children recognise and label the parts of the body. They are beginning to find out and identify features in the place they live as, for example, they visit the local supermarket. As they tend seeds they have planted, children in both classes begin to understand that plants are living things that grow and change. Children are beginning to use the computer to support their learning, as when they use the mouse to direct the cursor to change a teddy bear's clothes. Visitors to the school are used well to extend learning. This was evident when children greatly enjoyed watching a visiting puppet act on the importance of caring for teeth.
62. No direct teaching of this area of learning was observed. However, teachers' planning indicates that lesson planning does not always identify the specific skills to be developed during these activities, such as in water and sand play and, consequently, learning sometimes lacks purpose.

Physical development

63. Good progress is made in physical development. By the time they reach Year 1, children's skills of balance and co-ordination are above the expected level. Fine motor skills, such as using scissors and pencils are in line with expectations. The outdoor play area has recently been redesigned and refurbished with new equipment and, consequently, offers children very good opportunity to develop their physical skills. They develop their skills of balance and co-ordination well as they use sit and ride toys, climbing equipment and bats and balls. In a physical education lesson in the hall, children demonstrate good balance and co-ordination as they use different parts of their body to travel on apparatus. As they jump off the apparatus, higher attaining children consider the shape they are making. Children show developing awareness of space.
64. In lessons, good adult support sensitively encourages all children to participate and ensures that all children spend the majority of the lesson actively involved in physical activity. In physical education lessons in the hall praise is used well to encourage children and good performance by individuals is used effectively as an example to the rest of the class. In class, children are provided with a good range of resources and plenty of opportunity to develop their fine motor skills.

Creative development

65. By the time they reach Year 1, children's creative skills are much as expected. They demonstrate increasing competency with a range of media and materials. For example, in the nursery, children use a variety of media to make and print colourful patterns in connection with their work in mathematics. In the reception class, children show awareness in their choice of colours to use when painting self-portraits. Most children can recognise and name the primary colours. Children practise their skills of cutting and sticking as they select both the tools and materials they are using to assemble and join different materials. In music, they recognise and name a variety of percussion instruments and are familiar with the sound they make. They enjoy singing a variety of songs.
66. The provision of good resources allows children the opportunity for a wide range of experiences. Children are well managed and respond well to adults' instructions. Children benefit in their learning of music through the valuable assistance of a school governor who voluntarily takes singing sessions each week, successfully increasing the children's repertoire of familiar songs. Teachers plan innovative activities so children are well motivated to improve their skills. The good quality of teaching is successfully raising the standards of children's skills in the creative arts.

ENGLISH

67. In the results of the national tests for seven year olds in 2000, attainment in reading and writing was close to the national average, overall. The proportion reaching the average Level 2 or higher was well below average and the proportion obtaining Level 3 or higher was above average in reading and well above average in writing. In comparison with similar schools, attainment in both areas was above average. Girls generally performed better than boys. Although attainment has fluctuated between year groups, over the last three years sound standards have mostly been maintained, compared with national averages. Currently, inspection evidence indicates that standards in reading and writing are above average by the end of Year 2. All pupils achieve well. Over the past year, the school has been successful in raising the level of attainment for lower attaining pupils, by the provision of extra support. As a result, teacher assessments indicate that almost all pupils have achieved the expected standards in reading and writing and approximately one third of pupils have achieved higher than the expected standard. The unconfirmed end of Year 2 national tests match these results.
68. At age 11, the test results in 2000 showed standards to be below average, although in comparison with similar schools attainment was well above average. Overall, over the last four years attainment is in line with the national trend. Generally, boys perform better than girls. Evidence from lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that standards have improved and are close to average. The school has effectively highlighted reasons for the lower attainment and is addressing the issues. For example, a thorough analysis of test results highlighted the appreciable difference in attainment for those pupils who had a high level of absence from school. As a result, the school has

established very effective measures to reduce absence. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils make good progress in their learning, including those with special educational needs who achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds make good progress.

