

## INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND (AIDED)  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Woolmer Green, Knebworth

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117461

Headteacher: Patricia Ginsberg

Reporting inspector: Steve Bywater  
18463

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2002

Inspection number: 194044

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: London Road  
Woolmer Green  
Hertfordshire

Postcode: SG3 6JP

Telephone number: 01438 813267

Fax number: 01438 813267

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Eunice Reddish

Date of previous inspection: May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                |                      | Subject responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities   |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 18463        | Steve Bywater  | Registered inspector | Mathematics<br>Music<br>Physical education<br>Foundation Stage<br>English as an additional language                    | What sort of school is it?<br>How high are standards?<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>How well is the school led and managed? |
| 09348        | Mary Le Mage   | Lay inspector        |  | How well does the school care for its pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?                 |
| 04303        | Simon Reynolds | Team inspector       | Science<br>Design and technology<br>Geography<br>Information and communication technology<br>Special educational needs | How high are standards? (attitudes and behaviour)<br>How good are curricular and other opportunities?                           |
| 19828        | Heather Weston | Team inspector       | English<br>Art<br>History<br>Equal opportunities   |   |

The inspection contractor was:

Peak Education Partnership  
19, Huddersfield Road  
Barnsley  
South Yorkshire  
S70 2LT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

|   | Page      |
|---|-----------|
| <b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| Information about the school  |           |
| How good the school is  |           |
| What the school does well   |           |
| What could be improved  |           |
| How the school has improved since its last inspection   |           |
| Standards   |           |
| Pupils' attitudes and values  |           |
| Teaching and learning   |           |
| Other aspects of the school   |           |
| How well the school is led and managed  |           |
| Parents' and carers' views of the school  |           |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>   |           |
| <b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>  | <b>13</b> |
| The school's results and pupils' achievements   |           |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  |           |
| <b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>  | <b>17</b> |
| <b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>                         | <b>19</b> |
| <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>  | <b>21</b> |
| <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>                                     | <b>22</b> |
| <b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>  | <b>24</b> |
| <b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>  | <b>26</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>   | <b>27</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b> | <b>31</b> |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Michael's Woolmer Green School is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School with 90 children on roll aged between four and eleven. There is a balance of boys and girls overall but significant variability in particular year groups. The school serves the local village but also takes a number of children from Stevenage. Children come from a mixture of private housing and council owned dwellings. The proportion of children known to be entitled to free school meals is 5.6 per cent which is well below the national average. One child speaks English as an additional language but is not at an early stage of English acquisition. Two traveller children normally attend the school but were not present during the inspection week. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class varies year on year but in 2001 it was broadly average and covered the full range of attainment from well below to well above the levels expected for their age. Approximately 36 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register and two of these have a statement of special educational need. Most pupils on the special needs register have learning difficulties but a small number have medical or behavioural difficulties.

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

This is a good school with some very good features. Standards in English, mathematics, art and music are above national expectations at the end of Year 6. The school has recently been awarded the highest standard of a Gold Arts Mark from the Arts Council. This year the school also received a Department for Education and Skills Schools Achievement Award in recognition of improvement of standards in the year 2000 – 2001. The overall quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress overall. The reception class provides a very good start for the youngest children. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave well. The school provides well for pupils, with extra-curricular activities and visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum. This is a caring school which benefits from the support of its parents. The school is led and managed well by a very effective headteacher who is supported by a dedicated team of teachers and a well-informed governing body. It provides satisfactory value for money since the expenditure per pupil is high.

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

- Teaching is good and pupils make good progress. The reception class provides a very good start. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics, art and music.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good and, as a result, pupils have a very good attitude to learning and a strong sense of citizenship. A wide range of visits, visitors and activities enhances the curriculum and supports pupils' personal development.
- Relationships within school are good and pupils behave well.
- The headteacher, with the support of staff, governors, parents and pupils, creates a very good ethos and promotes high standards. Parents think very highly of the school. This is a caring school.
- The school analyses pupils' achievements very well and uses the information wisely.

### What could be improved

- Standards at the age of seven are too low, particularly for higher attainers.
- Teachers in infant and junior classes do not always plan work carefully enough to suitably challenge all ability groups. Planning for reception class children should be more closely related to Early Learning Goals.
- The quality of teachers' marking and pupils' presentation of their work.

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

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

The school has developed well since the last inspection in May 1997 when it had many issues to act upon. It has formalised the planning of pupils' work so pupils develop their knowledge and understanding in a systematic way. More attention still needs to be paid to preparing work which is more accurately pitched for pupils of different abilities. Assessment and recording procedures have developed well and the staff make good use of the analyses and the results of a variety of tests to inform their future planning better. Teaching in English and mathematics is regularly monitored and there has been a marked reduction in the use of worksheets. Monitoring of teaching in other subjects still has some way to go. The school has improved its investigative and problem solving work in mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) is used much more. The school has enhanced the role of co-ordinators appropriately, to include a monitoring and evaluation responsibility.

### 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             | E    | A    | C               |
| Mathematics     | D             | E*   | E    | E*              |
| Science         | C             | E*   | D    | E               |

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E  
 very low                E\*

In the 2001 national tests, standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average in English, below the national average in science, and in mathematics standards were well below the national average. In comparison with pupils in similar schools, pupils' performance was average in English, well below average in mathematics and very low in science. Test results should be treated with caution however since small year groups do not give a reliable picture of how standards compare with other schools. Children's skills on entry to the reception class vary year by year. This year they entered school with average skills. Children in the reception class make particularly good progress. By the time children reach Year 1, their attainment will be above the level normally expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the



world and personal and social development. The evidence collected during the inspection shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are below average by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are above national expectations in English and mathematics and in line with national expectations in science. Standards are above average in art at seven and eleven, and in music at eleven. Standards are in line with national expectations in other subjects at seven and eleven. There was insufficient evidence available to judge standards in geography and physical education.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school                | Most pupils have a very good attitude towards their work and the school. They are eager learners and try hard to do their best.  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Most pupils behave well in lessons and at break times. The vast majority of pupils are consistently polite and well mannered towards visitors. A very small number of pupils do not behave so well, are impolite and disturb others. There have been no exclusions this year.  |
| Personal development and relationships | Personal development is good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities that they are given to take on responsibilities. Relationships within school are good. The school has an atmosphere of mutual respect where adults and pupils alike trust each other, can express their views confidently, are positive and take others' views seriously. |
| Attendance                             | Attendance is very good and well above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually at the beginning of the day and lessons start promptly.  |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2  | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching    | Very good | Satisfactory | Good        |

