

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111308

Headteacher: Mr H Koltan

Reporting inspector: Ms A M Grainger
20782

Dates of inspection: 29th October – 2nd November 2001

Inspection number: 193297

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 Catholic School
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Quebec Road Warrington Cheshire
Postcode:	WA2 7SB
Telephone number:	(01925) 234699
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Byrne
Date of previous inspection:	14 th – 17 th April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20782	Ms A M Grainger	Registered inspector	English Art and design Music	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19664	Mr J Bayliss	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1189	Mrs S Brown	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Equality of opportunity Special educational needs	
23385	Miss S Gerred	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Benedict's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school. With 221 boys and girls aged four to eleven on roll and a further 33 children attending part-time in the nursery, the school is about average in size. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (22 per cent) is broadly average. The percentage with statements of special educational need (one per cent) is below average. Most pupils with special educational needs have learning difficulties. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and none has English as an additional language. Children start in the nursery at the age of three, and there are two intakes each year. Those who are three between the start of January and the end of August begin in September. The others enter in January. Taking the intake as a whole, children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below average. In the specific area of writing, it is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. While it has many strengths, there are also areas in need of improvement. Children make good progress in the nursery. After that, pupils' overall progress through the school is satisfactory. It is good in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are not, however, making as much progress as they should in writing as they move up through the school or in science in Year 2. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics, average in science but below average in English. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and their relationships are very good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, as is the value for money provided.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress from Year 3 to Year 6 in mathematics because they are well taught in this subject. Mathematics standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Children have a good start to their education in the nursery.
- Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour. They work and play very well together and have very good relationships with the adults in the school.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development. The provision for spiritual development is very good.
- The care for pupils' personal wellbeing is very good. As a result, pupils feel secure and happy at school.
- The partnership with parents is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English are below average when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. While pupils' overall progress in English is satisfactory, they could do better in writing.
- Standards are below average in science at the end of Year 2. Pupils do not make enough progress in science in Year 2.
- The checking of teaching and the curriculum is not sufficiently rigorous or sharply enough focused on areas needing improvement.
- The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Information from assessment is not used well enough to ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's progress since its last inspection in 1997 has been satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved in that there is no longer a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 to 6. There is now consistent implementation of the school's behaviour policy. These improvements are largely a result of more effective deployment of teachers, all of whom are permanent. At the time of the last inspection, half the teachers were temporary. Standards in Year 6 are higher now in mathematics and science. English standards have not improved and the school recognises this as a priority for development in relation to writing in particular. Not enough progress has been made in developing a programme for checking teaching and the curriculum and how they contribute to pupils' learning.

The provision for information and communication technology has improved through the development of a computer room and staff training. A policy and programme of work for this area have been developed and implemented. Strategic planning has improved. Long-term developments are now prioritised and the arrangements for funding all types of development are good. Staff training is much more closely linked to priorities for development. Whole-school policies for the curriculum have been developed, although the assessment policy is not adequately implemented.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	D	D	E
mathematics	C	B	B	B
science	E	C	C	C

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

The above table shows that pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 were above the national average in mathematics, close to the national average in science, but below the national average in English. In comparison with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was also above average in mathematics, and average in science, but it was well below average in English. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that, at this point, standards are much the same in the present Year 6. Pupils are making good progress from Year 3 to Year 6 in mathematics, and satisfactory progress in English and science. However, the pupils now in Year 6 have not made enough progress since the end of Year 2 in writing. In 2001, the school exceeded its targets for mathematics and met its targets for English. There is scope for the school to challenge itself by setting more ambitious targets in English. Taking English, mathematics and science together, the rate of improvement in the school's test results since 1997 has been similar to that found nationally.

The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that standards in the present Year 2, at this point, are average in mathematics but below average in English and science. Within English, reading standards are average, but writing standards are well below average. In mathematics, pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in Year 1 in English and good in science, but it is unsatisfactory in these two areas in Year 2.

In design and technology, geography, history and information and communication technology, standards are as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6 and pupils make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. Standards are also as expected nationally in art and design and physical education in Year 2, with pupils making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. Not enough evidence was gathered to make judgements on the standards in these subjects in Year 6. Although it

is not possible to make overall judgements on music standards, the quality of pupils' singing is very good.

Children make good progress in the nursery in communication, language and literacy; personal, social, emotional, mathematical, creative and physical development; and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. At the end of their year in the nursery, standards are as expected nationally for children of this age in all areas except writing. Children's good achievements are built on satisfactorily in the reception year. Children now in the reception class are on course to achieve the nationally expected standards in all areas except writing at the end of the school year. Although standards in writing are below average, they are no longer well below average at this age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils apply themselves well in lessons. They are interested in the work provided and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils consistently behave well in lessons, around the school and when at play. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils get on very well together and are at ease in their relationships with the adults in the school. They respond positively to opportunities to take responsibility and diligently carry out the duties assigned to them.
Attendance	Very good. The school maintains levels of attendance that are well above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually in the mornings.

Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, their very good relationships and attendance and their willingness to take responsibility all help to create an environment supportive of learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The judgements on teaching and learning are based on an analysis of teachers' planning and a scrutiny of pupils' work, as well as lessons seen. During the inspection, 42 lessons were seen. Nearly all of these lessons were satisfactory or better, and almost half were good. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in only one in twenty lessons. There were no unsatisfactory lessons in Years 3 to 6, in the nursery, or in Year 1. Teaching and learning in the nursery are consistently good, providing children with a strong start to their education. In the reception class, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

In English, including the basic skills of literacy, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are areas, however, in which improvements are needed to ensure that pupils make enough progress in writing. In mathematics, including the basic skills of numeracy, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. In science, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In writing and science in Year 2, however, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. In all other subjects, teaching and learning are satisfactory, although insufficient evidence was gathered to make a firm judgement on the teaching of art and design and physical

education in Years 3 to 6, or in music throughout the school. The school meets pupils' individual needs satisfactorily, including those of pupils with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The learning opportunities for children in the nursery are good. They are satisfactory overall in the reception year and in Years 1 to 6. While the learning opportunities in English are satisfactory overall, improvements are needed in writing.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The school is effective in identifying the needs of these pupils. They have appropriate support from learning support assistants in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development, and very good provision for their spiritual development. Effective emphasis is given to the all round development of pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. There is very good care for pupils' personal wellbeing, so that the school is a safe and secure environment in which pupils feel happy and confident. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory and not enough use is made of information the school has on pupils' performance.

The partnership with parents is very good and parents make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning. Parents are given good information on their children's progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher, supported by the deputy, gives a strong lead in areas such as the care for pupils' wellbeing and the provision for their personal development. A satisfactory educational direction is given for the improvement of the school in key areas such as raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Under the very strong leadership of the chair, the governing body is supporting the school towards improvement and increasing its role as a critical friend. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. There is not enough checking of the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum. The checking that does take place is not sharply enough focused to identify and deal with areas needing improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes full and effective use of the resources available to it to support pupils' learning. There is satisfactory consideration of whether the school provides the best value for pupils and parents.

There is a satisfactory number of teachers and support staff, and enough accommodation and resources to support the delivery of the curriculum.

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 are expected to work hard and achieve their best.• The teaching is good.• Their children make good progress.• Behaviour is good.• They feel comfortable approaching the school.• Their children like school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside lessons.• The information they receive on their children's progress.• The size of classes in Years 3 to 6.

Parents have very positive views about almost all aspects of the school's provision. In the main, inspection evidence supports these views, although teaching and progress are satisfactory overall rather than good. Inspectors found that the school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons and that the information provided to parents about their children's progress is good. The class sizes in Years 3 to 6 present problems on occasions, such as when using the computer room.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' results in the end of Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2001 were above the national average in mathematics, close to the national average in science, but below the national average in English, based on the average of all the points scored. When compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was still above average in mathematics and average in science, but it was well below average in English. Standards now in mathematics and science are better than when the school was last inspected in 1997. At that time, standards in mathematics were below the national average and science results were well below. English standards were below the national average in 1997. Although they improved to an average standard in 1998 and 1999, they went back to below average in 2000. The 2001 results were close to the school's targets in English, and in mathematics the targets were exceeded. While the targets for English are realistic in relation to pupils' present performance, there is scope for the school to challenge itself more through setting more ambitious targets. Taking the three key subjects of English, mathematics and science together, the rate of improvement in the school's results since 1997 has been similar to that found nationally.
2. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that, at this point, standards in the present Year 6 are much the same as those seen in the 2001 tests. They continue to be above average in mathematics, average in science and below average in English. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils have made good progress since Year 2 in mathematics and satisfactory progress in science. In English, the weakness is in pupils' writing. By tracking the present Year 6 from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 5, it is evident that the year group as a whole has made only seven terms' progress in writing over nine terms. This is unsatisfactory. In reading, in contrast, pupils have averaged nine terms' progress over nine terms, which is an adequate rate of progress. The progress in English of pupils now in Years 3 to 6 this school year is satisfactory. There are, however, aspects of the school's provision for writing that need improvement to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they are capable of doing.
3. In the end of Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2001, pupils' results were close to the national average in reading and mathematics, but they were well below the national average in writing. Compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. The results in 2001 show a significant improvement on the previous year in reading and mathematics. They are also much better than when the school was last inspected in 1997. Writing standards are not improving. They were also well below the national average in 2000 and when the school was last inspected. Although they rose to being close to the national average in 1998 and 1999, this was not maintained. Teachers assessed pupils' performance in science as below average in 2001.
4. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work is that, at this point, standards in the present Year 2 are average in mathematics, but they are below average in English and science. Within English, reading standards are average, maintaining the improvement seen in 2001. In writing, however, standards continue to be well below average. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. In mathematics and reading, pupils are making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. In writing, progress is satisfactory in Year 1, and it is good in science. In Year 2, however, progress is unsatisfactory in writing and science. The difference in the rate of pupils' progress in these two areas in Years 1 and 2 is directly linked to variations in the quality of teaching.
5. The effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy throughout the school, including the high allocation of time to mathematics in Years 3 to 6, has led to the improved standards in mathematics. There are more consistent approaches to teaching throughout the

school, with good teaching of mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Science standards in Year 6 are better now because the overall quality of teaching and learning in this subject is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6; at the last inspection there was some unsatisfactory teaching. There is also a much more settled teaching staff in Years 3 to 6 and this is contributing to improved standards in mathematics and science. When the school was last inspected, there were a number of temporary teachers. The more settled staffing is not raising writing standards, however, because of weaknesses in the learning opportunities for pupils in this area. The school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is being effective in respect of reading, but not in respect of writing.

6. Taking the intake as a whole, children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below average. Writing is the weakest area and attainment is well below average. While in the nursery, children make good progress in communication, language and literacy; in personal, social, emotional, mathematical, creative and physical development; and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the time they leave the nursery to enter the reception year, their attainment is average in all areas except writing. Although writing standards are still lower than normally expected at this age, they are no longer well below average. The good progress made in the nursery is built on satisfactorily in the reception class. The group of children now in the reception class is on course to reach the nationally expected standards at the end of the school year in all areas of learning, except in writing.
7. Children in the reception year listen attentively during question and answer sessions and respond confidently, such as when talking about the books they look at together as a class. They handle books correctly, tell stories from the pictures and understand that print communicates meaning. Children are familiar with some letter sounds and are starting to link these to initial letters in written words. A good proportion of children write their names unaided, but only the highest attaining ones write simple words and phrases without adult support. Most children count to 10, and some count beyond. They sort and order objects by size and colour, put pictures into the correct sequence and make repeating patterns. They have the awareness of shape and measure expected at this age. The highest attaining children identify simple symmetrical patterns.
8. Pupils in Year 2 have the listening skills expected for their age and speak clearly, taking turns in conversations. They read accurately and fluently, successfully using a range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words. A few lower attaining pupils, however, still rely heavily on the pictures to tell a story and need adult support to do so. Although pupils write for an adequate range of purposes, they do not write at the expected length for their age. Standards of spelling and punctuation are weak. Only a few higher attaining pupils write linked sentences with adequate awareness of the reader. While most pupils form letters evenly, they are not starting to join letters. In mathematics, pupils undertake an appropriate range of problem solving activities, although poor writing skills restrict their capacity to record their findings. Pupils count reliably to 100, recognise sequences of numbers and identify odd and even numbers. While most pupils form numbers correctly, a few write them back to front. Most pupils have a secure understanding of place value to 100, competently work in addition and subtraction and use multiplication facts relating to two, five and 10. Pupils have much of the knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measure expected at this age although their knowledge of right angles and reflective symmetry are not as well developed.
9. In Year 6, pupils participate confidently in one-to-one and small group conversations, showing a good awareness of the listener and communicating ideas clearly. Most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the texts they read and competently explain the narrative and characters in stories. Lower attaining pupils confidently tackle unfamiliar words, for example, using their knowledge of letter sounds, but they do not read well enough for meaning. Pupils have satisfactorily increased the range of purposes for which they write, but only higher attaining pupils show the awareness of the reader expected at this age. Few pupils use language well enough to describe or create atmosphere at the level normally found. Skills in drafting and redrafting for style and content are under-developed. Pupils are confident in working with large numbers, including when using multiplication or division. Most competently use decimals to two places, with higher attaining pupils using more complex decimals. Pupils competently cancel fractions to their simplest form and work with percentages. They have a

good knowledge of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes, and of probability. They present and interpret data in a variety of graphic forms. Pupils have good skills in mental mathematics, use mathematical language well and very competently apply their knowledge of mathematics to practical situations.