69. At age seven and 11, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are average. Most pupils speak clearly and express their thought articulately. They make good progress in speaking and listening skills. For example, in Year 1, pupils listened very carefully to the shared text, confidently completing the end of the sentences. By Year 2, pupils speak confidently when expressing their feelings and talk freely in social conversations with visitors to the school. At age 11, pupils listen with concentration to other pupils and their teachers and wait their turn in discussions. Most are confident in putting forward their point of view in discussion, but some pupils lack a sufficiently wide vocabulary to help them explain their ideas clearly. For example, when pupils in year 6 were asked to explain the difference between words that are pronounced the same but spelt differently, one pupil was unsure of the meaning of "flour". Pupils benefit from the opportunities for speaking and listening during the literacy hour, when teachers take every opportunity to widen pupils' vocabulary and extend their understanding of the use of language.
70. At age seven, attainment in reading is above average, with most pupils working at the expected level and about one third reading at the higher level. Pupils make good progress in acquiring a wide range of reading skills. They read with developing accuracy and respond to what they have read, confidently talking about the story and characters. Higher attaining pupils understand the difference between fiction and non fiction and can explain how to use index and contents pages to gain information. Pupils' skills are developed well through the literacy hour lessons and good use is made of the shared and guided reading time to help pupils gain a greater understanding of what they read. Pupils take books home on a regular basis and those parents who regularly hear their children read make a valuable contribution to the progress their children make. Attainment at age 11 is average. Most pupils enjoy books and respond to the humour and subject matter with interest. Most are able to express opinions about plot and character, although a few find it difficult. Higher attaining pupils usefully act as reading partners to less able pupils in the year group. Work in the literacy hour is having a positive impact on enriching the range of literature studied. The school's assessments of pupils from Years 3 to 6 has highlighted the fact that, for a significant minority, particularly those who joined the school during this time, their limited vocabulary and lack of comprehension skills limit progress in both reading and writing. In order to improve standards the school has implemented several new initiatives. For example, a new classroom assistant has been appointed specifically to assist with lower attaining pupils in Year 6. These initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on standards and all pupils achieve well. The school is aware that, at present, the library provision is unsatisfactory. The area that is currently being used as a library is too small and pupils are not easily able to access books in order to find information. The improvement of the library has been correctly prioritised on the school development plan.
71. In writing, at age seven, most pupils work at the expected level for their age, with approximately one third working at the higher level. The majority of pupils spell a range of familiar words accurately. Higher attaining pupils use an interesting vocabulary and apply words adventurously. They organise and plan their extended stories well, so that they have a clearly defined structure. Spelling is mostly consistent and handwriting is accurately formed and of a consistent size, although few pupils use a joined script. Most pupils apply punctuation accurately and are beginning to use interesting sentence connectives. Higher attaining pupils use workbooks and dictionaries confidently to check their spellings. At age 11, attainment is broadly average. Pupils know that writing is used for a range of purposes and the writing of many is varied and interesting, including both stories and factual writing. Higher attaining pupils use punctuation, including speech marks, well and sentences are generally well structured with the effective use of some extended phrases. Ideas are developed logically and organised into paragraphs. Most pupils write neatly and present their work well, often drafting to improve their work. The literacy hour is having a positive effect on pupils' ability to select more powerful language and extended writing lessons allow suitable opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. This is having a positive impact on progress as older pupils' independent writing is carefully and neatly presented and shows fluency of style. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. A strength of writing throughout the school is the high quality poetry. For example, Year 2 pupils produce imaginative poems around the letters of the alphabet and Year 6 pupils compose

striking poems, using prompt sheets. In conversation, many pupils refer to their enjoyment of poetry.