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

Teaching is good. Of the 26 lessons seen, all were satisfactory or better; around seven in ten were good or better. Over half of teaching seen in the reception class was very good. This is because the teacher has high expectations of the children and sets challenging tasks. She teaches the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. In the infants and juniors, common features of good lessons include the teacher having a good understanding of the subject, setting work which challenged pupils of all ages and abilities well with purposeful questioning, and a good choice and use of resources. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and control is generally good. Weaker teaching, even in satisfactory lessons, results from lesson planning which lacks challenge for higher attaining pupils and is too difficult for lower attainers and those with special needs. Some teachers do not mark work well and do not have high enough expectations of presentation. The teaching of English and mathematics

is satisfactory overall. Strengths in English and mathematics include the way that teachers give good explanations and clear instructions for the tasks that they ask pupils to do. Teachers often make good use of review sessions at the end of literacy lessons to consolidate learning and to provide a firm platform on which further to develop understanding. Occasionally these sessions are too short. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Class teachers and support staff are aware of pupils' learning targets and use them well to plan work.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Good overall. It provides all children with learning experiences that engage their interest; it is enhanced by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities and a good range of visits and visitors across many subjects.  |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Provision is good, and effective support from classroom assistants enables pupils to make good progress overall. Provision for children with disabilities is good; the school's strong caring ethos promotes positive approaches to educational and social inclusion.  |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | One child speaks English as an additional language but is not at an early stage of language development and there is no specific provision made.   |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good overall. Spiritual development is very good. Assemblies and lessons provide good opportunities for personal reflection. Moral and cultural development is very good and social development is good. Pupils are encouraged to get on together, work together and help each other. They value and explore other cultures and develop a very good understanding of their own culture through subjects such as history, art and music. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Very well. There are very good procedures for child protection and welfare. Other aspects including pupils' attendance and punctuality are being monitored rigorously. The school has a good range of assessment systems, especially in English and mathematics. The school records and tracks the results carefully.  |

Traveller children are supported very well by the school and the traveller support service. They are fully included in the school's activities. The school has very good links with parents and parents in turn have very positive views of the school. A significant number make a very good contribution to their children's education. Targets are set for pupils on a regular basis and parents and pupils are aware of these targets.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good. The headteacher is a very effective leader who has a clear picture of what the school does well and where it needs to develop. All the staff work well together to achieve the school's aims.  |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Very well. Governors are well informed and take a positive role in monitoring and supporting the work of the school.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Very good. There is a rigorous analysis of standards, frequent checking of the progress towards meeting targets in the school development plan and regular observations of teaching. The school correctly identifies the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and takes action to deal with these issues. |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Good. There is a very clear link between development planning and finance. Priorities are entirely relevant to school. Best value principles are clearly understood and are at the heart of the financial planning process.  |

The school is satisfactorily staffed and opportunities for staff development are good. Accommodation is satisfactory and used effectively. There are sufficient resources and the school makes good use of all grants available. The school has suitable plans to use the large reserves and in view of the larger than average costs per pupil the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most   | What parents would like to see improved  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school and they make good progress.</li> <li>• The information that parents receive about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school.</li> <li>• The close working relationship with parents.</li> <li>• The amount of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul> | <p>Although nothing significant stands out, a small number of parents (14 per cent) have some concern over the amount of work pupils do at home.</p> |

This table takes account the views of 22 parents attending a meeting held with the registered inspector prior to the inspection and those expressed in 45 (50 per cent of the total sent out) returned questionnaires. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents and also believes that homework is well thought out and supports pupils' learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Children this year entered the reception class with skills which are average for their age, though this varies from year to year and there is evidence to show that in many previous years children entered the reception class with limited skills, especially in personal and social development and communication and language skills. Due to high quality teaching they achieve well in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>. By the time they reach Year 1, the current reception children will have attained above average levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal and social development. They are achieving the standards expected of their age in creative and physical development.

2 The previous inspection in 1997 indicated that pupils' overall attainment at the end of the infant stage in English, mathematics and science was below average. In the national assessments for seven year olds in 2001, standards in speaking and listening matched other schools in the number of pupils reaching the nationally expected level (level 2) but no pupil achieved level 3. Standards were below the national average in reading, and well below in writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, both reading and writing were well below average, and results in mathematics were very low. Initial results in 2002 indicate an improvement in reading, particularly in reaching the higher standards (level 3), but no pupil achieved this standard in writing.

3 The results in the national tests for eleven year olds in 2001 were well above the national average at both the expected standard (level 4) and the higher standard (level 5) in English, and in line with results in similar schools. This is a considerable improvement on the standards noted in the previous inspection, and indicates the progress that pupils make between ages seven and eleven. However, pupils' attainment continued to be well below the national average in mathematics and very low when compared with similar schools. In science, attainment was below national average and well below average when compared with similar schools.

4 Both boys' and girls' achievements in mathematics have been of serious concern because on average they were over a year behind the levels expected of eleven year olds from 1999 to 2001. Just over half of the pupils in Year 6 achieved the expected level in 2001 but very few achieved a higher level. Girls outperformed boys enormously last year, and whilst there is no trend of either boys or girls doing significantly better than each other, boys attainment has been declining over the past three years. It is important to recognise that there were few boys in the year group in 2001.

5 Some reasons for the low standards in national assessments in mathematics and science in recent years include:

---

#### <sup>1</sup> **FOUNDATION STAGE**

The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also include: knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development.

- pupils entered the school with limited skills in mathematics (well below average for their age);
- some classes were affected by staff absences;
- many of the pupils in the juniors joined the school after completing their infant education and sometimes one or two of their junior years in other schools;
- many of the pupils were on the special needs register and not expected to attain the national expectation.

6 It is important to recognise that the small number of pupils in each year group means that the performance of individual pupils has a significant impact upon overall results. However, standards observed in the current Year 2 class are still below average in English, mathematics and science, because a small number of pupils, mostly the more able, do not always make the best possible gains in learning because:

- they sometimes get work which is too easy for them and which they clearly already understand, before they receive suitably challenging tasks;
- some lower attaining pupils struggle because the work they are given is the same as higher attainers;
- expectations by teachers of what pupils can achieve are sometimes not high enough;
- pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to record their findings in their own ways;
- where they all have the same worksheet, lower attaining pupils often cannot complete it in time and some older or brighter pupils could achieve more;
- pupils do not improve their presentation, which is often untidy.

7 Last year pupils entered Year 1 with average skills in language, literacy and communication. The development of speaking and listening skills is given a high priority throughout the school, so that by the age of eleven standards are above national expectations. Pupils speak clearly and confidently and this is a strength of the school. Reading standards are in line with national expectations in the infants and above national expectations by the age of eleven. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional support and monitoring so that they make good progress. By the end of Year 2 standards in writing are below average and the writing books of pupils of all abilities at this stage indicate that there is a lot of unfinished work, limiting the standards that are achieved, particularly at the higher levels. However, pupils make good progress in their writing in the junior classes, so that by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. Standards of spelling are also above average. Pupils use their literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects. Handwriting is systematically taught throughout the school, with pupils given regular practice in developing a cursive style. Handwriting books indicate good standards. However, presentation of work in class books throughout the curriculum is often careless and not to such a high standard.

8 In mathematics, most pupils in the infants achieve satisfactorily in the development of understanding of number, and shape, space and measures, and make sound gains in their ability to handle data. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand place value of digits and sequence numbers to 20. However, higher attainers in Year 2 have shown that they can comfortably use numbers to 100 and are often given problems that are too easy. Because higher attainers are not achieving as well as they could, overall standards are below national expectations. Most, but not all pupils make good progress in all aspects of mathematics in the junior classes. Their work in number is particularly strong. By the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving above national expectations. However, although examples of the use of

mathematics in other subjects are evident, they are not systematically planned for and are under-represented.