10. Standards of literacy in other subjects are below those expected throughout the school. Weaknesses in writing hamper pupils' capacity to write in other subjects, for example, to record information in history and geography. Reading skills are better applied and pupils successfully use books to find information, for example, about aspects of the science curriculum. Standards of numeracy in other subjects are average overall in Years 1 and 2, and above average in Years 3 to 6. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in activities such as early work on co-ordinates in Year 1 in geography and in science and design and technology in Years 3 to 6.
11. In science, Year 2 pupils' understanding of all the areas of study required by the National Curriculum is at a lower level than normally found at this age. Pupils' skills in investigation are under-developed and they do not sufficiently record their work. Pupils in Year 6 have the expected knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical phenomena. While pupils understand what makes a scientific investigation fair, they do not have the expected independence for their age in devising and carrying out scientific enquiries. They do, however, satisfactorily record their investigations in a variety of forms.
12. Overall standards in information and communication technology are as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6, and pupils make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. The standards achieved and pupils' rate of progress are better than when the school was last inspected. These improvements have been brought about through the provision of better resources, including the development of a computer room, and through staff training. Year 2 pupils use computers confidently, for example logging on, controlling the mouse and using the space bar. They competently use a paint program. A weaker area in Year 2 is pupils' use of a programmable toy, as skills in this area have not been systematically developed. Pupils in Year 6 word process competently and produce art work on the computer. Skills in creating and using spreadsheets are developing. In the specific areas of modelling and monitoring or in using computer-based simulations, standards are still below those expected owing to this work not having been covered. The necessary resources have just arrived in school and the work planned for next term should rectify the weaknesses in this area.
13. In design and technology, geography and history, standards are as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6, and pupils make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. Standards are also as expected in Year 2 for pupils of this age in art and design and physical education, although it was not possible during the inspection to gather enough evidence to make a judgement about standards in these two subjects in relation to Year 6. While music is another subject for which it is not possible to make a firm overall judgement, the standards of singing are very good.
14. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and good progress in Years 3 and 4. In both mathematics and English lessons, pupils with special educational needs are supported in working towards the targets set in their individual education plans. While their overall progress is satisfactory in English and science as they move up through the school, it is unsatisfactory in Year 2. In this year group, work is not always well enough matched to their needs and, along with other pupils, they are not achieving well enough. In other subjects, such as art and design in Year 3 and geography in Year 1, the effective deployment of support staff, as well as the care taken by teachers to meet their needs, ensures that these pupils make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour and response to the opportunities provided for their personal development are all good. Relationships are very good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. The strengths in this area found at the last inspection have been maintained. The unsatisfactory behaviour that was seen in some classes in Years 3 to 6 has been eradicated through a more consistent implementation of the behaviour policy. Pupils' good

attitudes and behaviour, together with their very good relationships, contribute significantly to making the school an environment conducive to learning.

16. Children in the nursery settle happily into school routines. They build good relationships with adults and with each other. They are co-operative, amicably share toys and resources, and take turns. This is seen, for example, as they play together outdoors using the large toys available to them. They enjoy what they are asked to do, particularly in the nursery, and are keen and eager to learn. They pay attention and are beginning to follow instructions well. In the reception class, children know what is expected of them such as when they line up to go to the hall for assembly or physical education. They have a clear awareness of the difference between right and wrong. Behaviour is consistently good in the nursery and it is satisfactory in the reception class. The variation in the behaviour at these two early stages in children's education is linked to differences in how well their teachers manage them.
17. Throughout Years 1 to 6, pupils have good attitudes to learning and are well motivated. It was impressive to learn from some Year 6 pupils that they would gladly stay at school longer in the afternoon because there is not always enough time to do everything that they would like to do. In lessons, pupils listen politely and attentively to the teacher and to each other and most do their best at all times. This is particularly noticeable when, in good lessons, pupils' attention is captured and their interest is maintained. This was seen, for example, in a Year 3 English lesson when pupils were fascinated to discover the different ways in which information is presented in non-fiction books. Similarly, in a Year 2 lesson in the computer room, pupils eagerly applied themselves to making firework pictures using a paint program. Pupils' response to instructions from teachers is invariably good. Pupils work well together and individually and show an interest in their work. They are keen to collect rewards for good behaviour, good work and for trying hard. Even on the rare occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils continue to make a good effort.
18. Inspection evidence confirms the view of parents that behaviour is good. Pupils' behaviour is good in classrooms, in the playground, when moving to the computer room or to the hall for assembly and when eating their lunch. Lunchtimes are very pleasant social occasions. Pupils respond well to the high standards of behaviour expected by the school. There is no recent history of behaviour that falls well short of that expected. It was not necessary to exclude any pupil, for either a fixed-term or permanently, in the year preceding the inspection.
19. Pupils readily grasp the opportunities they are given to show initiative and display personal responsibility. These opportunities steadily increase as pupils move up through the school. The children in the nursery are already beginning to respond well to them. They are starting to carry out routine responsibilities in a mature way. Elsewhere, pupils are diligent in fulfilling their classroom and school responsibilities, which they undertake with enthusiasm. All Year 6 pupils have responsibilities, which they carry out conscientiously.
20. Pupils show respect for the values and feelings of others and this is apparent in the way they relate to each other both in lessons, around the school and when at play. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs, mix well together. Pupils get on well with adults when they know them. Pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are courteous and helpful to each other, to staff and to other adults. The school is a harmonious community.
21. Attendance is very good and is well above the national average, as it was at the last inspection. Levels of unauthorised absence are very low and there is no evidence of truancy. In recent times, however, there has been an increase in the number of parents organising holidays during term time. This trend is a concern to the school as absence at any time has the potential to restrict the progress of the pupils involved. Punctuality in the mornings is good. When instances of lateness occur, they are of a minor nature and are not disruptive to lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory. The judgements on teaching and learning in subjects and in year groups are based on an analysis of pupils' work and a scrutiny of teachers' planning, as well as on lessons seen. During the inspection, 42

lessons were observed. Teaching and learning in almost all the lessons seen were at least satisfactory, and they were good in nearly half the lessons. Unsatisfactory teaching and learning were seen in only one in twenty lessons. In the nursery, teaching and learning are consistently good and ensure that children have a good start to their education. The teaching in the nursery is a significant factor in raising standards in this important early stage of children's education. At the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning in the nursery was also identified as a strength. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 has improved since the last inspection when 35 per cent of the lessons seen in these year groups were unsatisfactory.

23. The overall quality of teaching and learning in English, including the basic skills of literacy, is satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6. The exception is Year 2 where the teaching of writing is unsatisfactory. In mathematics, including the basic skills of numeracy, teaching and learning are satisfactory up to Year 2, and they are good in Years 3 to 6. The good teaching and learning in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is an improvement since the last inspection. It makes a strong contribution to the above average standards pupils achieve in this subject at the end of Year 6. In science, teaching and learning are satisfactory in the school as a whole, although they are unsatisfactory in Year 2. The weaknesses in the teaching of writing and science in Year 2 are key reasons for standards not being high enough in these two areas at the end of Year 2.
24. In geography, history and information and communication technology, teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection in teachers' confidence in teaching information and communication technology. In art and design and physical education, teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but not enough evidence was gathered to make a firm judgement on these subjects in Years 3 to 6. Similarly, insufficient evidence was collected to make a judgement on music throughout the school. The very good quality of singing from pupils of all ages indicates, however, that this particular aspect of music is very well taught.
25. Teaching and learning in the nursery are good because of the emphasis given to children's individual needs. Very clear and easy to follow routines are established, creating a secure environment in which children feel confident and able to learn. Adults consistently provide children with good role models and effectively reinforce the difference between right and wrong, and this contributes significantly to children's emotional, personal and social development. Adults make effective use of all opportunities to develop children's skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematics, and this leads to good progress being made in these key areas. A high priority is given to talking to children to develop their speaking and listening skills. Reading and writing are integrated into all activities across the areas of learning for children of this age, as well as there being careful teaching of basic skills such as how to hold a pencil. Mathematics is explored in activities such as the making of Jack o' Lanterns, when understanding of shape is developed through an enjoyable activity. Adults successfully link new learning about the world in which we live with what children already know. In areas such as physical and creative development, there is effective demonstration and questioning. The teacher makes good judgements about children's day-to-day progress.
26. Mathematics is taught well in Years 3 to 6 because teachers have high expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of achieving in this subject. Teaching draws effectively on the National Numeracy Strategy and is supported by the teachers' good subject knowledge. In most lessons, teachers are effective in meeting pupils' individual needs. In each lesson, the teacher carefully explains to pupils what they are expected to learn. As a result, pupils are clear about the purpose of the lesson and they know what to aim to achieve. Teachers use and emphasise the correct mathematical language and this contributes to pupils' understanding. Clear instructions and explanations, as well as helpful demonstration, all support pupils when undertaking practical activities.
27. In other good lessons, there is also a clear focus on what pupils are to learn. In a good English lesson in Year 3, for example, the teacher developed pupils' understanding well of the different ways in which factual information can be presented in non-fiction books. In good English and science lessons seen in Year 1, activities were well planned to take account of the range of pupils' needs in the mixed ability class. In both these subjects, the teacher achieved a good balance in the tasks provided between challenging pupils and giving support and

encouragement. Learning was made fun in the English lesson through the use of games to develop basic skills in letter sounds and punctuation. In a good history lesson in Year 3, the teacher's imaginative use of timelines and effective questioning encouraged empathy and deeper understanding. 'Open-ended' questions were used well to challenge pupils' thinking in good science lessons in Years 3 and 5.

28. In satisfactory teaching, as well as in good lessons, there is effective management of activities and resources. All that is needed for the lesson is out and ready before it begins. This ensures that no time is wasted, for example, as pupils move from a whole-class question and answer session to individual or group work at their tables. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff manage pupils well and this contributes much to the good attitudes to learning and the progress that pupils make in lessons. The management of pupils is much better now than when the school was last inspected. In all classes, support staff are well deployed and are clear about the role they are playing. They work closely with teachers in planning lessons. As a result, they make a good contribution to pupils' learning, especially in supporting pupils with special educational needs and those who need additional help with a particular activity. This ensures that in the larger classes in Years 3 to 6, pupils' needs are met satisfactorily, for example, in writing activities. The effective deployment of support staff was also identified as a strong feature of teaching at the last inspection.
29. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and they make satisfactory progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Good progress is made in the nursery and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 because of the good attention to meeting the individual needs of all pupils. In Year 2, where there are weaknesses in the teaching of writing and science, pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in these areas along with the other pupils in this year group.
30. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory in subjects, there are nevertheless some areas in need of improvement. In English in Years 3 to 6, teachers do not give enough attention to developing pupils' skills in drafting and redrafting for style and content, or in using language imaginatively, in writing activities. When texts are explored, enough is done to satisfactorily develop pupils' understanding of them but there is too little discussion of how the texts are written to support skill development in writing as well as in reading. On occasions, too much time is spent reinforcing what pupils already know and understand. This was seen, for example, in a Year 6 English lesson when pupils were learning about the difference between a biography and an autobiography. The National Literacy Strategy is used satisfactorily overall to support teaching and learning in English, but its use is more effective in relation to the teaching of reading than in relation to writing.
31. While there is an adequate emphasis on scientific enquiry in science lessons, teachers do not give enough attention to developing pupils' independence in this area as they move up through the school. The planned work in art and design and geography is appropriate overall, but it is not closely enough matched to the range of pupils' needs in the mixed ability classes. In an art and design lesson that was satisfactory overall in Year 3, the introduction was too long and this restricted the amount of time available for practical activity. The use of a written worksheet was too demanding for the pupils with special educational needs. The use of computers to support pupils' learning in lessons across the range of subjects taught is not well enough established. Computers are used adequately in art and design, for example, but not in other subjects.
32. While the overall quality of teaching and learning in the reception year is satisfactory, the good start made in the nursery is not sustained. This is largely because lessons are planned on the basis of National Curriculum subjects rather than in relation to the areas of learning for children of this age. The teacher does not always take enough account of the small steps children need to take as they develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. On occasions, too much is expected of children and their learning is restricted as a result. This is what happened in an unsatisfactory lesson seen during the inspection, in which there were also weaknesses in the management of the children. The emphasis on developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy through specific lessons means that the teacher does not give enough priority to how these skills might be encouraged through other areas such as creative activities. There is not

enough attention given, for example, to how children develop language, early reading and writing skills and mathematical concepts through imaginative play and practical exploration.

33. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across subjects and in different year groups. This weakness was noted at the last inspection and it has not been rectified. In English, for example, marking supports learning well in Years 1, 3 and 4. In Year 1, pupils are reminded about basic punctuation and spelling and in Year 3 they are encouraged to reflect on their use of language. Marking in science is good in Year 5 and pupils are told what they need to do next in order to improve. Throughout the school, marking in mathematics is regular and provides pupils with encouraging comments, although it does not always identify errors in order to move pupils forward. In Year 2, however, marking in English and science is weak and contributes little to the development of basic skills. The marking in English in Year 2 does not take account of the targets set for pupils. In science, it does not identify errors in order to move pupils forward. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning, as it was at the last inspection.
34. In writing as an aspect of English and in science in Year 2, pupils are not being supported to learn at a fast enough pace. In writing, not enough account is taken of the range of pupils' needs in the mixed ability class. There is too little challenge for the higher attaining pupils, and much of the work is too difficult for the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. In science, the planned activities lack challenge, especially for those who have the potential for higher attainment. There are too few opportunities for pupils to record their work and, as a result, pupils do not sufficiently develop and consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Lack of challenge was a feature of unsatisfactory teaching at the last inspection, and this weakness has not been fully rectified.

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

35. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the nursery are good. Together with consistently good teaching, these opportunities give children a strong start to their education and support them in making effective progress. The range of learning opportunities in the reception class is satisfactory, although there are areas requiring improvement. The scheme of work for the nursery and reception year is used well in the nursery where it is used to plan a wide range of stimulating and relevant learning opportunities each week. Shorter-term planning in the reception class, however, does not always pay enough attention to the small stages of development and 'stepping stones' that children need to take in the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills. In the reception class, the focus on the subjects of the National Curriculum and all children doing work on the same subject at the same time is not always appropriate to the needs and stages of development of these young children. This is especially so at the start of the school year. Children in the reception class do not have daily access to water play, painting or creative activities, as they should have at this age.
36. A satisfactory range of learning opportunities is provided for pupils in Years 1 to 6. An appropriate emphasis is given to English, mathematics and science. The time allocation for other subjects is reasonable and is used satisfactorily by alternating some subjects such as history and geography. There have been improvements to the provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection when the areas of study required by the National Curriculum were not covered adequately. The improvements mean that pupils in Years 1 to 6 are now making satisfactory progress in this subject as they move up through the school. In particular, regular lessons in the new computer room allow pupils to develop basic skills in the use of computers. One gap remains in the work covered in Years 3 to 6, in the aspect of control technology. The resources to allow this area to be covered have only just arrived in school. Teachers' planning shows, for example, that Year 6 pupils will cover this area next term. This should make up for the work not undertaken previously in this area and deal with a weakness in the standards pupils are presently achieving.
37. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection in the planning of the curriculum have largely been rectified. There are now schemes of work for all subjects, which are based on national guidance and which meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, these schemes have not been adapted to meet the specific requirements of the school. Consequently, in some

subjects, the topics chosen for a particular year group are not always relevant or appropriate. An example of this is in art and design in Year 3. The content of much of a unit on 'pattern' is too difficult for the pupils. The school has not carefully enough considered whether this unit needs to be taught as one block or whether it might be better spread over a longer period with aspects of it being revisited as pupils move up through the school.

38. The school's use of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a good effect and has been instrumental in raising standards. In addition to a daily numeracy lesson that is an hour long, pupils in Years 3 to 6 often have an additional 25 minute session at the start of the day for mental mathematics or another mathematical activity. Numeracy skills are developed appropriately in some subjects of the curriculum, for example in design and technology in all year groups and in science in Years 5 and 6. While standards of numeracy are satisfactory in other subjects in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6, not enough use is made of opportunities for the application and development of numeracy skills.
39. The school's strategy for literacy draws appropriately on the National Literacy Strategy and is satisfactory overall. There are, however, areas in need of improvement in the school's provision. These mainly relate to the development of pupils' writing skills. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to develop more advanced writing skills, specifically in relation to adapting the style and content of their writing and exploring the ways in which language can be used to describe or create atmosphere. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a creative writing lesson each week, but the work covered is much the same as that normally undertaken in the daily literacy hour. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills, especially in writing, through other subjects such as history and geography. While there are some examples of such writing activities taking place, there is scope for considerable further development.
40. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils are given the same curricular opportunities as others in the same classes. Good use is made of support staff to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are able to participate in all activities. Clear procedures are in place for identifying pupils' needs. Individual education plans are drawn up by the school's special educational needs support teacher, together with the class teacher, for all pupils who are on Stage 2 and beyond on the school's special needs register. These are of satisfactory quality although, on occasions, targets are not specific enough to ensure the small steps needed for improvement. They are reviewed termly. Pupils at Stage 5 on the special educational needs register are provided with appropriate support, in line with the requirements of their statement.
41. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. These include guitar, recorders, football and netball as well as seasonal activities such as Maypole dancing. All activities are popular with pupils. The school also strives hard to ensure that pupils gain valuable first-hand experiences through visits to museums, galleries and places of interest, such as the Blue Planet, Stockley Farm, the Science Museum, Chester Zoo and Jodrell Bank. Pupils in Year 6 also have opportunities to attend a residential visit on the Isle of Man.
42. Appropriate arrangements are made for sex and drugs education. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in a range of situations and to develop an understanding of citizenship through discussion about rules, responsibilities and community. There are opportunities for pupils to talk about themselves, their thoughts and feelings and to listen to what their friends have to say. Visits to school by the local policeman, representatives of the fire service and railways, as well as the school nurse, successfully reinforce health and safety initiatives.
43. The school's links with the parish community are very strong and benefit pupils, including the strong involvement of the parish priest in the work of the school. There are also good links with the local Anglican Church, which pupils visit, for example, to study the stained glass windows. The school's association with local businesses and shops is satisfactory. Effective use is made of the local area for study in geography. The school has constructive links with other schools in the area. Good relationships with the local Catholic high schools effectively aid transition to the next phase of education for pupils at the age of 11. Year 10 pupils from one of the high schools

participate in regular work experience, assisting in classrooms, and this makes a good contribution to pupils' learning through the extra support they provide.

44. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Good opportunities are provided for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Christian values underpin all aspects of the work of the school. They are lived out by staff and pupils alike, and are very evident in the day-to-day life of the school. There is very good provision for pupils to develop their knowledge and insights into different values and beliefs. Daily acts of worship, religious education lessons and personal, social and health education make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. Morning and afternoon sessions often begin with a short time of quiet reflection around a theme. During the inspection period, some good examples were seen throughout the school, from the nursery to Year 6. These included, for instance, the creation of a calm and spiritual atmosphere through the lighting of candles and the playing of gentle music. These quiet times provide very good opportunities, for example, for pupils to reflect on being special or to think about friendship. They help pupils to gain self-knowledge and to be sensitive to the value of others. Arrangements for daily acts of worship are good and ensure that statutory requirements are met.
45. There is good promotion of the principles that distinguish right from wrong. This is an area that particularly pleases parents. The school works extremely hard and with considerable success at promoting and rewarding good behaviour and to raising pupils' self-esteem. Clear rules are displayed in all classrooms and all staff promote very good behaviour by following the school's behaviour policy. Pupils also have good opportunities to reflect on the part they play in making the school a friendly and supportive community. Personal, health and social education lessons and 'circle time' activities (where pupils sit in a circle and discuss matters of mutual concern) provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss issues and establish codes of behaviour, which clearly have a positive influence on relationships.
46. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop socially and to increase their understanding of living in a community. Within their classrooms, pupils from the nursery onwards are encouraged to take responsibility and help each other. Older pupils have added responsibilities. For the annual May procession and the crowning of 'Our Lady', older pupils are balloted and a boy and girl are elected. This contributes well to pupils' growing understanding of citizenship. All pupils are encouraged to work harmoniously together, to take responsibility for their own learning, and to acquire independence in learning through homework across a range of subjects. Extra-curricular activities and the residential visit in Year 6 provide further opportunities for pupils to work and play together outside lessons. Pupils are involved in a good range of fundraising activities, for example for CAFOD and their 'Love in a Box' annual collections for children in third world countries. This successfully develops pupils' awareness of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils also regularly entertain local senior citizens.
47. There is good provision for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the richness of other cultures. The school places emphasis on helping pupils to appreciate and respect the rich cultural diversity of British society. A range of visitors, including musicians and theatre groups, also support pupils' cultural development. In geography, pupils learn about life in the immediate locality and in contrasting localities such as Chembakoli in India. In history they learn about some important past cultures. Religious education, art and music also make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of the diversity of cultural traditions. The celebration of festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year further reinforces pupils' multi-cultural awareness. Resources including books are chosen well to reflect a range of different cultural traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is very good overall. A very strong emphasis is placed on the pastoral care of all groups of pupils and on their personal wellbeing. In this respect, there is very effective care for each pupil's individual needs. The school's success in this area is apparent in the everyday life of the school. The very positive picture that was found in this area at the last inspection has been maintained. Parents are very happy with the pastoral support provided by the school. Inspection evidence confirms the view

of almost all parents that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible individuals. The weakness in the care for pupils is in the assessment of their academic attainment and progress.

49. With a clear lead provided by the headteacher, all members of the school community successfully work together to provide an environment in which pupils feel well cared for and secure. There is good exchange of information between teachers so that all staff have very good knowledge of the pupils as individuals. This helps them to respond sensitively and positively to pupils' personal needs. The result is that pupils are happy at school and confidently turn to adults when they need help or advice, secure in the knowledge that their needs will be met sympathetically. The supportive atmosphere within the school encourages pupils to work hard and to learn.
50. The governing body undertakes its responsibilities for health and safety matters very conscientiously, with well-organised procedures to ensure that pupils are not exposed to risk. Mid-day supervisory staff relate well to pupils. They provide good support during lunchtimes and this has a positive effect on behaviour and safety. First aid and fire safety arrangements are good. The school's procedures for recording and dealing with accidents are secure and no health and safety hazards were observed during the inspection.
51. The school's procedures for child protection are very good. They meet statutory requirements. The designated person is very experienced. He ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities, and that they are attentive and conscientious in their approach to the proper support of the pupils in their charge. The school has good procedures for checking and promoting attendance. Records of attendance are properly maintained and there are regular liaison visits by the school's education welfare officer. Rigorous procedures are in place for recording lateness and the very occasional unauthorised absence.
52. The procedures for promoting positive behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There are some very good features, such as the arrangements for the elimination of bullying. The school responded very effectively to the need identified at the last inspection to improve the checking of the implementation of its behaviour policy to ensure consistency throughout the school. The policy has been reviewed, and there is now a whole-school approach to its implementation that results in good behaviour within and around the school. Rewards and sanctions are well organised, appropriate and understood and accepted by pupils.
53. The school's arrangements for the checking and support of pupils' personal development are satisfactory. A range of procedures, both formal and informal, is used by teachers to ensure that all pupils, whatever their background, gender or ability, receive support appropriate to their individual need. Pupils with identified special educational needs are supported satisfactorily. Informal arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development, which benefit from teachers' knowledge of pupils as individuals, are stronger than formal ones, and are good.
54. Assessment procedures are good in the nursery. The teacher makes effective use of the systems available to her to make accurate judgements about children's progress. Often, notes are made of what has been observed. Work is planned accordingly, based on a clear and secure assessment of children's individual needs. In the reception class, there are fewer procedures for checking children's progress. Those that are available are not used effectively to guide children's next steps of learning and to ensure that the work is planned at appropriate levels for all the children in the class, especially those who are lower attaining or who have special educational needs. There is a need for a more consistent approach across the nursery and reception year for measuring the 'steps' made by children towards the standards expected nationally at the end of the reception year.
55. The procedures for checking and supporting pupils' progress from Years 1 to 6 are unsatisfactory. This was also the case at the last inspection and too little progress has been made in rectifying this weakness. Mathematics is the only subject in which assessment procedures are satisfactory. However, even in mathematics the information gained is not always used well enough to match work to pupils' differing needs, especially in Years 1 and 2. While

opportunities exist in mathematics for some self-assessment by pupils, which helps them to have an overview of their work, learning and development, this is not the case in other subjects.