72. Word processing skills are satisfactorily developed and information and communication technology is used effectively to support reading and writing throughout the school.
73. Teaching is very good, overall: it was very good in over half the lessons observed and never less than satisfactory. Pupils make good progress over time and, in the lessons observed where teaching was very good, they were making correspondingly very good progress in their learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan their lessons very well, providing innovative and plentiful learning opportunities for pupils to build on their skills progressively. In most lessons teachers have high expectations and engage pupils' interest by setting a brisk pace and providing suitably challenging work for pupils of differing capabilities. Pupils are well motivated to give of their best and effective questioning is used well to enhance and extend pupils' thinking. Very good use is made of ongoing assessment to match work well to pupils' needs, although marking of pupils' work is not always used effectively to improve writing skills through the use of constructive comments. A strength of the teaching throughout the school is the very good pupil management and positive relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils are treated with great respect and their opinions are valued, creating positive attitudes and an enthusiastic response, which directly contributes to the quality of their learning. Across the school, learning support assistants provide knowledgeable and useful help. Most pupils work hard in their independent sessions during the literacy hour, which contributes positively to their personal development. They co-operate and support each other very well.
74. The co-ordinator has worked effectively to promote literacy and improve standards. However, the teaching of literacy skills is not common practice in most subjects; the school is missing opportunities to build upon the very good work done within literacy lessons. The coordinator monitors teachers' planning regularly and the monitoring of teaching and learning in literacy lessons by senior managers and local authority advisors is an established and effective feature. The school has set realistic targets for the national tests for 2001, based on sound analysis of evidence. Assessment is used very effectively to establish, class, group and some individual targets in reading and writing and this is having a positive impact on standards. Resources are adequate, with a suitable variety of reading materials to stimulate pupils' interests and meet their needs in all subjects. The school endeavours to compensate for the inadequacy of the library by ensuring that there is a good supply of books readily accessible in each. Standards have risen since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

75. National tests in 2000 showed that the attainment of pupils at the age of seven was below average compared with schools nationally. Standards were above average in comparison with similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was above the national average and well above when compared with similar schools. Overall, boys perform better than girls. The recent trend has shown results, overall, to be just above the national average. This is similar to the findings of the inspection.
76. The national tests for pupils at the age of 11 in 2000 showed attainment to be below the national average at both Level 4 and above and, at Level 5, well below average, overall. When compared with similar schools, it was above average in both cases. The previous three years had shown the school to be above average. The current situation is similar to the year 2000.
77. Attainment by the age of seven is broadly average. Pupils' computation of number is secure. They add various multiples of 10 to equal 100. Higher attainers are quick to say that $900 + 100 = 1000$. A small proportion of pupils still add pairs of numbers to 10 with varying success. Most pupils know the names of common 2-dimensional shapes, such as triangles and hexagons. They show their full understanding when they successfully identify them from a description of their properties. Pupils learn well through the key stage. For example, a pupil of below average ability in Year 1 showed clear progress in writing number symbols. A higher attainer achieved more difficult tasks by solving problems involving 2 and 3 digit numbers and asked for and was given harder tasks. A Year 2 pupil struggles initially to order multiples of 10, but shows clear improvement in learning. Targets

are set to challenge higher attainers, such as to learn the 4x table. Overall, all pupils, whatever their ability or ethnic background, achieve well.

78. By the age of 11, attainment is below the national average, overall, although a significant proportion of pupils are achieving high levels. However, within this year there is a group of pupils, many of whom have not been in the school long enough to have benefited from the teaching approaches used. The school is working hard to rectify this and the progress these pupils make from their low starting point is good. For example, time has been spent reinforcing multiplication tables to ensure that these pupils know them thoroughly. Pupils at age 11 show a wide variation in their knowledge and understanding. Lower attainers multiply and divide by 10 and 100 but they do not work confidently with decimal numbers. They classify 2-dimensional shapes and know about basic measurements. However, some pupils are wildly inaccurate when estimating capacity. Higher attainers order negative numbers and measure and draw angles correctly. When tackling problems, pupils explain their understanding and the methods used to solve them. Progress within classes is good for pupils of all capabilities and backgrounds. Teachers assess pupils' needs and provide for them with much reinforcement of basic skills where necessary.
79. Teaching is good overall. Two very good lessons were seen in Key Stage 2. Assessment is very good. The teachers are well aware of the starting points for all pupils, targets are set and work is planned for these to be achieved. In the best lessons, the teacher shares clear learning objectives with the pupils. Year 3 pupils knew what the purpose of their lesson was and, at the end of it, they could judge their own learning. The very high quality teaching meant that all pupils had increased their understanding of equivalent fractions and were eager to demonstrate this. The methods used provided fun in their learning and so they applied themselves really well. A small number of pupils with special educational needs were closely supported in their task and during the whole-class discussion the teacher ensured that every pupil participated. This is a feature of many classes. The teachers have a secure grasp of the numeracy strategy and plan accordingly. However, in some classes, the mental activities lack pace and are not sufficiently challenging. This was not the case in Year 5, where a very dynamic teacher inspired the pupils and drove learning on at a great pace. She matched questions to the pupils' understanding so that all were involved. Tasks are matched according to different capabilities and good use is made of resources. Each pupil in Year 5 had a clock, so that all had to find the answers. Other adults who support the teachers are well prepared and give good support to pupils. Consequently, those with special educational needs make good progress. In addition, support teachers provide a high level of effective support for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The very good management of pupils of all ages is due to the above average expectations of the teachers and good relationships. Pupils want to be praised and seek to earn it. Teachers give it readily and the lessons flow well. On occasions, pupils who achieve successfully are allowed to continue at the same task when they should be moved on to a further challenge. Pupils want to be constantly challenged and ask for it.
80. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the strengths of the subject and weaknesses found, when analysing results, are acted upon. Assessment information is used very effectively to provide targets for pupils and to aid lesson planning. The aspect of 'time' was discovered to be weak and additional attention has been given to it. Although the subject is monitored, this could be sharper, so that, for example, mental activities in all classes take place with more zip. There is good use and reinforcement of literacy with emphasis on use and understanding of key vocabulary. In addition, pupils are required to explain their understanding of problems. Information and communication technology provides good support for the teaching of data handling. It is not used generally, however, to support class lessons. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