9 In science, largely because of disrupted teaching in the Years 1 and 2 class, standards by the age of seven are too low, as they were in the previous report. However, standards at the end of the juniors are in line with other schools and appropriate for most pupils. Currently attainment is higher in the areas of life and living things and physical processes, with a general weakness in pupils' skills of scientific enquiry. Expectations need to be raised if all higher attaining pupils are to achieve their potential. For example, some pupils – usually, but not always, boys – need to take more care in collecting and recording their information methodically.

10 Standards are better and improving this year at age eleven in mathematics and science because:

- there are fewer pupils with special educational needs in Year 6;
- planning is usually well focused, which enables teachers to build carefully on previous learning;
- teachers ensure that they follow the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and there is good emphasis on the development of basic skills in numeracy, which is helping to improve understanding;
- teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking through investigative and experimental work in mathematics and science; this helps to develop pupils' reasoning and improve levels of confidence;
- the school analyses information gained from tests to discover strengths and weaknesses and increasingly plans and implements programmes to help overcome them;
- pupils have started to become involved in setting their own targets for their work so that they are clearer about what they are doing;
- support staff are deployed successfully to help pupils with special educational needs.

11 The school has recently achieved a Gold Arts Mark award from the Arts Council in recognition of the high standards achieved in the arts, including art and music. The photographic evidence of pupils' work throughout the school, and the artwork on display, indicate that standards are above average, and often well above. By the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven, standards in music are also above those found nationally and this is an improved picture when compared with the last inspection. Specialist teaching makes a significant contribution to the high standards in music by the end of Year 6. By the age of seven, pupils achieve the standards expected of their age in music.

12 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the last inspection because the school has worked hard to improve provision and staff training, taking advantage of national initiatives. They are now around the expected level at the ages of seven and eleven. Average standards are also reached at both the ages of seven and eleven in design and technology and history. Because there was too little evidence it was not possible to make an overall judgement of standards in geography and physical education.

13 The attainment of pupils who have special educational needs is well below national averages but these pupils make good progress because the school is committed to inclusion and has organised a strong programme of support. Traveller children also make good progress because of the support provided for them.

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

14 The previous inspection report painted a positive picture of pupils' attitudes and personal development. Behaviour in most lessons was good, although a very small number of occasions were noted when some pupils were restless or boisterous. Pupils' attitudes are now very good and behaviour is consistently good, contributing to the raising of standards.

15 Pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic, arrive on time and are almost always very interested and involved in what the school has to offer. Children in the reception class enjoy their activities and delight in telling visitors about what they are doing. They have a good awareness of the high expectations of behaviour because the teacher regularly reminds them of the class code of conduct. As a result, children know what is right and what is wrong. They have good levels of self-esteem and treat friends and adults with respect and courtesy. The activities, of which these are four examples include the delight of reception children when they heard they were going into the hall for music, the excited buzz of Year 2 pupils before working in the computer suite and the very real enthusiasm for after-school clubs and residential visits shown by pupils of all ages.

16 Behaviour is good in lessons and at other times, such as pupils' arrival and participation in assemblies and the way they play together during break times. Pupils are almost always attentive in lessons, trying hard, especially when working with an adult. They mostly work sensibly on their own. Occasionally some become distracted or slightly silly when the work is not meeting their needs or staff expectations are not clear enough. A few pupils have quite complex special needs identified in their individual education plans. Class teachers and assistants predominantly manage these successfully, although some staff require continuing support in applying the necessary range of individual strategies to meet those needs consistently.

17 There were no exclusions in the last school year and there is no evidence that bullying or racism are issues to concern pupils or parents.

18 Attendance at the school is very good and is well above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually at the beginning of the day and lessons start promptly after break and lunchtime.

19 Relationships in school amongst pupils and between adults and pupils are good. Pupils enjoy the simple responsibilities offered in class and through the school, such as ringing the bell or taking registers to the office. They offer to help each other when necessary and relationships with staff and each other are good. There are some opportunities to show initiative, for instance when choosing designs or materials in a technology project, but this is not a strong feature of the school's provision. Because of the very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils have a good understanding of the importance of spiritual belief and the way this may be represented in different faiths. They develop good foundations in understanding a range of cultural traditions as, for instance, when they visit theatrical productions and participate in the school's own dramatic presentations. The school's commitment to the arts, reflected in the winning of a national award, enables pupils to develop good expressive and creative abilities.

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



20 Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when 15 per cent of the teaching observed was unsatisfactory. During this inspection, the overall quality of teaching observed was good, ensuring that pupils make good progress and achieve well, especially in English, mathematics and music. Of 26 lessons observed, seven were very good, eleven were good and eight were satisfactory.

21 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. The teacher in the reception class has been in post for only one term and she has continued to build upon the very good start that children received from their previous teacher. She is well prepared and organised, has very good relationships with the children and manages them well. A very positive feature of her teaching is the timely interventions to speak with children and develop their vocabulary, knowledge and understanding and this was seen to good effect in play activities. The staff in the reception class have produced stimulating resources and displays which they use effectively to create and hold children's interest. Children make good progress in their personal development because the staff encourage them to help themselves.

22 The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. This class has been subject to much disruption over the past year due to staffing changes and as a result pupils have been adversely affected by the inconsistencies in teaching. The current teacher is a good teacher but she has found it difficult to assess how well the pupils are doing and consequently some of the work is not well matched to the differing abilities of pupils in the class. Higher attainers in particular are not being stretched at times. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, but there are occasions when the needs of the average attaining pupils are not well cared for.

23 The quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good. Teachers' knowledge about the subjects is good and they have implemented both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully. Pupils in many lessons are given opportunities to enter into discussions and to listen to the views of others. Because most pupils are articulate and confident, such lessons provide good learning experiences. Teachers in the juniors have placed a good emphasis on developing writing so that it now more closely matches the achievements pupils make in reading, and speaking and listening. Pupils in the juniors produce good quality written work which reflects teachers' high expectations and pupils are justifiably proud of their efforts. In the infant class pupils need more opportunities to write extended pieces of writing. Teachers challenge pupils particularly well in number work, and pupils enjoy the mental mathematics sessions at the start of the lesson. The 'rapid fire' questioning in these activities generates interest and enthusiasm and motivates pupils to make progress. Teachers set pupils individual targets and often remind them of these in day-to-day work. Mathematical skills are put to good effect in other lessons. For example, in a science lesson in the mixed Years 5 and 6 class, pupils use data-handling skills to collate and analyse pulse rate data. In a number of lessons good use of the final session rounds off the lesson and helps to reinforce teaching points and consolidate pupils' understanding. Occasionally this session is a little rushed. An area for the school to develop is the use of support staff at the start of lessons. During the teachers' whole-class presentation their contribution is sometimes limited. More consideration should be given to their role in terms of, for example, ensuring all pupils are included in the question and answer sessions. At most other times the contribution of support staff is very good indeed as they support pupils in small groups or individually to make sure that learning is consolidated. Where teaching is of a high standard, teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and this is written down and displayed on the table so that support staff and volunteer helpers are fully informed.

24 All pupils, except those in the reception class, are taught in mixed age classes and teaching is generally satisfactorily planned to suit all ability groups. However, it is clear from

the scrutiny of pupils' work that, in too many lessons, the highest attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged, and they do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly the case in the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class. Because the children are eager to learn and produce work, they are prepared to be challenged and it is essential to build on previous learning. For example, if pupils have shown they can comfortably handle numbers to 100, it is not reasonable to then have them working with numbers to 20 at a later time.