56. Recent initiatives such as the introduction of sheets to track the progress of individual pupils and year groups and related target-setting are positive indications of the school's commitment to ensuring teachers have better information about what pupils know, understand and can do. However, these are at a very early stage of development. Although some analysis of statutory assessments is undertaken, for example, highlighting a weakness in writing throughout the school, the use of assessment information to support curriculum planning remains unsatisfactory. It is not used effectively to ensure that work is carefully matched to pupils' individual needs. Recently introduced targets for English and mathematics inside pupils' books are often the same for pupils of differing needs and abilities. Consequently, they are not contributing well enough to pupils' progress or the raising of standards.
57. The level of care and support given by teaching and non-teaching staff to pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Gains in academic and personal progress are recorded efficiently and details are reported to parents or carers every term.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. Parents are very supportive of the school, which they rightly think is better now than when it was last inspected. They consider the school to be very good and find many things to like about it. They have very positive views about almost all aspects of the school's provision for their children. Parents feel that the school takes excellent care of their children and they are pleased that their children like school. As a result of the very good partnership established with parents at the outset, children settle quickly and happily into school life. This effective partnership is continued as children move up through the school.
59. Parents see the main strengths of the school as being that their children make good progress, that behaviour is good, and teaching is good with high expectations. The school is thought to work closely with parents who are comfortable when approaching the school with questions or problems. Parents feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Inspection evidence confirms many of the parents' positive views about what the school provides for their children. However, teaching and pupils' progress as they move up through the school are judged to be satisfactory overall rather than good.
60. A very small number of parents have a few areas of concern. These are about the extent of the school's provision for activities outside the usual classroom ones, the information they receive on their children's progress and the effect of large class sizes in Years 3 to 6. Other than these, parents expressed no negative views of any significance. Inspection evidence does not support parents' concern about the provision of activities outside lessons, which are found to be satisfactory. The quality of information provided about progress is well organised. There is no reason for any parent to feel ill informed if they take advantage of the opportunities provided by the school. Large class sizes do present problems on occasions, for example, when using the computer room. The school tries hard to make up for the large classes through the provision of support staff.
61. The school continues to have very good links with parents, which provide enrichment to the pupils' learning experiences. Links between home and school are supported by a home-school agreement that provides for commitment by all to the improvement of standards. Parents and other helpers are warmly welcomed into school and are encouraged to participate in its work. Those able to help in school are used well in supporting classroom activities, helping to organise the library, cookery and listening to pupils read. The Friends of St Ben's Association is very well organised. It is led by a small band of enthusiastic parents committed to the support of the school. Social and fundraising activities are organised that are enjoyed by all, as well as contributing much valued financial support to the school. Parents give very strong support to these activities. There is an effective parent support group and the parish priest holds regular surgeries in school when parents can discuss with him any matters of concern. Parental support for homework and learning at home is good. The overall involvement of parents and other volunteers in the work of the school makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning.

62. The overall quality of information provided formally by the school is good. Parents receive regular information about school activities both from the school and from the Friends of St Ben's Association. As a result, parents feel well informed. The school prospectus provides parents with most of the information to which they are entitled. There is a minor omission in respect of reporting attendance rates but other than that it meets statutory requirements. The governors' annual report to parents has some good features, especially the very full reporting of the school's financial position. Opportunities are missed, however, to make the document a stimulating celebration of the school's achievements. There are some reporting omissions in respect of the school's provision for pupils with disabilities, and for attendance rates, but otherwise reporting requirements are met.
63. Parents are informed of their child's progress and development at two open meetings and annually through a written report. The quality of the written reports is good overall, with some very good quality reporting in Years 5 and 6. The best quality reports are the result of teachers taking considerable time and trouble to make them a reflection of individual achievement. Overall, the reports meet requirements and provide a good summary of what pupils have done and can do. There is, however, too little information given to parents about how what their children can do compares with the expectations for their age. The exception is at the end of Years 2 and 6 when the results of statutory tests are provided. The reports all contain targets for improvement that are helpful both to pupils and parents. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are actively involved in termly reviews of their children's progress.
64. In addition to the formal arrangements for discussing attainment and progress there are regular opportunities for informal discussion with staff. The headteacher makes himself available at any time to meet with parents. His pastoral support role is an effective feature of the school's links with parents. Teachers are happy to meet with parents informally before or after school, or by appointment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The aims and values of the school are appropriately reflected in its work. A strong emphasis is placed on the care for pupils' personal wellbeing and on the development of pupils as well-rounded individuals. In this respect, the school is very successful and a strong lead is provided by the headteacher supported by the deputy. The outcome is that pupils are happy and secure at school, and this pleases parents. With regard to the academic development of pupils, the direction provided by the headteacher and deputy is less clear although it is satisfactory overall.
66. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has provided the educational direction necessary for the school to make satisfactory improvement. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved in that there is no longer the significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 to 6 that was found previously. Standards are better now in mathematics throughout the school and there has been some improvement in science as well. There continues, however, to be a need to raise standards in English, especially in writing. The school's policy for behaviour is now consistently implemented and there are no longer instances of unsatisfactory behaviour in Years 3 to 6. The school has also successfully dealt with the key issue regarding the provision for information and communication technology. As a result, pupils are now making satisfactory progress in this area.
67. Staff with management responsibilities for subjects and areas such as assessment fulfil their roles satisfactorily. Although assessment is a weakness, the co-ordinator is aware of what needs to be done to bring about improvements. She has shown initiative in introducing procedures through which pupils' progress can be tracked at key points by recording results in statutory and optional national tests. The area of special educational needs is satisfactorily led and managed by the deputy working closely with the special educational needs support teacher. The staff work effectively as a team with a shared commitment to the improvement of the school. Co-ordinators are not, however, sufficiently involved in checking the quality of provision in their subjects across the school. This prevents them from being more effective in improving provision and in raising standards.

68. There are some areas in which improvements are needed in the leadership and management of key staff. Significant areas for improvement, once identified, are not tackled with a sufficient sense of urgency. This weakness is closely linked to the unsatisfactory arrangements for the checking of teaching and the curriculum. The school knows, for example, that the provision for writing needs to be improved in order to raise standards. While some appropriate action has started to be taken, such as through the attendance of staff on courses, there is too little analysis and review of present provision. There is no systematic observation of lessons. Observations that have taken place have not been effective in identifying where the weaknesses are. The weaknesses in writing and in the teaching of science in Year 2 had not been identified. While the headteacher undertakes an acceptable amount of checking of lessons and teachers' planning, the activity lacks rigour and a sharp enough focus.
69. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Governors, under the very good leadership of their chairman, have good involvement in shaping the direction of the school. Their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is improving and is good, although some governors who are very close to the work of the school find it more difficult to view it entirely objectively. While celebrating what the school does well, there are key governors, including the chairman and vice-chair, who are eager to have the areas for improvement dealt with so that the school might provide a better quality of education for its pupils.
70. The school has good procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available to it, which are lower than those of many similar schools nationally, are used appropriately to support pupils' learning. The overall financial management of the school is good with some very good features, particularly the involvement of some governors. Governors have ownership of the budget and the strategies behind it. Through the powers delegated to the finance committee, they play an important part in the school's strategic financial management. This is much stronger than when the school was last inspected. Working together with the headteacher, the chairman and chair of finance have developed strategic planning procedures over the past three years that have put the school in a particularly strong position to fulfil its improvement plan by effective financial support.
71. There is good sharing of expertise, balancing the commercial input from these key governors with the educational experience of the headteacher and other education professionals. This is a very good partnership approach. Governors receive information from the headteacher on a regular basis, together with information from those among their number who are involved directly in the school and the views of parents and others in the parish. As a result, they are able to make informed judgements that result in good use being made of the school's financial resources. The budget is properly considered and approved by the full governing body.
72. Recently, because of variations in roll numbers, planned expenditure has been higher than received income. Consequently, there has been a planned reduction in the financial reserves available to the school. Governors, advised by the chairman, are well aware of the implications of their decisions in this respect. Additional funds from central government have been used well to maintain the financial viability of the school. Financial reserve levels are maintained in line with the school's contingency planning to ensure that, given a degree of uncertainty about roll numbers, its finances will be sufficient to ensure the continuation of its present strategies. Expenditure has been appropriately targeted to directly benefit pupils' attainment and progress by maintaining staffing levels as high as possible consistent with the funds available to the school. Specific funding, such as that for special educational needs, is used well for its intended purposes.
73. The school's overall administration arrangements and the day-to-day control of its finances are satisfactory. The school has fully addressed the recommendations of its latest audit. The chair of finance visits the school frequently to discuss the school's financial position with the headteacher. The school secretary undertakes her duties in a quiet, conscientious way that ensures the smooth running of the office. Effective financial procedures are in place with good use being made of the information available from the school's computerised management

system. Elsewhere there is satisfactory use of new technology, such as for the preparation of reports on pupils' progress.

74. Satisfactory consideration is given to whether the school gives pupils and parents the best value in the education it provides. The headteacher and governors are aware of the need to obtain value for money when purchasing decisions are made. Under the guidance of the chairman and with information from the headteacher, governors are becoming more challenging of whether what the school provides is as good as pupils and parents are entitled to receive.
75. Staffing levels are satisfactory. There are enough qualified teachers and support staff for the delivery of the curriculum. Teachers and support staff work effectively together to meet pupils' needs. In particular, this benefits those pupils who are lower attaining or who have special educational needs.
76. The accommodation is satisfactory. It has improved since the school was last inspected through the addition of a well-equipped computer room and an additional classroom. As was found at the last inspection, the open plan nature of some parts of the school results in some distraction because of the working noise from adjoining classrooms. The school is aware of this problem and has introduced arrangements that seek to minimise it. The library area is presently being redeveloped, so pupils do not at present have access to it. However, the new library should provide an effective resource for learning. Teachers make good use of the accommodation available, although some large class sizes present challenges.
77. The external environment is satisfactory with sufficient good quality hard and grassed play areas and attractive features such as seating for reading or quiet reflection. There is a designated safe outside play area for nursery children although there is no fixed climbing frame or balancing apparatus. Children in the reception class do not have sufficient regular access to safe outdoor play in a designated area. This not only limits the opportunities for their physical development but also prevents some opportunities for their creative development and for increasing their knowledge and understanding of the world. As at the last inspection, the resources for learning are satisfactory overall and provide adequate support for pupils' learning. There are now weaknesses, however, in the provision for geography, which restrict pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To rectify the weaknesses, while maintaining the strengths of the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

a) Raise standards in English and improve pupils' progress in writing by:

- ensuring that in Year 2 the basic skills of spelling and punctuation are systematically taught, and that work in all aspects of writing is closely matched to pupils' individual needs;
- developing pupils' skills in drafting and redrafting writing, and for using language for different purposes such as description and the creation of atmosphere, throughout Years 3 to 6;
- increasing pupils' skills in exploring how different texts are written, as well as developing their library skills for accessing information in books; and
- giving greater attention to the development of pupils' literacy skills through the work in other subjects.

(Paragraphs 1-5, 8-10, 14, 23, 30, 34, 39, 66, 96, 97, 100, 101, 105, 106)

b) Improve pupils' progress and the standards they achieve in science in Year 2 by:

- ensuring that work is challenging enough and that topics are covered in sufficient depth for pupils of this age; and
- increasing pupils' skills in scientific investigation and the amount and quality of recording of their work.

(Paragraphs 3, 4, 11, 14, 23, 34, 116-118, 120, 123)

c) Develop and implement rigorous and systematic procedures for the checking of the teaching and the curriculum and how they affect pupils' learning, so that weaknesses are identified and action is taken to rectify them. The headteacher should be trained to check the school's work, as should the deputy.

(Paragraphs 68, 108, 115, 124, 129, 135, 141, 148, 157)

d) Develop and implement procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress. Use the information gained to ensure that work is well matched to the needs of all groups of pupils. Priority should be given to the key subjects of English, mathematics and science.

(Paragraphs 48, 54-56, 107, 114, 124, 129, 135, 141, 148, 153, 157, 161)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- The teaching and learning opportunities in the reception class do not take enough account of the small steps children need to take in the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills.