SCIENCE

81. In teachers' assessments in 2000, the standards achieved by seven year olds were broadly average, although the proportion of pupils obtaining the higher levels was well above average. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average and the proportion obtaining Level 3 or higher was very high. The unconfirmed results of 2001 show that standards have been maintained. In the national tests taken by 11 year olds in 2000, standards were below average, overall, but, compared with similar schools, they were above average. Results were lower than the previous year, a consequence of the school taking into Year 6 a large number of pupils who had

lower standards of attainment than expected on entry to the school. Unconfirmed national tests for 2001 indicate that standards are rising again and that they are close to average. Inspection evidence is broadly in agreement with this. Overall, boys attain higher than girls; this is true for pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and in line with their prior attainment. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

82. By the time they are seven, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average and a significant minority of pupils have above average attainment. The highest attainers have a good understanding of the properties of materials and how these are important in choosing the right material for specific jobs. Their knowledge about electrical safety and the life cycle of plants is good. The majority of average pupils know that electrical appliances can be powered by batteries or mains electricity. Practical skills are good and the most able pupils make simple predictions about the outcomes of experiments. Pupils write competently about their work, when they have the opportunity, although generally they copy too much. Their explanations of what they see in experiments are generally sound, although some lower attainers confuse pushing and pulling forces when applying them to everyday situations. Overall, the progress made by pupils is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and all pupils, whatever their ethnic background, make good progress, because there is a high level of support from teachers and classroom assistants.
83. By the time pupils are 11, their attainment is broadly average, with about one quarter showing above average knowledge and understanding. The highest attainers, for example, have a good understanding of the upthrust experienced by objects when they are suspended in water and make a good attempt to explain why there is a weight difference. Their knowledge of what materials are made of is satisfactory, overall, and, in discussion, many pupils use scientific vocabulary competently, mainly because teachers use scientific terminology regularly in their explanations and descriptions and expect pupils to do the same. Practical skills are generally good and, although pupils do predict the outcomes of experiments, the investigative work they do is too controlled by the teacher, so there are too few opportunities to find out for themselves. Pupils produce quite good written work, but not frequently enough. All pupils, whatever their backgrounds and capabilities, are supported well and make good progress. Those pupils who came into the school as a result of reorganisation within the Catholic primary school system, have made good progress, considering their low starting point; many of them are now attaining in line with the national average.
84. Teaching is good, overall, and never less than satisfactory. In all but one lesson, teaching was good. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and is evident in the quality of questioning that involves and challenges pupils to think for themselves. The range of methods used is good and sometimes very good, for example, where the teacher takes the opportunity to investigate the formation of shadows by taking pupils into the playground on a sunny day. However, in many lessons there are too few opportunities for pupils to investigate for themselves; teachers provide too much direction, taking away some of the sense of discovery that pupils can enjoy. Teachers use scientific vocabulary and terminology accurately, reinforcing it regularly so that pupils become familiar with new words, and insisting that pupils use the same terms in their own speech. This has a significantly positive effect on pupils' learning. Generally, the pace of work is good and pupils respond well, because their attention is maintained. For example, in a Year 4 class, recap on previous work, discussion about how electrical circuits work, practical work to investigate various arrangements of bulb, wires and battery, followed by a discussion about results led to good learning and a high level of concentration by pupils. Work is challenging; questioning supports this and, with sensitive support, pupils gain confidence to attempt answers and explanations. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to show their understanding or knowledge through independent or extended writing. Pupils copy a lot about the topics they cover, often in readily understandable language, but they do not write about their own understanding or knowledge themselves, which would help them to gain confidence and competence to express their own ideas. Work is marked very thoroughly and pupils receive a high level of feedback, often with specific targets to help them improve. The individual learning needs of pupils are addressed well. Classroom assistants and other teachers in lessons work well together to identify specific needs and make sure that pupils receive the help they require. In this way pupils are confident that they are performing as well as they can. Teachers manage pupils well; they establish good relationships based on clearly understood behaviour expectations and pupils respond extremely well.