25 Teachers make effective use of good resources and educational visits to make learning interesting. The school has made good progress in developing its ICT facilities and teachers make effective use of this resource in day-to-day teaching in the classroom in some subjects. For example, pupils download information from the Internet to support their research in history lessons and they use word-processing packages to draft and redraft their writing. However, teachers recognise that they do not make sufficient use of the computers in mathematics and science.

26 Teachers have good relationships with pupils, and this is an important factor in helping to motivate them to do their best. Pupils throughout the school are managed well and teachers have high expectations for good behaviour.

27 There is early identification of special educational need, which enables teachers to address any possible issues. There are good quality individual education plans. Targets are clear and measurable. Teachers are aware of the needs of all their pupils. In lessons, pupils with special educational needs get good support from both teachers and support assistants. The careful planning of programmes of work by teachers and special educational needs support staff ensures that pupils with statements of special educational needs achieve very well. Parents and volunteer helpers also provide much valued support.

28 One child speaks English as an additional language but speaks English at the level expected for pupils of that age. No external support is necessary but the school ensures that the child is fully included in all activities. The two traveller children were absent during the inspection but receive very good support from the school and the traveller support service of the local education authority. For example, to enable the pupils to continue their progress, teachers and the support service provide a camera, exercise books and other school equipment to record their journey and events. The school has made very good efforts to fully include the pupils in the life of the school and ensures that in topic work for example, when talking about homes, travellers homes are mentioned alongside detached houses and bungalows etc.

29 A relative weakness in teaching is the quality of marking. It is often unsatisfactory. Teachers often fail to pick up sufficiently on poorly presented writing and diagrams and this detracts from the quality of some pupils' work. Where teachers assess work thoroughly, comments explain how pupils can improve their work and meet their targets. Whilst this happens occasionally, on more occasions teachers make only cursory comments and these do not help pupils to see what they have done well or how they can improve their work. Around four out of five of the parents who responded to the parents' questionnaire are satisfied with the homework given to pupils but some parents expressed concern that there is too much of it. Whilst the inspection team agree that the homework provision may be demanding for some pupils, it is clear from the documentation provided and information to parents that the school is not pressurising pupils unduly. The organisation of homework means pupils are clear about when they will receive work to do at home, and when it is due back in school.

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

30 The curriculum has improved well since the previous inspection because staff have worked hard to plan more consistently and systematically while broadening the range of experiences available to pupils. The statutory curriculum is now fully covered. Provision for ICT and geography has improved and all subjects benefit from a scheme of work sensibly adapted for the two year groups in each class. Time allocations are sufficient to cover the necessary ground, particularly where prudent links are made between subjects, for instance through the imaginative topics in the younger classes. The Foundation Curriculum for children in the reception class is very good, providing broad learning opportunities balancing the needs of the children so that virtually all can reach or exceed the learning goals for their age group.

31 The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been adopted since the previous inspection, with additional provision made for some pupils who need short-term help to boost their performance. Adequate arrangements exist for pupils to apply their literacy and number skills in other subjects, although these could be extended further, for example in history and geography, to ensure that reading and writing skills are progressively developed when they research or record their learning.

32 Planning is completed and monitored termly and weekly, ensuring that lessons are thoroughly prepared and resourced. A notable strength in the process is the detailed briefing of classroom assistants so that they are fully aware of lesson objectives and the specific needs of the pupils with whom they work. Planning is effective in ensuring coverage of the programmes of study. There are, nevertheless, some weaknesses that affect the progress made by pupils:

- planning for the reception class does not fully reflect the early years curriculum and so is less relevant than it might be;
- the planning format pays insufficient regard to meeting the different needs of pupils including the two age groups in each infant and junior class and pupils of different abilities including those with special educational needs;
- the system has become time consuming, particularly when the same information is required in the medium and short-term plans.

A review of planning to simplify what is required whilst ensuring all essential elements are covered is now needed.

33 A major strength in the curriculum is the way it is extended well beyond the statutory requirements. A good programme for personal, social and health education is regularly covered through planned circle times where pupils consider elements such as behaviour, relationships and citizenship. Policies for sex and drugs education are in place. The extra-curricular life of the school is outstanding. A wide range of popular clubs is available over the year, staff giving generously of their time, supported by a number of volunteers. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to attend, although, the school could do more to counteract potential gender stereotyping in some activities such as the cricket club being attended almost entirely by boys and art club almost entirely by girls. A good number of pupils benefit from individual instrumental tuition, although the school needs to monitor the impact when pupils miss the same class lesson each week.

34 Further extension, very much enjoyed by pupils, is provided by the well-planned residential visits available in both junior classes. Younger juniors have recently returned from York and the older class is looking forward to their time in Wales. The programme is so well-established that younger pupils have already planned where they expect to go over the next two years! Visits and visitors are a regular feature in the curriculum. Recent examples include artists-in-residence, theatre and museum visits and the regular drama events

enjoyed by parents and pupils alike. Parents rightly value the extra-curricular provision made at St Michael's.

35 Provision for the relatively high number of pupils with special educational needs is good. Needs are identified early, individual education plans establish clear targets in collaboration with parents and vital support in class is provided by well-briefed teaching assistants. The revised Code of Practice has been considered, although policy amendments and procedural changes are not yet complete. The school is strongly committed to an inclusive approach, reflected in the successful way that pupils with special needs are integrated within most lessons. Pupils with a statement of special educational need receive the support to which they are entitled. Good support from the local education authority is helping the school to fully include and provide for the needs of pupils from the travelling community.

36 The school has gone further than many in identifying and beginning to provide for gifted and talented pupils. A register has been established, a small number of pupils work with older groups for part of the day and specific talents are encouraged and celebrated. For example, an artistic pupil has attended a special Saturday class and her efforts are attractively displayed in the main entrance to encourage others to aim high.

37 Community links are good, including liaison with the church and with a local retirement home. Good arrangements are in place to ease the transfer of pupils with special educational needs into the secondary schools and a small number of other curriculum links, such as the forthcoming 'Dangerous Science' day, are in place. There is limited curriculum liaison with other local primary schools, although the use of the school building by the playgroup allows for a smoother transition when children start in the reception class.

38 The school is very successfully meeting its well-publicised aim of providing for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. This is a substantial improvement since the previous inspection, led strongly by the example and commitment of the headteacher.

39 Provision for spiritual development is very good. Daily assemblies promote a special atmosphere of quiet reflection through the use of candles and incense and the calm way pupils enter and leave listening to carefully chosen music. An unusual and powerful feature at the end of one assembly was the headteacher's thanks to the pupils for making it such a pleasant occasion. Equally, lessons are often accompanied by quiet music and staff are quick to seize opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of deeper meanings such as respect for small creatures in the reception class or the amazing changes in a human child from babyhood. The school's strength in the arts, as demonstrated by winning a major arts award, promotes spiritual growth as in the poetry lessons in the Years 1 and 2 class where they considered what special items they might place in a magic box.