(Paragraphs 32, 35, 80, 85, 88, 91)

- Marking is inconsistent across the subjects and year groups and does not always support pupils' learning well enough.

(Paragraphs 33, 104, 114, 140, 146)

- While national guidance is used to support planning in Years 1 to 6, it has not been adapted to meet the specific needs of the school.

(Paragraph 37)

- Computers are not used well enough to support pupils' learning in subjects other than information and communication technology.

(Paragraphs 31, 106, 114, 122, 135, 141, 147, 153)

- Co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in checking the teaching and learning opportunities in their subjects.

(Paragraphs 67, 115, 124, 129, 141)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	20	20	2	0	0
Percentage	0	0	48	48	4	0	0

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

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)	17	221
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	16

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	0	56

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	13	17
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	28	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (53)	79 (72)	91 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	15
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	28	30	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (67)	91 (78)	85 (83)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	11	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	9
	Girls	9	11	10
	Total	16	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (79)	86 (84)	86 (89)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	7
	Girls	8	10	9
	Total	14	17	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (45)	77 (55)	73 (66)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	219
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.6
Average class size	31.6

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	108.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	16.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	421164
Total expenditure	433320
Expenditure per pupil	1772
Balance brought forward from previous year	24577
Balance carried forward to next year	12421

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	254
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	37	1	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	57	39	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	49	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	54	6	0	5
The teaching is good.	63	37	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	51	12	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	30	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	39	55	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	37	6	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	36	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	37	20	7	15

Not all responses total 100 per cent due to rounding.

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

78. There are two intakes to the nursery each year. Children enter the nursery when they are three and attend part-time for either morning or afternoon sessions. Those who have their third birthday between the start of January and the end of August begin school in September. Those with birthdays between the start of September and the end of December enter in January. Children transfer to the reception class in the September of the school year in which they will be five. At the time of the inspection, one child in the nursery and three in the reception class had been identified as having special educational needs. Taking the intake as a whole, children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below that normally expected for children of this age in all the areas of learning. In writing, it is well below average.
79. Teaching and learning are consistently good in the nursery, as they were at the last inspection. A good range of stimulating and relevant learning opportunities is thoroughly planned and organised. There is a good balance between activities that children choose for themselves from a range provided, and those that are adult led. The teacher and nursery assistants complement each other well in ensuring much personal attention for the children. As a result, children's acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding is good. The good teaching and learning in the nursery and the well-selected range of learning opportunities provided give children a good start to their education. By the end of their time in the nursery, children are achieving the standards expected for their age in all areas, except writing. In writing, standards are still below average, but they are no longer well below average.
80. Teaching and learning in the reception class are satisfactory overall. Standards are still average when children reach the end of the reception year, and writing continues to be below average. In the reception class, the teaching is not as effective as in the nursery in taking account of the small steps that young children need to take in their development of knowledge, understanding and skills. The teaching of lessons as separate subjects of the National Curriculum, where all the children do work on the same subject at the same time, is not always appropriate, particularly at an early stage in the school year. The last inspection identified that the learning opportunities were not linked to the areas of learning for children of this age. Too little progress has been made in rectifying this in the reception year. Standards in the reception class are much the same as when the school was last inspected.

Personal, social and emotional development

81. Children make good progress in the nursery, and satisfactory progress in the reception year. Those now in the reception class are on course to achieve the nationally expected standards in this area at the end of the school year. They have settled well into school life. At the beginning of the day, children gather on the carpet area and separate from their carers or parents with confidence. They know how to behave in school, for example, lining up to go into the hall for assembly and physical education. Children willingly work and play together, taking turns with toys and resources. They find their way around the classroom and school confidently. They are eager to be chosen as 'helping hands' when materials are given out, to take registers to the school office and to tidy up at the end of sessions. Most children are developing good levels of concentration, for example, when listening to a story or looking at a book. While in the nursery, children develop good levels of independence in putting on coats and shoes, washing their hands and settling to whole-class and individual activities. Behaviour is consistently good in the nursery, where the adults' high expectations are reflected in the children's attitudes. In the reception class, attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory.
82. The overall quality of teaching and learning in this area is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. In the nursery, a welcoming, calm and happy environment is created with consistent and very well organised routines. This provides children with security and helps to build their confidence. Children are taught right from wrong in a firm but positive way. They are sensitively shown, for example, how to settle disagreements and to say sorry to someone they

may have upset. This is instrumental in helping them to develop good attitudes to school and in forming very good relationships with adults and with each other. The very good relationships and care for children are maintained in the reception class. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for children to work and play together. The teacher's management of the children is not as consistent as in the nursery. This leads, on occasions, to some inappropriate calling out and inattentive behaviour.

Communication, language and literacy

83. Children are making good progress in this area in the nursery, and satisfactory progress in the reception year. Most are on course to achieve the nationally expected standards at the end of the reception year in speaking, listening and reading. Few are likely to achieve the standard expected in writing. Most children enjoy books. Those in the reception class turn the pages of a book in the correct way and tell a story from the pictures, understanding that print and illustrations convey meaning. The highest attaining children talk about some authors of books they have looked at as a class. Most children are confident speakers and take turns during question and answer sessions. They listen with the care expected for their age. Children are familiar with some letter sounds and are beginning to link these to initial letters in written words. Some children write their names independently as well as stringing letters together. The highest attaining children write simple words and phrases without adult support.
84. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. In the nursery, opportunities are taken during activities across all the areas of learning to develop children's understanding of language and to extend their vocabulary. Good use is made of snack time, for example, to engage children in conversations and to develop their speaking skills. Literacy skills are effectively developed through sharing stories and rhymes. Children are helped to read and write their names and to develop pencil control as they practise writing patterns.
85. In the reception class, the teacher selects an interesting range of books to read to the children. This captivates their interest and provides opportunities for them to recognise and join in reading repetitive sentences. She draws children's attention appropriately to the title of the book, the author and illustrator. Literacy lessons, however, are organised in a way that is more suitable for older children. Children are sometimes given tasks to do unaided that need adult support. The literacy lessons are too long for these young children at the start of the school year. In both the nursery and reception classes, not enough use is made of imaginative contexts, such as the role-play witch's house, home corner, shops and cafés to provide 'pretend' situations through which children might develop their early writing skills.

Mathematical development

86. Children are making good progress in this area in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception year. Most are on course to reach the standards expected nationally at the end of the reception year. Nursery children develop a good awareness of numbers through sorting, matching and counting, and through activity songs and rhymes. They learn to recognise two-dimensional shapes such as circles, squares and triangles as they make collections of everyday objects and make patterns with brightly coloured paper. In the reception class, most children count reliably to 10, and some count further. They sort and order objects into sets by size and colour, and sequence a set of four pictures from first to last. Most children, including those with special educational needs, recognise and make a repeating pattern with two colours using unifix cubes. The highest attaining children recognise a symmetrical pattern, such as those seen on butterflies' wings.
87. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. In the nursery, the teacher provides stimulating and exciting activities and games which engage children's attention well and promote the learning of mathematical skills and concepts. The nursery assistants contribute well to children's learning. This is seen, for example, as they work with children in making witches' faces and drawing Jack o' Lanterns. They reinforce children's understanding of triangles and circles, which are used to make the

hats, faces, noses and teeth. The teacher makes good judgements about children's progress, often making notes of what she has observed, and plans their work accordingly.

88. In the reception class, satisfactory use is made of the National Numeracy Strategy in planning mathematical activities. While these support children in making satisfactory progress, there are areas in need of improvement. The teacher sometimes introduces a new idea before the children have fully understood the first. The result is that some children are uncertain about what they have to do in practical tasks. Some activities are just too difficult for most children. This is because the procedures for checking children's progress are not being used well enough to guide their next steps of learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

89. Children are making good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception class. They should reach the nationally expected standards in this area by the end of the reception year. Most children have a sense of the past developed by looking at photographs of themselves as babies, toddlers and as they are now. Through examining an assortment of old and modern household objects, they have a simple understanding of what it must have been like to do the washing and ironing before electricity. Most children name the main parts of a plant and use their senses to explore the world around them. They notice changes in the seasons. Most children know that switches on machines make things happen. When using computers, they confidently use the mouse to click and drag objects across the screen and show the levels of control expected at this age.
90. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. Teaching in the nursery builds on children's natural curiosity. Many activities and direct teaching, planned at an appropriate level for all children, develop their knowledge and understanding of the world in which we live. The teacher and nursery assistants support children well, asking suitably challenging questions to make them think. Knowledge and understanding of cultural traditions, such as Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas, are well developed through the use of stories, songs and role-play.
91. In the reception class, successful use is made of such topics as the senses, winter, transport and toys. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for children to develop computer skills both in the classroom and in the computer room. The teacher gives clear instruction for the use of the computers. Learning support assistants and students, when available, are deployed appropriately so that children learn to control the computers at the expected level for their age. Teaching and learning in one science lesson were unsatisfactory, however, because the content was not at the right level and too much was expected of most children. The teacher confused children by moving too quickly from one idea to the next and consequently children's understanding was not developed well enough. Noise levels were too high and there were moments when the teacher struggled to gain children's attention.

Physical development

92. Children are on course to reach the nationally expected goals by the end of the reception year. They are making good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception year. In games such as 'Follow my Leader', children in the nursery show the expected co-ordination as they jump, march and wave their arms. Riding and pushing wheeled toys, in the nursery, develops physical skills and enhances children's sense of space and direction. Children in the reception class vary their speed and direction in response to different types of music. They follow instructions well and move safely about the hall in physical education lessons. They show the control expected at this age as they stretch, curl and use their bodies expressively when moving to music.
93. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. Regular access to a wide range of outside equipment helps nursery children to increase their confidence in physical activity. However, the lack of fixed climbing and balancing apparatus restricts opportunities for children's physical development. Although they have a hall time when balancing can be practised, this is only time-tabled once each week. Children in the

reception class do not have their own secure outside play area and access to the nursery playground for prolonged sessions is infrequent. The teacher uses a recorded radio programme for physical education lessons, and some of the language in this is difficult for all but the highest attaining children to understand. Demonstration and repetition of the taped instructions are sufficient to ensure that children make satisfactory progress. A range of activities, both in the nursery and reception class, helps children to handle crayons, pencils, scissors, glue and paintbrushes with increasing control and care, developing effective hand-eye co-ordination.

Creative development

94. Children are making good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception year. Most are likely to reach the nationally expected standards by the end of the reception year. Children confidently sing songs and rhymes, clap a steady beat and perform a range of actions to their songs. They listen carefully to recorded music such as 'Peter and the Wolf' and recognise how the sounds change, becoming louder or softer. They confidently use untuned percussion instruments to accompany familiar songs. Children in the reception class successfully sing from memory and are building up a repertoire of songs. Children use a wide range of materials to produce paintings, drawings, collage and mobiles both from direct observation and from imagination. They have successfully produced pictures of themselves and their families, of trees in Autumn, of witches' faces and of animals. Children engage happily in imaginative role-play, becoming absorbed in the characters they are playing.
95. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery. It is satisfactory in the reception class, with good teaching of music. Good use of questions and enthusiastic demonstration by adults help children in the nursery to learn that some instruments are shaken, others struck and some are blown. Children are taught the names of instruments as they learn how to play them. In both the nursery and reception classes, teachers set up appropriate activities where children can observe natural objects such as plants and animals. They provide satisfactory opportunities for a variety of painting, modelling, collage and printing activities, which are often linked to topics, as well as opportunities for imaginative role-play in designated areas and with 'small world' toys. In the reception class, the teacher's enthusiasm for singing is conveyed effectively to the children as she accompanies them on a guitar. Through the support of adults during these activities, including their comments and questions, children are helped to develop skills well and to express their own ideas with confidence. Adult-led activities promote good learning of colours and visual awareness. While children have daily access to creative activities in the nursery, access is restricted to specific lessons in the reception class.

ENGLISH

96. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were below the national average, as they were in 1997 when the school was last inspected. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that, at this point, standards in the present Year 6 are below average overall but are better in reading than in writing. Pupils now in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress in reading since the end of Year 2. However, in the nine terms between the end of Year 2 and the start of Year 6, they have made an average of only seven terms' progress in writing. This is unsatisfactory. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress overall in English this school year. Nevertheless improvement is needed to support pupils in making better progress and to raise standards.
97. The National Curriculum test results of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were average in reading, but well below average in writing. These results show a significant improvement on the previous year, and since the last inspection, in reading. There has been little change in the writing standards. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that, at this point, standards in reading in Year 2 are average and the improvement of 2001 has been maintained. In writing in Year 2, standards are still well below average. Pupils now in Years 1 and 2 are making satisfactory progress in reading. While those in Year 1 are progressing satisfactorily in writing, those in Year 2 are not. The difference in the rates of progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is directly linked to variations in the quality of teaching in this key area.