85. The subject is managed very well. All teachers have been observed teaching and given feedback. Pupils' work is monitored and the coordinator checks the marking of work to ensure consistency throughout the school. Considerable work has been done to improve the teaching of investigations and, although this has improved, there are still instances of work that is intended to be investigative, but ends up being heavily directed by teachers. Very good use is made of available assessment information to monitor the performance of pupils, to provide them with targets and to improve the planning of teaching. The curriculum is well organised and staff collaborate effectively to ensure that there is proper continuity and progression in the work they do as they move through the school. However, opportunities to use ICT in lessons are limited, mainly because there are no computers in classrooms and access to the computer suite is not always possible. Overall, the improvements made in the subject since the last inspection have been good.

ART AND DESIGN

86. At ages seven and 11, pupils' standards of attainment exceed national expectations. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, due to improved curriculum provision, including the recent introduction of a nationally recommended scheme of work.
87. From ages five to seven, pupils use a range of media to experiment successfully with colour and shape and to develop techniques. Pupils' confidence and control develop well in two and three-dimensional work. By age seven, these good foundations to learning result in pupils working confidently and creatively, as is evident in their wax and wash work in the style of Klimt. Pupils show good use of colour in their design of a patchwork quilt. Observational drawings are detailed and pencils are used well to create line.
88. By the age of 11, pupils are knowledgeable about the work of a range of famous artists and the techniques they use. They show good techniques in the mixing and blending of colors and in the composition of their drawing and paintings. Most pupils' observational drawings are detailed and demonstrate a developing use of perspective to add depth to their work. This is evident, for example in Year 6 pupils' sketches of architectural features. Pupils' work with clay shows attention to detail and the effective use of different tools. Pupils make good progress as they learn to emulate the work of famous artists, such as Van Gogh. They learn to use a range of media effectively, for example, pastels, paint and crayons to create good paintings and drawings. As they progress through the school, pupils' use of colour becomes more subtle and complex, as was evident when Year 5 pupils produced patterns in the style of African art. Skills and techniques are developed well. For example, Year 6 pupils showed good use of techniques as they used sketch sticks to enlarge sketches. There is effective use of information technology to produce art images, as when Year 2 pupils created brightly coloured abstracts in the style of Mondrian. Throughout the school, pupils have begun to use sketchbooks effectively to plan their work and try out techniques. This is also beginning to provide a useful record of their progress.
89. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and lessons are planned to allow for practical experience in a variety of media and the direct teaching of techniques. Good use is made of resources and pupils are given the opportunity, before they begin their own work, to examine a variety of work from other artists and evaluate it for their effectiveness and creativity. Pupils are excited by the challenging tasks and work with concentration and enthusiasm. In all lessons, pupils are managed well. Good use is made of praise and encouragement and pupils' work is valued. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the provision of an extra-curricular art club, by visits to local galleries and participation in local art festivals.
90. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator, who monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work. There are no formalised assessment procedures in place for assessing pupils' capabilities. Around the school, pupils' art work is displayed well

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Standards are broadly average for pupils aged seven and 11. By the time pupils are seven, they have sound practical skills and use devices like staples, pins and paper fasteners to join paper and card together to make models with moving parts. They use construction kits competently to make

models of, for example, play areas. The element of designing is underdeveloped and there is not enough independence to pupils' work. All pupils make good progress.