40 Moral development is also very successfully promoted, witnessed by the significantly improved behaviour of pupils in lessons, at playtimes and on visits. The school has continued to give high priority to improving behaviour. The headteacher has played a prominent role in developing a successful policy in collaboration with staff, pupils and parents. The foundations for this are very well laid in the reception class where the teacher gives constant praise to the class and to individuals when they try hard and behave well. Staff spend a lot of time discussing and reinforcing the class and school rules. For example, the rules for circle time in the reception class are prominently displayed and personal and social education lessons often focus on matters of right and wrong. There is an emphasis on reinforcing good behaviour to which all pupils, including the small number with complex needs, respond well.

41 Provision for social development is good. The very careful supervision and the high expectations of staff, establish a special reflective atmosphere for assemblies and trouble-free playtimes. Positive attitudes are equally encouraged through the identification of 'superstars' who are recognised for a broad range of actions. Additionally, lunchtime supervisors provide a good range of activities for pupils who want to be more or less energetic. Each class displays an interesting photographic record of events during the year, underlining the way they have worked, played and grown together. The school is trying out a 'buddy' system and pupils from different classes work together from time to time, for example when the older pupils prepare presentations for their younger peers. The different age groups also learn to work together in extra-curricular activities, residential visits and drama productions. Some teaching emphasizes collaborative skills, such as the Years 5 and 6 design and technology project where mixed-sex teams of four pupils worked together to design, make and evaluate their own fairground rides. Similarly, the reception class successfully operates a 'talking partner' technique. However, opportunities to develop social and collaborative skills could be more explicit in the lesson plans and more opportunities created for pupils to play a role in some of the school's decision-making processes.

42 Provision for cultural development is very good and notably improved since the previous report. Regular visits and visitors present opportunities for pupils to understand elements of their own culture. There is a proper focus as a Church of England Aided school on major aspects of the Christian culture. However, the school is fully aware of its responsibilities to nurture pupils' awareness of different faiths and cultures. Simple actions such as greeting children in the reception class in a number of different languages or ensuring that books displayed in the library represent a range of cultural identity reflect the school's commitment to raising awareness of a multi-cultural, multi-faith society.

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

43 The steps taken by the school to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils are very good and are a strength of the school, as they were at the time of the last inspection. This is undoubtedly a very caring environment where the safety of pupils is given high priority in lessons and the general welfare of pupils is well catered for in the daily life of the school. The obvious care within the school is underpinned by rigorous procedures and monitoring to ensure all statutory requirements are met.

44 Child protection procedures are in place and are very good. All adults in the school have received recent training in child protection issues and procedures.

45 Educational and personal support and guidance are effective in raising pupils' achievements. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The ethos of the school establishes a clear moral framework which is known by all pupils. Every class has developed its own code of conduct based on respect and safety and these are reinforced by school-wide expectations of good behaviour. The procedures to monitor and eliminate oppressive behaviour are extensions of those which promote good behaviour in the school. Pupils are very aware of what to do should bullying take place or be suspected. Some of the pupils spoken to during the inspection say they have followed the procedures and they were effective.

46 The monitoring of the personal development of pupils is very good. Every pupil is regularly assessed against a progressive list of personal qualities. As a result of this assessment pupils are given individual and relevant personal development targets.

47 Teachers and support assistants carefully monitor and regularly assess the work of pupils with special educational needs to enable them to make good progress towards meeting precise targets on their individual education plans. The school also tracks the progress of gifted and talented pupils consistently.

48 There has been a significant improvement in the school's procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance since the previous inspection, which identified this as a key area for improvement, so that this is now a strength of the school. The headteacher has taken on the role of assessment co-ordinator, and under her leadership there are now good procedures in place to enable her to track individual pupils' progress and attainment throughout the school. All pupils are formally assessed in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics three times a year, to ensure that sufficient progress is being made. This information is used to target appropriate support for individual pupils, and all classroom assistants have been trained for this, for example in additional literacy schemes. The school undertakes other assessments at the end of the year to support the assessments made by teachers, and this information is used well to set challenging targets for the coming year, and to set learning targets for individual pupils. Currently these are paper records. The school now plans to use ICT, to make the system more manageable and efficient.

49 Detailed records are kept in each year group about pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics, and in other subjects, and these are regularly monitored, as is planning, to ensure that assessment information is being used to plan the next steps. The focus upon literacy and numeracy has meant that limited work has been undertaken on securing teachers' understanding of standards within other subjects. The development of annotated portfolios by subject co-ordinators would help to address this. The headteacher's role as co-ordinator means that she has a very clear knowledge of standards within the school and of what needs to be done to raise them further.

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

50 There is a very effective partnership between the school and the parents. Parents feel that this is a very good school and their views of the school have improved since the last inspection.

51 The parents' questionnaires completed for the inspection reveal that parents are most pleased with:

- children liking school and making good progress;
- the information that they receive about how their child is getting on;
- the teaching being good and the school expecting children to work hard and achieve their best;
- the way they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem;
- the school helping their children become mature and responsible;
- the leadership and management of the school;
- the close working relationship with parents;
- the amount of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection broadly endorses the parents' positive views of the school. A very small minority of parents does not feel that their children get the right amount of homework.

52 The inspection found behaviour in the school to be good, as are the quality and quantity of homework, and found information for parents about the progress their children are making to be good overall.

53 The impact of the involvement of parents on the work of the school is very good and parents make a very good contribution to children's learning at school and at home. The school has a significant number of parents working in school on a regular basis as volunteers in the classroom. Parents also help with extra-curricular activities, accompany pupils to swimming lessons and on school visits and raise significant funds for the school. The contribution of these volunteers is greatly valued by the school and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Parents are very supportive of school functions. Parents receive regular, detailed information about what their child is taught and how they can support this learning. This enables parents to be fully engaged in their child's learning at home. In addition, the school regularly surveys parents about aspects of school life and the results of these surveys influence the school's plans for its development.

54 The quality of information provided for parents is good overall. There is regular contact with parents through reading diaries, homework, school newsletters and two open evenings per year, as well as many regular opportunities for informal contact at the start and end of the school day. The open evening in October is built around a discussion of individual targets for pupils which are agreed between the class teacher, the pupil and their parents. This is a very good process to involve parents in the learning of their children and is a very good opportunity for parents to fully understand what is expected of their child. The school's prospectus is attractive and informative, as is the governors' annual report to parents. All parents receive an annual report on their child's progress. These reports vary in quality across the school. All reports cover all the subjects of the National Curriculum plus religious education and personal, social and health education. All report clearly on what the child can do in English and mathematics and to a lesser extent in science. Weaknesses exist in the reporting of other subjects when just the experiences the pupil has had and their attitudes to the subject are reported. Reports for the older pupils in the school do state the national curriculum level achieved by the pupil but this information is restricted to mathematics and English only and is reported under a heading of 'Targets' which is confusing. Although annual reports do contain targets for pupils these are frequently very general rather than indicating the next step needed for the pupil to make progress. Overall, there is insufficient information in the annual report for parents to know if their child is performing in line with, above or below national expectations. However, parents also receive two interim reports which focus on English, mathematics and pupils' attitudes to learning. These are very good and give very clear guidance as to how parents can support the progress of their children.

55 The school prides itself on its close involvement with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. They are fully involved in the procedures at every stage, and are kept well informed of their children's progress. Most of them attend the important annual review meetings. Parents overall are pleased with the school's approach to inclusion, its readiness to help, and with their children's progress.