98. Standards of speaking and listening are average overall in Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Year 2 listen attentively in a variety of situations, such as whole-school assemblies and class question and answer sessions. They speak with the clarity expected for their age and take turns in conversations. Average and higher attaining pupils in Year 6 participate confidently in one-to-one and small group discussions, showing a good awareness of the listener. They communicate their ideas and opinions clearly, for example, about the books they read. A few lower attaining pupils are less confident and their speech is not always clear enough.
99. In Years 2 and 6, reading standards are average. Many Year 2 pupils read accurately and fluently, successfully using a range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words. Many are confident and competent in using letter sounds. They also split words into smaller sections and look at the context in order to read words they find difficult. A few lower attaining pupils rely on the pictures to help them identify words and need adult help to do this. Most pupils in Year 6 have a satisfactory understanding of the texts they read and competently explain the narrative and characters in stories. They make sensible predictions about what might happen next. Many average and higher attaining pupils in particular have favourite authors and give reasons for their choice of reading material. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs confidently try to read unfamiliar words by applying their knowledge of letter sounds. They do not, however, read well enough for meaning, for example, by taking account of simple punctuation. Although pupils know how to find information in non-fiction books, few have the library skills expected at this age.
100. Writing standards are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 write for an adequate range of purposes - for example, instructions on how to get from their classroom to the nursery, accounts of an imaginary bear's holiday and descriptions of their best friend. Higher attaining pupils successfully spell simple words as they sound, but overall spelling standards are weak. Even the most able pupils do not use the simplest punctuation with any consistency, although they are able to talk about the punctuation in their reading books. Only a few higher attaining pupils write linked sentences with an adequate awareness of the reader. Overall, pupils do not write at the length expected at this age. While average and higher attaining pupils form letters evenly, they are not starting to join them. By Year 6, pupils have increased the range of purposes for which they write. They have developed their awareness of the reader, although only higher attaining pupils show this at the level expected. Few pupils are sufficiently competent in using language to describe or create atmosphere. Skills in drafting and redrafting for style and content are under-developed. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have neat joined handwriting.
101. The overall quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory throughout the school. In Year 2, however, the teaching of writing is unsatisfactory and is restricting the standards pupils achieve at this age. There are also areas in need of improvement to raise writing standards in Years 3 to 6. During the inspection, good lessons were seen in Years 1, 3 and 5. Pupils of all abilities made good progress in these three lessons because the teaching was well focused on what the teacher wanted them to learn. The teachers showed high expectations of the standards that all pupils in their classes are capable of achieving. Pupils responded well, trying hard and maintaining a good level of involvement. In the Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils increased their understanding of how information is presented in non-fiction books. In the Year 1 lesson, they developed their reading comprehension skills and their awareness of question marks.
102. In satisfactory English lessons, pupils, activities and resources are well managed. What pupils need for their group activities, such as worksheets or a range of non-fiction books, are out on their tables before the lesson begins. This means that there is a smooth transition from the whole-class introductory part of the lesson, when the pupils are gathered round the teacher on the carpet, to the work at their tables. As a result, no time is lost during which pupils could be learning. Support staff are well deployed and make an effective contribution to the learning of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. In all classes, they are well briefed by teachers. Activities are appropriately matched to the wide range of pupils' needs in the mixed ability classes. Question and answer sessions are used effectively. All these features of teaching ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress, particularly in activities designed to develop reading skills.

103. Some features of lessons, which are satisfactory overall, prevent pupils from making better progress. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher reinforced the difference between biography and autobiography on several occasions when pupils had already clearly understood this point. This prolonged the introductory part of the lesson unnecessarily and slowed the pace. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils studying an obituary of Julius Caesar were not told what an obituary was. As a result, the text they were studying was not clearly enough set in context.
104. The quality of marking is inconsistent. In Years 1, 3 and 4, marking is used effectively to support pupils' progress. In Year 3, for example, the teacher writes comments that require pupils to reflect on how they are using language in their writing. This is particularly important in helping pupils to improve, as the standards are low in this year group. In Year 1, pupils are reminded to use capital letters and full-stops and their spellings are corrected. Marking in Year 2 is weak. Pupils are set targets, such as to write a sentence with a capital letter and a full stop. However, when they do not do this, their errors are not picked up and corrected. This means that the setting of targets for these pupils has little effect.
105. In Year 2, too little account is taken of the range of pupils' needs in the mixed ability class. In handwriting, for example, all pupils are required to copy the same piece of text, even though the lowest attaining pupils are unable to form letters correctly. When pupils are set the task of writing instructions, again the activity is not appropriate for the lower attaining pupils. Not enough is expected of the most able pupils, and this is particularly evident in the lack of feedback to them through marking. The result is that those who are able to write a series of linked sentences do not use punctuation to demarcate the sentences.
106. There is not enough emphasis on improving pupils' writing throughout Years 3 to 6. This is a concern, given the low standards in writing at the end of Year 2 and the school's acknowledgement that pupils in Year 6 do not do as well in writing as in reading. While a lesson each week is classed as 'creative writing', pupils are not given the opportunities they need to explore the imaginative and creative use of language or to sufficiently consider how language is adapted according to the purpose of the writing. Not enough attention is given to developing pupils' skills in drafting and redrafting writing for style and content. While there are many opportunities for pupils to explore texts, there is not enough emphasis on how the texts are written. Pupils are not sufficiently expected to consider the text from the writer's point of view or to focus on how the effect on the reader is achieved. While there are some good opportunities in some classes to write in other subjects such as history, the school is not making enough use of other subjects to develop pupils' writing skills. There are also some examples of computers being used to support writing skills, but such opportunities are under-developed.
107. While the school records pupils' results in National Curriculum tests and optional tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5, little analysis of this data takes place. There are no adequate additional systems in place for ongoing assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress in the English. Overall, information from assessment is not used well enough to ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs and that they make effective progress as they move up through the school. The assessment of pupils' work was found to be inconsistent at the last inspection and too little progress has been made in ensuring that a whole-school approach is developed.
108. The overall leadership and management of English are satisfactory, although the checking of teaching and the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The headteacher and the deputy, in her role as English co-ordinator, have recognised the need to improve writing standards. Teachers have attended writing courses run by the local education authority. Arrangements have been made for teachers to visit a beacon school next term, especially to look at the teaching of writing. Writing targets for pupils were introduced last term, although there has been no specific checking of whether these are being used effectively. There has been some observation of English lessons this term. The checking of teaching in lessons has not, however, identified weaknesses sufficiently. As a result, no action has been taken to improve the situation. The checking of pupils' books is not sufficiently rigorous or systematic to highlight areas in which improvements are needed. The checking of teaching and the curriculum and how they contribute to pupils' learning has not developed well enough since the last inspection when it was judged to be at a very early stage of development.

MATHEMATICS

109. Standards in mathematics now are considerably better than when the school was last inspected in 1997. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were above the national average. In the tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2001, the school's results were average. Standards have improved because the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively and is now well established throughout the school. In addition to a daily numeracy lesson, pupils in Years 3 to 6 regularly have an additional 25 minutes for mental mathematics or another mathematical activity at the start of the day. The overall quality of teaching and learning is better than when the school was last inspected in Years 3 to 6. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that, at this point, standards in the present Years 2 and 6 are much the same as those shown in the 2001 national tests. Standards continue to be above average in Year 6 and average in Year 2. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress. In Years 3 to 6, all groups of pupils are making good progress.
110. Pupils in Year 2 undertake an appropriate range of investigative and problem-solving activities, although a significant number are hampered at times by their weak writing skills which affect their recording of work. Most pupils count reliably to 100 and recognise sequences of numbers, identifying odd and even numbers confidently. Numbers are formed accurately in most cases, although a few lower-attaining pupils occasionally reverse their digits. Most pupils have a secure understanding of place value to 100. They use addition and subtraction, and many are confident with multiplication facts relating to two, five and 10. They double and halve numbers competently and demonstrate satisfactory mental recall of addition and subtraction. Most recognise and correctly identify a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They successfully describe their properties, such as the number of sides and corners. Pupils understand and use standard and non-standard units to measure length and mass. Their knowledge of right angles and reflective symmetry is less well developed.
111. Almost all Year 6 pupils calculate confidently in numbers to a million and multiply and divide large numbers by hundreds. They have a good understanding of the four rules of number and are competent in using decimals to two places. Higher attaining pupils use more complex decimals. Pupils cancel to reduce a fraction to its simplest form and solve problems which involve ratio and proportion. They have a secure knowledge of multiplication tables and understand negative numbers. They competently calculate fractions or percentages of numbers. Pupils identify the properties of many three-dimensional shapes and explain rotational symmetry. They measure and draw angles accurately and calculate the area and perimeter of two-dimensional shapes. Most pupils know the angle sum of a triangle and the sum of angles at a point. They show a good understanding of the language and concept of probability. Pupils successfully collect and present data on a bar chart. They interpret data in tables, graphs and charts, for example, in relation to favourite television programmes and height and chest sizes in their class. Pupils have good mental mathematics skills and competently use a wide range of mathematical vocabulary to explain their thinking. They apply their knowledge of mathematics to practical situations well. The weakest aspect of mathematics for pupils of this age is in the use of computers to record and interpret data.
112. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, as it was at the last inspection. In Years 3 to 6, it is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 generally have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and of the standards that all groups are capable of achieving. Teachers explain to pupils what they want them to learn and pupils are clear about what they are aiming for. These teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. There is a good focus on mathematical language, which contributes effectively to the development of pupils' understanding. Clear instructions, careful explanations and helpful demonstrations support pupils with practical activities and problem solving, for example, when investigating number sequences. All of these aspects of teaching result in all pupils, including those with special educational needs, making good progress in lessons and over time. The well-directed use of support assistants helps pupils with special educational needs to participate fully in lessons. In some cases, their progress is restricted only by their weak writing skills. The

good teaching in these year groups results in pupils enjoying mathematics. This is reflected in their application and the enthusiasm and sustained effort with which they work.

113. Where teaching is satisfactory, in Years 1 and 2, teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. Practical resources are used to develop pupils' understanding, such as pegs on a coat hanger in a Year 2 lesson. In a lesson seen in Year 1, the teacher gave clear explanations and instructions and used the mental session appropriately to assess pupils' understanding. There are, however, areas in need of improvement. Pupils with potential for higher attainment are not well enough challenged. This was also seen in a Year 5 lesson, when the work for the most able pupils was not demanding enough. In a Year 2 lesson, the higher attaining pupils were ready to move on at a brisker pace and the teacher's expectations of this particular group were not high enough. Where tasks are not challenging enough or the pace is not brisk enough, pupils do not always cover enough work, or work hard enough. On occasions, introductions that are too long limit the time available for pupils to engage in practical activities. This restricts the progress made.
114. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and many make encouraging comments. Few refer pupils to targets or advise them on what to do to improve their work. As a result, there are missed opportunities to move the learning on further. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place, but insufficient use is made of the information gained to support planning especially in Years 1 and 2. The recently introduced tracking system is not used well enough to set individual targets, although steps have been taken in this direction. The good involvement of pupils in self-assessment is contributing effectively to their knowledge of their own learning. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning. The use of computers to support pupils' learning is not well enough established in mathematics.
115. At present there is little checking of teaching by the headteacher or co-ordinator. This is unsatisfactory even though standards have improved. The lack of such checking means that there is not an objective review of provision to eliminate weaknesses and improve progress and raise standards further, especially in Years 1 and 2.

SCIENCE

116. Standards in Year 6 now are better than when the school was last inspected. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were close to the national average. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that standards in the present Year 6, at this point, are average. Pupils now in Year 6, including those with special educational needs, have made satisfactory progress as they have moved up through Years 3 to 6. In 2001, teachers assessed pupils at the end of Year 2 as below average. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that, at this point, standards are also below average in the present Year 2. While pupils presently in Year 1, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress, those in Year 2 are making unsatisfactory progress. The variations in the progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are directly linked to differences in the quality of teaching in the two year groups.
117. Pupils in Year 2 are not developing sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding of all the areas of study required by the National Curriculum. This school term, they have gained a very simple understanding of some of the conditions needed for animals to survive, such as food, water, warmth, sleep and exercise. They recognise that animals have babies. They know that there are different kinds of food and understand that some of these are healthy. All these aspects of their scientific knowledge and understanding are at a level normally expected of younger pupils in Year 1. Pupils have a rudimentary understanding of materials and their properties and can sort a selection of objects in a number of ways referring to properties such as rough and smooth, soft or hard. They are beginning to distinguish between natural and man-made objects.
118. The wider evidence from the work of pupils in Year 2 last school year indicates that, by the end of the year, few pupils had knowledge of physical phenomena such as light and sound expected at this age. Few but the most able pupils had a clear understanding of the effects of heating and cooling on materials. They did not sufficiently understand that some changes are reversible

and others are not. Skills in investigation are not as well developed as they should be and there is too little recording of work. This also means that there are missed opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills in science.

119. Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what a food chain is and appreciate the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat. They understand pollination and seed dispersal at the level expected at this age. Pupils know that plants need sunlight for healthy growth, have a simple understanding of photosynthesis and know that different soil conditions provide habitats for a variety of plants. They are beginning to develop an understanding of micro-organisms and their relationships to illness and their cures. Pupils have the expected knowledge and understanding of solids, liquids and gases, and of reversible and irreversible changes to materials. They have a satisfactory awareness of physical phenomena such as forces and electricity, and of the sun and moon, and the formation of shadows. Pupils sufficiently understand the main principles of a fair test, showing understanding of constant and variable conditions. However, they do not have the independence expected at this age in carrying out scientific investigations. They do not, for example, devise their own tests or select their own equipment and measures. Nevertheless, they record findings and results of investigations in a variety of ways including as line graphs, charts and tables, occasionally using computer graphics.
120. The overall quality of teaching and learning in science is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In Year 1, it is good, but it is unsatisfactory in Year 2. Although a lesson seen in Year 2 was judged to be satisfactory overall, the pace of learning was slow for most pupils. Pupils with special educational needs, however, were supported well by the support assistant during the written task, which enabled them to make satisfactory progress. Teaching and learning in Year 2 are unsatisfactory overall. Activities often lack challenge, especially for the most able pupils. There is not enough recorded science work in Year 2 and even the most able pupils are not challenged to write more than one or two sentences that represent a week's work. Marking is poor. It consists of ticks and comments such as "wonderful work" and "superb" on often barely legible writing and untidy drawings. It does not sufficiently identify errors to move pupils' learning forward. Neither is it used to support pupils' literacy and language development as spellings of commonly used words are left uncorrected.
121. By contrast, in Year 1, activities are planned appropriately to take account of pupils' differing needs. Marking provides useful comments and requires pupils to make additions to uncompleted work. In a good lesson seen in Year 1, a good pace was maintained throughout with an effective balance between challenge and encouragement for all groups of pupils. Good lessons were also seen during the inspection in Years 3 and 5, where effective use was made of open-ended questions to challenge pupils' thinking. In Year 3, the teacher provided stimulating and interesting activities to which pupils responded well. Resources were well prepared beforehand and used effectively both in the whole class and group activities. In the good lesson in Year 5, effective use was made of pupils' mathematical knowledge of division in calculating squares on the axis of a line graph.
122. At the last inspection, there was some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 to 6 and this is no longer the case. Teachers in these year groups demonstrate satisfactory subject knowledge. This means that pupils are given accurate scientific information and are taught correct scientific terminology. Behaviour management is good so that pupils are attentive, behave well in lessons and settle well to work. Marking is satisfactory overall. It is particularly good in Year 5, where individual targets are set and comments tell pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do next. This means that pupils have a good knowledge of their own learning. Teachers expect pupils to present their work neatly and tidily. This is particularly evident in Years 5 and 6, where some beautifully presented and accurately observed drawings of plants reflect the pride that pupils take in their work. Teachers plan lessons satisfactorily and there is an adequate emphasis on learning through scientific investigation and enquiry. However, more independence could be given to pupils to pose scientific questions of their own, to devise their own investigations and select equipment needed. In Years 5 and 6, teachers make appropriate use of computers so that pupils can present results of investigations in the form of line graphs or present results of their personal research as attractive information cards. Across the school as

a whole, however, not enough use is made of computers and other new technology to support work in science.

123. The range of learning opportunities for pupils in both key stages is satisfactory. There are weaknesses in the curriculum which affect the quality of opportunities provided. Since the last inspection, the scheme of work from which teachers plan their lessons has been changed to take account of national guidance. The new scheme has not been in place long enough to have an effect on standards. Changing from one scheme to another has left some gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Interpretation of the scheme of work in teachers' planning is not consistent. This results in some insufficiently challenging activities being planned and superficial coverage of the curriculum, particularly in Year 2.
124. Procedures to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding in science have only just been introduced and have not yet been used sufficiently by teachers to assess standards and to plan pupils' next steps in learning. The co-ordinator is keen to develop science and is aware of some of the main strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. She provides good support for colleagues by contributing to staff meetings and providing written guidance. A little checking of teaching and learning has taken place through the co-ordinator seeing teachers' planning and sampling pupils' investigative work. However, she has not yet had the opportunity to scrutinise planning fully or to observe lessons in order to identify and rectify the weaknesses in teaching and planning. The headteacher does not check the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum through lesson observations.

ART AND DESIGN

125. The standard of pupils' work in art and design is as expected nationally in Year 2. It is not possible to make a judgement on standards in Year 6 because the subject is timetabled as alternate blocks of time with design and technology, and pupils in Year 6 have been focusing on design and technology so far this school year. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress overall as they move up through the school. The standards now and pupils' rate of progress are much the same as when the school was last inspected.
126. Pupils in Year 2 have the awareness of pattern and colour expected for their age. A few higher attaining pupils competently create complex patterns that include geometric shapes and pools of white space. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory skills in their pencil drawings of a variety of subjects, for instance, in pictures on themes of personal significance to them. These include drawings displayed in the area of the class prayer table on the theme of 'You love me and You know me'. Pupils apply their awareness of colour and pattern well in creating patterns using a computer program. The work in Years 3 to 5 is of the standard expected for pupils of this age. Pupils in Year 5 produce careful observational drawings of fruit. Some of these show good detail and awareness of colour. They successfully achieve three-dimensional effects through shading. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 competently work in a satisfactory range of materials, including charcoal, pastel crayon and paint. It is clear that pupils enjoy art and design activities and make a good effort.
127. The overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 5 is satisfactory as it was at the last inspection, although it is not possible to make a judgement in relation to Year 6. During the inspection only one lesson was seen, in Year 3. Other evidence was gained from scrutinising pupils' art and design books in Years 3 and 4 as well as work on display throughout the school, and from analysing teachers' planning. In the one lesson seen, the teacher provided a wide range of patterns for pupils to observe and draw. Through these examples of patterns, pupils satisfactorily developed their awareness of how patterns appear in nature, such as on animal skins, and of the patterns of different cultures. As pupils observed and drew, the teacher circulated and helped them to look closely and, for instance, to identify geometric shapes or repeating patterns. There were some weaknesses in this lesson that prevented pupils from making better progress. The introduction was very long and some pupils became restless as a result. The introduction of a worksheet for a writing activity at one point in the lesson restricted the participation of pupils with special educational needs. The marking of art and design books in Year 3 provides pupils with helpful comments. This practice is not, however, consistently

applied in other classes, such as in Year 4. There is adequate use of computers to support pupils' learning in art and design.

128. The evidence of teachers' planning shows that pupils have access to a satisfactory, range of art and design experiences as they move up through the school. The school is making appropriate use of national guidance for the subject. Not enough has been done, however, to explore how units of work within the national guidance should be adapted to fit the school's two-year rolling programme for art and design in Years 3 to 6. The unit on pattern in Year 3, for example, requires teachers to cover a large amount of material very quickly. Some of this is difficult for pupils of this age. There is not enough attention to how different aspects of art and design should be revisited at an increasingly more challenging level as pupils move up through the school. The weaknesses found in the long-term planning at the last inspection have not been fully eradicated.
129. The overall leadership and management of art and design by the co-ordinator are satisfactory. She has shown initiative in organising training for teachers to ensure that printing is taught effectively. Resources have been centralised and are being developed to support the teaching of each unit of work. The co-ordinator provides help to teachers informally. While there is no checking of the teaching in lessons, the co-ordinator ensures that she knows what is going on throughout the school by scrutinising teachers' planning each term. She has put together a portfolio of examples of work to give teachers ideas. The portfolio of work is not, however, assessed against National Curriculum level criteria to guide teachers in assessing the standards achieved by pupils in their classes. Other than the day-to-day assessments that teachers make in lessons, there are no assessment procedures for art and design. This makes it difficult for teachers to adapt the units of work to meet the range of needs of pupils in the mixed ability classes. It also prevents teachers from being more effective in consistently developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as they move up through the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

130. Standards in design and technology are as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6, as they were at the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school.
131. Year 2 pupils successfully clarify their ideas for making a glove puppet by looking at books and glove puppets brought in from home. Having drawn designs, they competently practise joining techniques, such as sewing before they make their product. Pupils select from a range of coloured fabric and tools such as scissors and glue sticks to help them make their product. They take care in matching their designs to those in their original plans. Pupils have the expected skills for their age in cutting components carefully and joining them. As they move through Years 1 and Year 2, pupils successfully make, for instance, pictures and toys with moving parts, puppets and winding mechanisms.
132. Year 6 pupils draw appropriate plans for making items such as beach shoes. After experimenting with different designs, considering the purpose of the product and the intended consumer, they produce a prototype. They evaluate and modify their designs to see if they work and to avoid wasting materials later. They successfully measure, cut and shape the materials and join them with items such as sticky tape, glue and pins. Pupils enjoy the challenge of working to a design specification, such as the one 'to design and make a beach shoe with a unique tread pattern on the sole'. Pupils provide appropriate finishing techniques, such as painting, where required. They confidently evaluate their work, both as they proceed and when they have finished. In Years 3 to 6 pupils have successfully made money containers, musical instruments and biscuits, developing skills in measuring, cutting, shaping and finishing.
133. Only two lessons were observed in design and technology. These were in Years 5 and 6. In both of these lessons, teaching and learning were good. The teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and helped pupils to develop a good understanding of the design process. In Year 5, the teacher used taped music imaginatively to suggest ideas for the kinds of images pupils might include on their packaging for Christmas biscuits. This novel approach stimulated interest and made learning fun. In providing opportunity for pupils to experiment with product names,

writing styles, packaging colours and logos, the teacher successfully reinforced pupils' understanding of the need to attract the consumer's attention when designing packaging for a product. This resulted in some pupils making good use of literacy skills, such as a play on words, to come up with interesting and well thought out names for Christmas biscuits, such as 'Frostbite' and 'Snowflakes'. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported by the teacher to be able to carry out the tasks successfully and make good progress in the lesson.

134. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall across the school. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and shows that teachers have adequate subject knowledge. Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to carry out designing and making activities and to develop all the skills expected for their age. Pupils clearly enjoy design and technology, readily discuss the work they have produced, how successful it has been and how it could have been improved.
135. There is a satisfactory scheme of work in place based on national guidance. However, the subject does not have a co-ordinator at the moment, which means that there is not enough checking of the work being undertaken in lessons. There are no assessment procedures to help teachers identify pupils' current attainment and their skill levels. This prevents teachers from more closely matching work to pupils' needs and challenging them to higher achievement. The writing activities undertaken by pupils in planning and evaluating work give some limited support to the school's initiative in literacy. Measuring activities, such as when cutting materials accurately, help support the work in numeracy. Some use of computers was seen in a Year 5 lesson. However, overall there is insufficient use of computers or other new technology to support pupils' learning throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

136. Standards in geography are as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. Some lower attaining pupils, however, are hampered by weaknesses in their literacy skills, especially in writing. This restricts their ability to record at length. The standards found at the last inspection have been maintained.
137. Pupils in Year 2 have the expected awareness for their age of physical features of places such as houses, roads and shops in the local environment. They have a satisfactory understanding of simple maps. They successfully draw a simple map of the imaginary Island of Struay. They understand differences such as modes of transport, jobs and physical landscapes, comparing this imaginary location with their own locality. Satisfactory links are made with literacy through this work. Pupils also identify differences in places when studying their local area and a village in Mexico. They discuss ways of improving the local area, successfully identifying unattractive features such as litter and how this might be resolved. Work in Year 2 is complemented by the use of 'Barnaby Bear' who sends postcards to the class from various places. This increases pupils' awareness of different localities, although there are missed opportunities to make use of maps in this work.
138. Year 6 pupils have the expected mapping skills for their age. They demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of directions, using appropriate mapping terminology. Pupils have studied contrasting locations such as Chembakoli village in India and confidently compare features such as climate, clothing, language and land use. Most pupils know how to locate India using globes and maps. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the River Nile and of physical features of coastal and mountain environments. They understand how rivers and weather influence the landscape through the process of erosion. Pupils show the expected awareness for their age of problems such as water shortage and other environmental issues such as coastal erosion, and offer suggestions for dealing with such problems. They devise posters, for example, telling how to save water. Their knowledge and understanding of the local environment is further developed through a study of the High Street, when good cross-curricular links are made with mathematics as pupils conduct a survey, record data and tally traffic.
139. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall throughout the school. Teachers' own knowledge and understanding of geography is satisfactory. Planning provides pupils with a suitable range of work, although this is not always matched to the range of pupils' needs in the

mixed ability classes. In a lesson in Year 4 finding out about India, for example, higher attaining pupils were well challenged. Some average attaining pupils working on their own, however, found it difficult to locate the information, particularly as the globe they were using was very small. There is a good focus on developing geographical language. This helps to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, and contributes effectively to literacy.