92. By the time they are 11, pupils' practical skills are broadly average. They choose materials for some of the models and artefacts they make, for example, houses and slippers, and write detailed evaluation reports on what they have done. Work learned in science, for example, electrical circuits, is applied to pupils' tasks in design and technology successfully. Overall designing skills are still underdeveloped, mainly because teachers direct tasks too much and do not allow pupils opportunities to develop their own ideas. Written reports and evaluations of work done are detailed, neat and accurate. Progress is good; all pupils, whatever their backgrounds and prior attainment, make sound progress through Years 3 to 6.
93. Based on the one lesson seen and from work on display, teaching is generally good. Teachers have high expectations in terms of the quality of work expected and pupils respond well. Their work shows evidence of hard work, attention to detail and pride in finished articles. Lessons are well prepared so that pupils can get on with making items. Sometimes, preparation is overdone, with paper and card cut to size for pupils to use, rather than encouraging pupils to cut out for themselves. Nevertheless, work is generally challenging and varied. The quality of products and the one lesson seen, indicate that work is often directed too much, so that pupils do not get opportunities for independent work or time to explore their own ideas. However, when pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work, teachers take all contributions into account, valuing the work of all pupils. Work is marked and pupils are given useful feedback to help them improve.
94. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The subject is well managed and, although formal observation of teaching is not established, the coordinator (the headteacher) has visited all classes when the subject is being taught. There are too few planned opportunities for ICT to be used during lessons. Formal observations of lessons are planned as part of a two year cycle of observations.

GEOGRAPHY

95. Standards are broadly average for pupils aged seven. For pupils at the age of 11, standards are below average. Progression in learning through the school is unsatisfactory. There is no scheme of work and the curriculum outline is insufficient to provide pupils with any clear development in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.
96. By the age of seven, pupils have an awareness of the world around them. Pupils in Year 1 identify physical landmarks such as rivers, railways and streets on simple maps. They recognise views from the air and discriminate between views of town and countryside. Sometimes there is repetition of work, such as pupils in both Years 1 and 2 identifying the countries of the United Kingdom. Occasionally, tasks are set which do not challenge pupils or make a real contribution to their learning; such as spending time just colouring a map.
97. By the age of 11, despite evidence of good work in Year 3, pupils have scant knowledge of the subject. In discussion, Year 6 pupils explain basically what the subject is concerned with and make certain links. They have learned about Ancient Egypt in history and are aware of how water supply affects settlements. However, their general knowledge of the world - distances, directions, time, is very vague. This is despite the fact that a significant number of pupils have travelled to the USA and the Caribbean or have families around the world. Pupils have not heard of Ordnance Survey maps and have only a vague idea of what co-ordinates are.
98. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, but is unsatisfactory, overall, in Key Stage 2. Only one lesson was seen; Year 4 pupils reinforced their knowledge of volcanoes by constructing models. They were enthusiastic and worked hard. Pupils' work shows that Year 3 pupils benefit from good teaching which is based on a well-planned curriculum for the year. Pupils consider their own locality and carry out a survey of the types of houses, drawing maps to support this work. They then extend their knowledge to the wider world, comparing settlements such as London with a Scottish island. They send postcards from different countries, reflecting some basic knowledge of a range of places. Mapwork develops with the use of 2-figure co-ordinates and the use of sample

maps to identify a town, city or village. This is good geography. It is not approached in the same way through the succeeding years. Pupils at the age of 11 do not, for example, transfer their skills on co-ordinates and data handling in mathematics.

99. The curriculum is very basic with no obvious progression. The small amount of available assessment information is not used to aid planning. There are insufficient resources and the subject has a very low profile in the school. The few resources the school has are not used enough, for example, globes sit in storerooms or on top of high cupboards. There is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology and older pupils have too few opportunities to use their literacy skills. Mainly younger pupils make some visits to the local area. The school recognises the inadequacies of the subject and has plans to produce a scheme of work. Currently, the subject makes little impact on pupils.