56 The school has worked hard to ensure that parents of the traveller children are fully involved in their children's education. For example, stories are recorded onto tapes so that parents can share these with the children. The parents feel that the school and community have supported them well and appreciate this support.

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

57 The headteacher provides very good leadership. She ensures very clear direction for the work and the development of the school, which she accomplishes through very effective self-evaluation. She provides very influential and supportive leadership. Other staff with management responsibilities support her well. At the time of the last inspection the current headteacher had just taken up her post and was praised for providing strong and purposeful leadership. This positive feature of leadership has continued over the past four years and the school has made good improvements in many areas since the last inspection.

58 The headteacher has helped to ensure that all teaching and non-teaching staff work in partnership for the good of the school. There is a high degree of shared commitment by the staff to raise standards and a good team spirit exists among them. This creates a positive ethos, which supports the school's commitment to a very effective atmosphere for learning, good relationships and equality of opportunity for all. The results of this commitment can currently be seen in standards which are above national expectations in English and mathematics at the end of the junior stage of their education. The headteacher and staff actively encourage parental involvement in the pupils' learning and value highly their contribution. There is a strong home/school partnership. Parents make a significant contribution to the progress their children make in school.

59 The governors are very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. Governors meet regularly and have allocated responsibilities through committees and links to some subjects. They have high levels of expertise and are very well organised and thorough in their approach. They are open to new ideas and adapt quickly. This enables them to take opportunities when they arise; for example, whenever funds to improve the accommodation available, they bid for them – usually successfully. The governors are active in the life of the school, and keep themselves very well informed about what is going on. They make regular visits and report back to meetings of the governing body. They have a very clear picture of how the school performs. They think very highly of the headteacher and expect her to be fully accountable to them. Governors are instrumental in helping to formulate long-term aims and values and the school reflects these aims very well in its day-to-day life. Governors act as critical friends and fulfil their statutory responsibilities very conscientiously.

60 The school's monitoring and evaluation of its performance are very good. Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, English co-ordinator and various consultants and local authority advisory staff, has been successful in identifying areas for improvement. Staff know how high pupils' standards are and whether there are variations across groups of pupils. There is a clear picture of how well pupils are taught. Staff reflect critically on what they can do to improve learning and develop more effective ways of working. From this, appropriate priorities are set within a very well-designed school improvement plan. Subject co-ordinators have clearly identified roles and regular school reviews by staff have enabled some considerable improvement in previously identified weaknesses. In particular, the development of schemes of work has improved markedly for all subjects. This has helped to ensure that pupils can develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in a systematic way. Whilst all teachers who have subject co-ordination responsibilities complete them assiduously, some co-ordinators have not formally evaluated and monitored teaching and learning in lessons in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. However, they do monitor teacher's planning and pupils' work in these subjects.

61 There is a very close link between school development planning and performance management. The headteacher has built the review part of the performance management process into a programme of professional development to integrate the needs of individual staff and of the school. Performance management is operating effectively and the school is well placed to gain recognition for its achievements with the 'Investors in People' standard in the near future.



62 The school budgets systematically for all expenditure and is clear about the cost of its developments. The school's spending decisions relate directly to priorities within the school development plan and for the benefit of the pupils. The school has made very good use of its financial and other sources. Governors and staff have identified clear and necessary priorities for the surpluses it has accrued over the past two years. Building to provide facilities for the disabled and to improve playground and accommodation for the reception children are all suitable developments. The day-to-day financial management is very good and maintained by the very efficient secretary and financial administrator. The governing body is very well aware of the principles of best value and has incorporated them into the school's financial arrangements to ensure that it seeks the most effective solutions to its spending.

63 The school makes efficient use of its resources. There are sufficient teachers and support staff who are well trained. Most subject areas are adequately resourced. The school has made good use of all available space to provide an attractive learning environment, both inside and outdoors, enhanced by high quality displays which demonstrate and support pupils' learning. The school hall is used for a variety of purposes: assemblies, physical education and music lessons, dinners etc. and the school makes effective and efficient use of this space through careful planning. The library is well resourced and provides a calm and attractive environment. It is, however, separate from the main building and this means younger pupils have at all times to be taken by staff to use it. There is a good ICT suite next to the library, and in addition classrooms have at least two computers in them, fully networked. The previous inspection highlighted the potentially hazardous state of the playground where the surface has been penetrated and disturbed by tree roots. The school has made annual bids to the local education authority for funding to deal with this problem, and it is finally to be dealt with and the playground resurfaced during the summer break.

64 There is a clear determination throughout the school to improve and provide good quality education for all of its children. The hard work of the headteacher, staff and governors has enabled the school to make good improvement since the last inspection. However, this is an expensive school and the income and expenditure per pupil is very high when compared with all schools. Nevertheless, it currently provides satisfactory value for money and is well placed to improve further.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

65 The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. In order to sustain this good work it should now:

- (1) Raise standards of infant pupils in English, mathematics and science by:
  - clearly identifying who their highest attaining pupils are and setting appropriately challenging work for them;
  - putting particular emphasis upon extended writing to ensure more seven year olds achieve the higher levels;
  - ensuring that written work is completed and any teaching points are followed through;
  - ensuring that pupils' prior attainment is taken into account and providing extension activities where necessary to challenge higher attaining pupils in mathematics.

Paragraphs 2, 5-9, 22, 23, 78, 82, 89, 90, 96,

- (2) Ensure that planning is improved by:
  - making sure that the planning format pays more regard to meeting the different needs of pupils including the two age groups in each infant and junior class and pupils of different abilities including those with special educational needs;
  - reconsidering the planning system which has become time consuming, particularly when the same information is given in the medium and short-term plans;
  - ensuring that the planning format for the reception class fully reflects the early years curriculum so that it becomes more relevant to the needs of young children.

Paragraphs 22, 24, 32, 68, 85, 89, 90, 92, 101, 107, 119

- (3) Raise teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' work and improve the quality of marking. Consistently apply marking procedures across the school so that pupils can recognise what they are doing well and what they should do to improve their work.

Paragraphs 29, 82, 84, 92, 101, 102

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 25 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 16 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 0         | 6         | 11   | 8            | 0              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 0         | 24        | 44   | 32           | 0              | 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 four 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)      |         | 90      |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals |         | 5       |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

|   | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       |         | 2       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register |         | 32      |

#### English as an additional language

|   | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 1            |

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

|  | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 11           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 6            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|             | %   |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 3.7 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|             | %   |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 0.4 |

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.6 |
|---------------------------|-----|

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 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)

|  | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2001 |      |       | 16    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above   | Boys     |         |         |             |
|   | Girls    |         |         |             |
|   | Total    | 14      | 13      | 14          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | School   | 88 (75) | 81 (83) | 88 (92)     |
|   | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above   | Boys     |         |             |         |
|   | Girls    |         |             |         |
|   | Total    | 14      | 12          | 14      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | School   | 88 (83) | 75 (92)     | 88 (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)

|  | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | 2001 |      |       | 13    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above   | Boys     |         |             |         |
|   | Girls    |         |             |         |
|   | Total    | 10      | 7           | 11      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | School   | 77 (60) | 54 (20)     | 85 (60) |
|   | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72)     | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above   | Boys     |         |             |         |
|   | Girls    |         |             |         |
|   | Total    | 10      | 10          | 10      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | School   | 77 (70) | 77 (50)     | 77 (60) |
|   | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72)     | 82 (79) |