140. Geography contributes well to pupils' cultural development and also to their moral and social development through citizenship, reflection on different ways of life and links with charitable fund-raising both for India and Mexico. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but while marking is positive it rarely guides pupils in how they might improve their work.
141. The school has adopted the national guidance as its scheme of work and makes satisfactory use of this. The co-ordinator recognises her own training needs and is anxious to develop her knowledge of the subject further. Neither she nor the headteacher observes lessons taking place and so there is little identification of how improvements in teaching and the curriculum might be brought about. There are no formal assessment procedures in place. Therefore, teachers are unable to judge pupils' attainment and the progress they are making. This is unsatisfactory. There is not enough use of computers to support pupils' learning, for example, through researching information. Currently, the provision of resources for geography is unsatisfactory, with too few up-to-date maps and guides and few resources to support topics in the curriculum.

HISTORY

142. Standards in history are as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. The standards found at the last inspection have been maintained.
143. Pupils in Year 2 have the expected knowledge and understanding for their age of the passing of time, and a reasonable awareness of some of the changes that have taken place over time. Through looking at pictures and photographs and comparing artefacts, they identify differences in such things as toys, homes and holidays. They successfully sequence items such as teddy bears and household implements, showing an increasing understanding of chronology. They have a satisfactory knowledge of some famous people and significant events from the past such as Florence Nightingale and the Crimean War. They put some of the events in Florence Nightingale's life in the correct order. Pupils are beginning to extract information at an elementary level from secondary source material. They use historical terminology such as 'old', 'new', 'oldest' and 'long ago' confidently in their work.
144. Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of a range of historical periods. They know some facts about the Vikings and aspects of the Tudor and Victorian periods. They have a sound knowledge of aspects of Britain since 1930 such as the period of John Lennon's life. Through their work on the Tudors, they know about Henry VIII and his wives and the differences between the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times. Pupils identify some of the changes that have taken place throughout history and use time lines successfully to place the periods they study in chronological order.
145. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6. A good lesson was observed during the inspection in Year 3. Teachers make effective use of photographs, artefacts, visits and visitors to foster pupils' interest in history. Museum visits, including to a Viking museum, and theme days such as those on the Tudors help to bring history to life in lessons. Pupils are well motivated as a result and work with interest and enthusiasm. They concentrate well when using a range of information sources to develop historical enquiry skills. The good lesson in Year 3 showed that the teacher had good subject knowledge. She made imaginative use of time lines to help pupils recall dates and facts. Questioning was used effectively to encourage empathy and deeper thinking. In response to a question about the life of Henry VIII, for example, one pupil commented that "Henry must have felt brilliantly happy inside when his son was born". Good links are made with literacy in Year 6, for example, reinforcing pupils' understanding of bias in newspaper reports of John Lennon's death.

146. The well-targeted use of support staff ensures that all pupils are able to participate fully in lessons. This particularly helps pupils with special educational needs with tasks that involve reading and writing. Otherwise, they would find it difficult to have full involvement because of their weak literacy skills, especially in writing. Effective displays in some classrooms contribute well to pupils' learning. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but the quality of marking is inconsistent. There are few comments to advise pupils about how they can improve work. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning and to enhance the work undertaken in lessons.
147. The school makes satisfactory use of national guidelines as its scheme of work. Most planning takes adequate account of pupils' differing needs. In Year 2, however, pupils with potential for higher attainment sometimes underachieve, and those who are lower attaining or have special educational needs struggle to cope with the same work. Not enough use is made of computers and other new technology to support pupils' learning in history in all Year groups.
148. In the absence of a co-ordinator for history, the headteacher is temporarily looking after the subject. There is no checking of teaching and the curriculum and how they contribute to pupils' learning. This weakness was identified at the last inspection and has not been rectified. There are no procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and checking their long-term progress. These are both areas in which development is required to ensure that all pupils are helped to do as well as they are capable of doing as they move up through the school. History makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

149. Weaknesses in the provision for information and communication technology were a key issue arising from the last inspection. At that time, the school did not meet statutory requirements for the subject, as the coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study was inadequate. Since then, there have been improvements in the school's provision. Resources have been greatly improved. The good computer room, opened in January 2001, is used effectively to contribute to pupils' learning. All staff have undergone training and are now much more confident in teaching information and communication technology. The co-ordinator's good knowledge and expertise supports teachers well. As a result of these developments all groups of pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, are now making satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not covered control technology as the school has only just got the necessary resources for this. This particular aspect of the subject is planned to be taught next term when the resources are properly installed. Presently, this aspect of pupils' work in information and communication technology remains below the standards expected for pupils in Year 6. In all other respects, standards are as expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 6.
150. Year 2 pupils use computers confidently. They accurately name items of computer equipment and readily refer to them using the correct names when explaining their work. All pupils know how to 'log on' and have the expected skills in controlling the mouse. They enter simple text accurately, and some know how to put capital letters and basic punctuation into their work. They use the space bar confidently to separate words. Occasionally, a few pupils need help to identify the correct key to use. Pupils competently use a paint program to create pictures and patterns, clicking on various tools such as the spray tool, and altering the size of the spray to create different effects on the screen. They have good ideas for colour patterns and mixes such as in the firework pictures produced. Over half the class save their work without adult help; others need some help. Higher attaining pupils print their work unaided. Although pupils have some awareness of how to use a programmable toy, this aspect is a relative weakness, as skills have not been systematically developed over time.
151. By Year 6, most pupils have satisfactory skills in entering and editing text. They change the colour, size, and style of text to produce best copies of their written work. Most pupils use the mouse confidently to produce various forms of artwork with a paint program. They print work independently. Pupils have a good understanding of the vocabulary associated with data-handling work. Skills in producing spreadsheets are developing. As pupils do not yet have experience with computer based simulations owing to a previous lack of resources, including monitoring equipment and programs to develop modelling skills, they do not have the expected competence in these specific areas. Pupils satisfactorily describe the use of information and communication technology in the outside world. They are beginning to develop the capacity to compare information and communication technology with alternative methods. Many successfully make use of the Internet for research purposes.
152. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Instances of good teaching and learning were seen during the inspection in Years 1, 2 and 5. Teachers are sufficiently confident and secure in their subject knowledge. They plan appropriate activities and, in many cases, present these in interesting ways. Pupils respond by showing good attitudes and a high level of interest in the subject and by behaving well. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils showed delight and wonder as the teacher produced 'firework' effects on the overhead projector screen. This made them keen to produce their own pictures. Most pupils work with sustained effort and concentration in lessons because teachers manage them well and present work in a way that is enjoyable and motivates them. Support staff are well deployed to provide help and advice. This enables all pupils to participate well, particularly those who are lower attaining or who have special educational needs, helping them to make satisfactory progress.
153. At the last inspection the school did not have a programme of work on which teachers could base their lessons. This has been rectified through the use of national guidance. The co-ordinator has good expertise and is helping to improve the quality of teaching and the range of learning opportunities provided. She is aware of what needs to be done to raise standards further and plans are already in hand to provide training so that greater use is made of

computers in other subjects. She does not, however, have the opportunity to observe lessons, and this is preventing her from being even more effective. Teachers keep a list of the skills pupils have acquired, but further development is needed in assessing pupils' standards and the progress being made. At present, insufficient use is made of assessments to support the planning of lessons. There is not enough use of computers to support pupils' learning in other subjects. This also prevents pupils' progress in information and communication technology skills from being better. A little use is made of computers in mathematics by pupils to maintain their individual assessment results. This is contributing effectively to pupils' own knowledge of their learning.

MUSIC

154. Only one music lesson, in Year 1, was observed during the inspection. There were no other music lessons scheduled for the period in which lesson observations took place. As a result, it is not possible to make firm judgements about the overall standards in Years 2 and 6 or about the quality of teaching throughout the school. Evidence from listening to singing in assemblies and at the mass held for All Saints Day shows that the standard of singing throughout Years 1 to 6 is very good. Pupils sing clearly, harmoniously and in two parts. They sing with a strong awareness of the meaning of the words, communicating a real sense of happiness. Pupils in Year 1 show the awareness of pitch expected at this age. As they sing the refrain of a song about a gruesome monster, they make monster-like faces and movements, thoroughly enjoying the experience.
155. The high standard of singing is evidence of very good teaching and learning in this aspect of music. In the lesson seen in Year 1, teaching and learning were satisfactory. The lesson provided a fun end to a day in which the class had worked hard. Good use was made of opportunities to develop pupils' vocabulary and basic English comprehension skills. Pupils were asked questions to check and develop their understanding of the words of the song they were practising. The teacher asked, for example, "What do we know about the monster?" and "Is he frightening?". This questioning helped the pupils to sing the words with understanding. Features such as 'loud and soft' and 'high and low', were introduced well into the song, with demonstration by the teacher using percussion instruments.
156. The evidence of teachers' planning shows that pupils have a satisfactory range of musical experiences as they move up through the school. The singing of songs that are related to the Christian faith and well matched to the age range in the school makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Opportunities for pupils to sing in charity concerts, at the community centre and at a hospice allow pupils to give pleasure to others. Pupils are also helped through such activities to gain an awareness of the needs of others. Guitar and recorder groups provide them with the chance to learn skills in a social situation different from normal lessons.
157. The overall leadership and management of music by the co-ordinator are satisfactory. She has successfully introduced a new commercial scheme of work to ensure that all the required elements of the music curriculum are covered adequately. She checks the implementation of the scheme by scrutinising teachers' planning and informally listens in to lessons in the hall when she is not teaching. There are no arrangements in place for a more in-depth checking of teaching and the curriculum through lesson observations. Other than the day-to-day assessments that teachers carry out in lessons, there are no procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

158. Timetabling arrangements resulted in only one lesson being observed. This was a dance lesson in Year 2. Standards of attainment in Year 2 are as expected nationally. It is not possible to make a judgement about standards in Year 6. The standards at the time of the last inspection have been maintained in Year 2. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2.

159. Pupils in Year 2 move confidently about the hall with the level of co-ordination and awareness of space normally found at this age. They move at different levels and travel at different speeds, keeping reasonable time to the music. Higher attaining pupils interpret the music well, successfully adjusting their movements and speed. They interpret the mood of the music well. When creating a dance sequence in pairs, most show good awareness of their partner, although a few have too little awareness of their partner or the mood and speed of the music. Pupils competently practise their skills, most working hard to improve the quality of their movement. When given the opportunity to observe examples of good practice, most pupils successfully improve their performance as a result.
160. Although no lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6, planning indicates that skills are being developed systematically and that the curriculum offered to pupils includes all elements and meets statutory requirements. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn to swim. Most swim 25 metres unaided by the time they leave the school. Pupils in Year 6 also develop their skills in outdoor and adventurous activities during a residential experience to the Isle of Man. The dance lesson seen in Year 2 was satisfactory. Activities were managed adequately and areas for improvement were drawn to pupils' attention. The teacher provided clear explanations and most pupils followed instructions obediently. A few did not listen carefully and, as a result, were not as successful as the rest of the class in performing to the music. The teacher set a good example to pupils, being dressed appropriately for the lesson, although the classroom assistant did not wear appropriate footwear. There was a good emphasis on the impact of exercise on the body. Not enough attention, however, was given to the need for warming up or cooling down, or to asking pupils to evaluate their performance.
161. The subject is managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator. She makes a good contribution to the satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities through running the rugby club. The out-of-school activities are very well supported by parents who manage both football and netball clubs after school. Since the last inspection, national guidance has been adopted as the scheme of work. This has rectified a weakness found at the last inspection when there was no suitable scheme of work. The school does not have assessment procedures for physical education and this restricts how well teachers are able to take account of pupils' prior attainment when planning activities. The facilities and resources continue to make an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious education is subject to separate inspection according to Section 23 of the School Inspections Act.