HISTORY

100. Standards are in line with those expected nationally of pupils at the ages of both seven and 11 and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy the subject and talk about it with enthusiasm. Learning is good, including that of pupils with special educational needs.
101. By the age of seven, pupils are beginning to gain an idea of chronology. They know that life was different in the past and make comparisons. Pupils have good knowledge of sources of evidence. In Year 1, the pupils suggest a lengthy list, including photographs, posters, museums and asking Grandad.
102. By the age of 11, pupils have developed their ideas and describe the work of archaeologists. They remember what they have learned through the school and can talk about life in Tudor times, studied 12 months previously. Year 6 pupils discuss Ancient Egypt with good understanding. They know the importance of the River Nile, linking it to geography and also to Biblical times.
103. Teaching is good. Year 1 pupils studying the history of transport show good understanding of vocabulary. They explain it as 'how to get about a long time ago'. The teacher questions pupils well, successfully encouraging all to participate. Group tasks are well planned so that pupils can read, understand and work with some independence. Year 3 pupils consider a range of artefacts relevant to World War 2. All pupils have a large copy of a photograph and are keen to explain what they see. The teacher's love of history is very evident and the pupils share it. She focuses them on the key points. The pupils are enthusiastic, making observations and asking questions. There is very good pace to their learning. When they consider the feelings of evacuees, one boy suggests the word 'empathy'. History is brought to life. Preparation takes place for the pupils as evacuees to compose letters home. A very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is made when suggestions for words include 'love, caring and safe'.
104. Although there is yet no scheme of work, teachers plan well from the curriculum framework, although they do not use assessment information effectively in Years 3 to 6 to aid their planning. A new scheme is being considered currently. The subject co-ordinator is aware of what needs to be improved. She sets a good example in her teaching. Her own pupils speak highly of it. The subject makes some contribution to numeracy with attention to timescale and many classrooms display timelines. Literacy skills are insufficiently used and reinforced, particularly in upper junior classes. Information and communication technology is used to research information, but this needs extending. Resources are inadequate, but there are some good displays and visits and visitors support and enhance the curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

105. Standards are as expected for seven and 11 year olds. By the end of Year 2, pupils are secure in their use of a key board and mouse. They competently use a mouse and menus to choose fonts and they type, using upper and lower case letters. They assemble simple databases with questions of their own and construct 'fields' to accept answers for a questionnaire. In lessons, they occasionally use a CD-ROM to search for information for topics being studied in other subjects, but this is too rare. Most pupils make good progress in developing their skills.

106. By the end of Year 6, pupils have sound skills in the full range of the elements of the subject. They log-on to the internet and use various 'search-engines' to find information about, for example, the pyramids. Most pupils refine this process so that they have a few sources of information rather than the hundreds obtained through a simple search. They use control programs successfully to create shapes and follow instructions to draw pathways on screen. Word processing skills are generally good; pupils write, edit and move text around competently. Most recall information they have entered into files or databases well. All pupils make sound progress in developing skills in the subject.
107. Teaching is generally good, from the small number of lessons seen. They have sound subject knowledge and, where they acknowledge limitations to their expertise in the subject, they ensure that they are well prepared and have suitable materials for lessons. Activities are well organised, so that pupils have opportunities to use computers themselves, for example, to draw shapes, using control programs, or to create 'fields' in databases. Teachers demonstrate effectively, drawing pupils into discussions about instructions, so that there is a clear understanding before pupils carry out procedures for themselves. Teachers monitor pupils' progress effectively and provide a high level of support to help those who struggle. They use a good range of methods to involve and interest pupils and to give them as wide an experience as possible. This ensures that pupils respond very well and work hard. Work is suitably challenging and pupils react well to this.
108. The use of ICT in other subjects is underdeveloped. Pupils have few opportunities to use computers in other lessons when they could be used beneficially to extend their ICT skills and contribute to developing their understanding and knowledge across the curriculum.
109. The subject is well managed and resourced, although centralisation of all the computers restricts how frequently pupils can use them in lessons, other than those specifically allocated to ICT. Pupils' experience is monitored thoroughly to ensure that they cover the curriculum fully. Standards obtained by pupils have improved since the last inspection and the numbers of computers have increased considerably. However, the accommodation for the computers lacks effective ventilation so that the area becomes very hot when in use.