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

Please note, where the numbers of boys or girls are 10 or below, the cell is blanked.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 0            |
| Black – African heritage        | 1            |
| Black – other                   | 0            |
| Indian                          | 0            |
| Pakistani                       | 0            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 0            |
| White                           | 89           |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0            |

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 5    |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 18   |
| Average class size                       | 22.5 |

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

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 6     |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 65.75 |

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) |  |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   |  |
| Total number of education support staff  |  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week    |  |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult           |  |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **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)                           | 1 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

### **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.*

### **Financial information**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year                             | 2001-2002 |
|  | £         |
| Total income                               | 294267    |
| Total expenditure                          | 276510    |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 2973      |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 39953     |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 57710     |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

50%

Number of questionnaires sent out

90

Number of questionnaires returned

45

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 78             | 20            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 64             | 33            | 0                | 2                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 56             | 42            | 0                | 0                 | 2          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 33             | 49            | 9                | 4                 | 4          |
| The teaching is good.  | 71             | 29            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 53             | 38            | 9                | 0                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 73             | 24            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 67             | 31            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 47             | 49            | 4                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 71             | 27            | 0                | 0                 | 2          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 76             | 20            | 0                | 0                 | 4          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 69             | 27            | 4                | 0                 | 0          |



## **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**

66 There has been good improvement in the provision for children in the reception class since the last inspection.

67 Children enter the reception class with skills which are average for their age and they achieve well. Many of these children have attended the play group which is attached to the school and the reception teacher maintains a close link with those children who may be transferring to the school. By the time children reach Year 1, their attainment this year will be above the level normally expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal and social development.

68 Teaching was very good in almost every lesson seen in the reception class and as a result the youngest children make good gains in their learning. This is because the staff in the Foundation Stage have high expectations of what children should achieve. The teacher is constantly looking for ways to challenge children's thinking, imagination and use of vocabulary through interesting, practical and relevant activities. This creates a purposeful working atmosphere and promotes the very good concentration and learning of the children. Relationships between staff and children are very good and children thoroughly enjoy their time in school. The lesson planning shows clearly what is to be taught and learnt. However, whilst the activities are clearly in line with the work expected of the Foundation Stage children, the actual written planning is more geared to subjects of the National Curriculum and this is unsuitable for some of the youngest children who need more time to investigate, play and learn independently. However, in practice the teacher merges the different elements of the curriculum successfully into one topic, such as their mini-beast topic which covers 'living and growing'. This ensures that children know what is expected of them in lessons and their learning is very focused. The teacher has good systems for assessing children's achievements and ensures that support staff and volunteers record the children's successes or difficulties and she uses these successfully to plan the next step in their learning.

69 A strong feature of all the lessons seen is that the teacher, support staff and volunteers work together effectively as a team. They ensure that all children are included fully in the activities. For example, staff identify children with special educational needs early and give good additional support. As a result they make good progress. Teachers select specific questions to involve children with special educational needs and encourage others to listen in order to raise their confidence and self-esteem. In order to support a traveller child, the teacher involves the local authority traveller support service who helps to provide resources, guidance and a limited amount of individual teaching.

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

70 Staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development effectively and many children achieve standards which exceed the levels normally expected of their age by the start of Year 1. Staff are caring, supporting and encouraging, for instance in praising children's efforts and achievements both in their work and in behaviour. Children in the reception class have a good awareness of their class rules and know some actions, such as 'pulling her bunches' and 'telling lies' are wrong, and others such as helping others, taking turns and being kind are right. Children delight in receiving rewards for their good attitudes and behaviour. For example, the teacher will say, "Thank you for not calling out" when a child raises an arm to answer a question. Children respond very well to the teacher's high

expectations of good behaviour. They work together as friends, share equipment with each other and take increasing responsibility for resources. The teacher uses well-chosen stories such as 'The Rainbow Fish' which promote and reinforce the special values of caring and sharing. Staff set a good example for children to follow of courtesy and consideration for others by listening with genuine interest to what children have to say and participating themselves in activities. The teacher, for example, brought in photographs of herself at various stages in her life (baby, toddler, child, youth etc.) to share with the children. Children respond very well and are delighted to talk about how they care for their class goldfish, their worms, snails, ants and their plants. They are aware, in studying their mini-beasts for example, that they need to be very careful and return them to where they were found. Children show very good levels of concentration, initiative and independence for this age because the staff encourage this. Children often choose and find their own resources and they file their work away at the end of an activity. Reception children dress themselves independently after physical education lessons and settle readily into daily routines, such as registration.

### **Communication language and literacy**

71 Reception staff place a strong emphasis on developing children's speaking skills. They give children many opportunities to discuss their work individually and in pairs and to speak in a larger group. The teacher extends children's vocabulary very well through topic work, for example about mini-beasts. For example, the teacher engaged the child in a conversation about 'spirals' and suggested the child looked at a real snail to see them on a shell. Many children are extremely articulate, and explain, "...a snail has a shell for a house and to protect it." The teacher develops their conversation by involving them in the 'Chinese Restaurant' role-play area, by asking "Do you do home delivery?" Children enjoy sharing books with adults and listening to the stories that they read to them. They enjoy joining in with the bits they know from books such as 'The Gingerbread Man' and 'Three Billie Goats Gruff'. The teacher ensures children are taught effectively the basic skills, such as the knowledge of letter sounds, and around two thirds of the class know them all. Staff encourage children to use this knowledge to help them to read and write the unfamiliar words they meet. Writing is developed from the earliest days in school with opportunities for children to trace, copy and make their own early attempts at writing in role-play situations. All children can now write their own names independently and with increasing accuracy. The reception teachers build well upon the formal skills of handwriting, such as the correct formation of letters. By the end of their time in reception class higher attaining children accurately spell regular key words independently. They use their knowledge of initial sounds to write even difficult words which are phonetically plausible. For example, when writing about her feelings on losing a bear, one child wrote, "I wud feel wurid. I wud clim a tree". Some higher attainers are beginning to use a dictionary. Around half of the class are already exceeding the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and only a very small proportion on the special educational needs register will not achieve them.

### **Mathematical development**

72 In the mathematical area of learning, standards are above average. Children make good progress in developing their mathematical understanding. They sort and match objects into large and small, recognise repeating colour patterns and all children can count reliably to ten. Children recognise and can name shapes such as circle, triangle, rectangle and square confidently. Some children understand solid shapes including cylinders and prisms. The teaching of mathematical understanding is very good. In a very good lesson in the reception class, the teacher guided children to make sensible estimates, for example by asking, "How many smaller containers of water will fill a larger one?" By the end of the time in reception, all children recognise number symbols to ten and are able to count confidently using one-to-one

correspondence. Higher attainers recognise numbers to 100 and can count backwards from a high number to find out how many children are present in the class when some are absent. Children use appropriate mathematical vocabulary such as 'lighter', 'heavier', 'longer' and 'shorter'. In number songs, children recognise 'one or two less'. Children use the computer effectively to support the teaching and learning of mathematics and to consolidate their understanding of numbers and number values. Through structured water and sand play the children develop a good understanding of quantity, and successfully compare objects by size. They are beginning to develop a satisfactory sense of space and measure. For example, they measure a bear in spans and they solve problems involving money such as 5p and 2p makes 7p.