MUSIC

110. Standards at age seven and 11 are in line with those usually found in most schools for pupils of these ages. Standards in singing exceed expectations.
111. By age 7, pupils sing well, with good attention to pitch, duration and dynamic as they learn to control their voices. They play a wide variety of untuned percussion instruments, which they are beginning to identify by name. Most pupils can copy the beat of simple clapping rhythms and compose simple sequence of clapping rhythms which they perform to the rest of the class. At least half the pupils in Year 2 are able to read a graphic score as they learn to play the recorder.
112. At age 11, pupils sing very well. This is evident in the weekly hymn practice, where pupils learn to sing by heart a wide repertoire of hymns. They hold notes evenly and with volume and are able to sing a two part round. Learning is enhanced by the high quality of support from visiting music teachers. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 play a musical instrument and many play two, including woodwind, violins and steel drums.
113. There are effective links with other areas of the curriculum. This was evident when Year 5 pupils used vocabulary from their geography project on The Gambia to add texture to a rhythm composition of layered sounds.
114. During the previous inspection, standards in music at ages seven and 11 were above the national expectation. The current inspection, however, finds the standards to be in line with that expected of the age group, throughout the school. The regular music lessons ensure that the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in singing and performing as they move through the school. Pupils learn to compose by developing their ideas of musical structures, but are given few opportunities to record their compositions by using symbols or notes to represent sounds. Pupils listen to the work of famous composers as they enter the hall for assembly but, apart from this, there is little opportunity to listen to and evaluate the work of these composers. However, pupils' learning is effectively enhanced by the good opportunities provided for public

performance. For example, pupils play in the school steel band at local festivals and have recently displayed their singing prowess at the Royal Northern College Of Music.

115. Teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and lessons are well planned to take previous learning into account and include structured practical experience. The lessons seen were innovative and conducted at a brisk pace, so that pupils worked with concentration and enthusiasm as a result. Pupils made good gains in their learning, because of the positive relationships that had been established.
116. The subject is effectively managed by a committed co-ordinator who gives good support to colleagues. Learning resources have been improved since the previous inspection, but there are insufficient tuned percussion instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. Standards at the ages of both seven and 11 are above those seen in the majority of schools. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards in swimming are broadly in line with the national expectation. Almost all pupils have attained levels in line with the requirement of the National Curriculum and swimming.
118. By the age of seven, pupils' ability in gymnastics is above average. When they use apparatus, they show sensible and safe practice. Pupils think about their shapes and the quality of finish to a movement. As they practise they grow in confidence and begin to look up as they land from the apparatus. They are developing good control over their movements.
119. By the age of 11, pupils' co-ordination and control are above average. They develop sequences of movement on both floor and apparatus, refining them well. A number of pupils in Year 6 have high levels of agility and are confident to experiment. In dance, pupils respond very imaginatively to the stimulus of both music and the spoken word. Most pupils lack inhibition and perform with a sense of enjoyment. In games lessons pupils show the correct stance for batting in cricket and bowl underarm accurately. Above-average ball skills are evident in football and basketball when pupils play in the playground.
120. Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of dress, performance and attitude, so that lessons are purposeful and enjoyable. Their good subject knowledge is respected by the pupils and so they listen and work very hard to achieve success. An outstanding dance lesson with Year 6 pupils involved all of them fully. The lesson was very well planned with a variety of music and poetry which stimulated the pupils. The dramatic control and involvement of the teacher was infectious and led to instantaneous changes of mood and speed. Pupils worked in pairs to mesmerise each other as magicians. They collaborated superbly. The teacher highlighted the performances of some pupils, including some with special educational needs. There was vigorous, purposeful and enjoyable activity for the full 30 minutes. The attitude and behaviour was impeccable and all pupils made excellent progress in the lesson.
121. Physical education has a high profile in the school. Pupils benefit from a broad and well-planned curriculum with a generous allocation of time. The school provides very well for the interests and enthusiasms of many pupils. The return from this is that the good attitudes from the subject are carried over into other areas of school life. There is very good leadership of the subject by a knowledgeable enthusiast who provides an excellent role model for teachers. The school has very good links, so that specialists in gymnastics, football and basketball provide additional high quality coaching. Resources are good and are used to the full in games and gymnastics lessons. In addition to extra-curricular clubs, the pupils compete successfully with other primary schools in various sports. The subject makes a very strong contribution to the pupils' personal development. This could be strengthened even more by increasing opportunities for pupils to comment on the performance of their peers. This is an area for development.