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

73 By the end of their time in the reception class, most children have a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They have closely observed plants and creatures and understand the life cycles of frogs and butterflies. Because they have creatures such as worms, ants, slugs and snails in their classroom and have planted a butterfly garden outside their classroom, they are familiar with the mini-beasts' habitats, behaviour and features. They were particularly thrilled when a bee visited their newly planted garden. The teacher astutely links the topic with interesting books such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and 'Butterfly Kiss'. They relate life cycles of creatures to how humans change. For example, they and their teacher have brought in photographs to compare how they have changed since they were babies. Children have a good knowledge of parts of their body. They know how the skeleton and bones fit together to give us shape and movement.

74 A strong feature of the very good teaching is the very pertinent questioning which encourages children to use their newly learned vocabulary and consolidates their understanding. Children are able to talk, draw and explore what they see, using a range of materials. Good attention is paid to safety issues when artefacts, objects and computers are used, enabling children to learn to handle equipment successfully and with care. Children explain what they like and dislike about their environment and describe what they see on the journey to and from school. They begin to understand the difference between old and new as they compare a selection of toys past and present. Children use construction kits to build a variety of moving objects and they are introduced to early computer skills and use the keyboard to match letters, draw pictures and play games. They have a basic understanding that some people are different and celebrate festivals such as the Chinese New Year.

### **Physical development**

75 By the end of their time in the reception class, children have developed physical skills which are at the levels expected for their age. Children play well together, sharing equipment and taking turns. Although planning to provide a suitable outside area for reception aged children is well under way, children currently do not have a separate play area and do not have sufficient access to the wheeled toys. This limits their physical development slightly. However, teachers do make use of the school hall to compensate for these limitations. Many opportunities are provided for children to cut and fold paper, to build with construction kits, to explore materials including sand and water and to use magnifying lenses. They have satisfactory control of pencils and use them successfully for writing, drawing and colouring. Most children can use scissors to cut round shapes such as butterflies and are beginning to gain confidence in cutting actions. Children enjoy outside play activities and demonstrate good skills in skipping, hopping and jumping. By the end of their time in the reception class, the majority of children can throw and catch a ball or bean bag at an expected level of skill. They run, skip and hop safely making good use of space.

76 The quality of teaching is good in this area. Teachers effectively build on the children's natural desire to explore and develop their physical skills by providing challenging and imaginative but safe activities, which encourage children to respond with increasing skill. The teacher ensures that children who are not taking part, due to injury or illness for example, can be included in the lesson and do not feel left out. Good intervention by adults provides opportunities for pupils to learn to move more imaginatively and with increasing co-ordination. For example, the teacher uses vocabulary well and children make smooth and flat shapes or shapes which are wrinkled and crumpled when performing their physical activities in the hall.

### **Creative development**

77 By the end of their time in the reception class, children achieve satisfactorily in their creative development and attain levels of understanding and skill which are appropriate for their age. The children's expression of their ideas and feelings is developed through art, music and role-play. Children are able to use good skills to create observational paintings, prints and collages of mini-beasts such as snails and butterflies. They use the term 'symmetrical' accurately to explain their folded print of a butterfly. They enjoy mixing paint and most know that they have to mix red and yellow to make orange. They take pride in the attractive display of their work. Children looked at the work of Henri Matisse and by using coloured pieces of squared paper they produced a spiral picture of a snail in the same style. Children are taught to sing a range of songs and to use 'angel voices' rather than 'shouting voices'. They use instruments enthusiastically to produce 'bell' sounds to accompany their chorus. Children demonstrate good listening skills and an awareness of others when performing. The quality of teaching is good in this area. Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities in art, craft, music, story making and imaginative play to develop children's ability to express ideas and feelings in creative ways.

## **ENGLISH**

78 The previous inspection in 1997 indicated that pupils' overall attainment at the end of both stages in English was below average. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2001, results in reading were below the national average, and those for writing well below. When compared with similar schools, both reading and writing were well below average. Initial results in 2002 indicate an improvement in reading, particularly in reaching the higher standards (level 3), but no pupil has achieved this standard in writing. Standards in speaking and listening in 2001 were in line with the average (level 2); no pupil achieved the higher standard (level 3).

79 The results in the national tests for eleven year olds in 2001 were well above the national average at the expected standard (level 4) and the higher standard (level 5). This is a considerable improvement on the standards noted in the previous inspection, and indicates the progress that pupils make between ages seven and eleven. At the time of the inspection, the results of the 2002 national tests for eleven year olds were not available. It is important to recognise, however, that the small numbers of pupils in each cohort means that the performance of individual pupils has a significant impact upon overall results.

80 The inspection findings broadly reflect this picture. Pupils enter Year 1 with language, literacy and communications skills in line with expectations. The development of speaking and listening skills is given a high priority throughout the school, so that by the age of eleven pupils' standards are above national expectations. Pupils speak clearly and confidently. They also listen carefully and attentively, both to adults and to each other. This is evident within the classroom and around the school, in talking to the inspection team about their school, for example. In a Year 5/6 design and technology lesson, pupils were able to explain to their

classmates the problems they had encountered in reviewing their fairground project, and how they had solved these, in many cases showing mature vocabulary and expression. Other pupils listened carefully, asking appropriate questions which were answered well. In a Year 1/2 English lesson pupils explored the contents of a dragon's lunchbox, and in response to teacher's careful questioning were able to explain why individual items might, or might not, be appropriate for inclusion in the box.

81 Reading standards are in line with national expectations in the infants and above national expectations by the age of eleven. Most pupils enjoy reading, and read from a range of both fiction and non-fiction texts. They are able to identify their favourite book and explain the reasons for this. A higher attaining pupil in Year 2, having read all the current Harry Potter books, said that he could not wait for the next one to be published! A Year 6 pupil currently reading 'Lord of the Rings' explained he liked adventures that focused upon creatures other than humans. The school has in place a graded reading scheme which enables pupils to make appropriate progress; pupils are knowledgeable about where they currently are within this scheme and beyond, as 'free readers'. They use a range of appropriate strategies, sounding out unfamiliar words, using picture clues and context to make sense of what they are reading. They are able to talk about the story plot and characters and predict what might happen next. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 were able to talk about the characters' motivation in acting as they did. Pupils read with increasing fluency, expression and understanding so that by the age of eleven standards are good. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional support and monitoring so that they make good progress. Reading records show that parents of younger pupils in particular are supportive of the school's homework policy in relation to reading, although for older pupils there is less detail, often written by the pupil. Library and information skills are systematically taught throughout the school, so that by eleven most pupils are confident in using the library's classification system to find information.

82 Pupils learn to write for a range of purposes throughout the school, including stories, poems, reviews and factual accounts, in English and in other subjects. By the end of Year 2 average attaining pupils show an understanding of the structure of narrative writing, and demonstrate an increasing consistency in using full stops and capital letters accurately. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to use speech marks and other punctuation, and using complex sentences with increasing confidence. However, the writing books of pupils of all abilities at this stage indicate that there is a lot of unfinished work, limiting the standards that are achieved, particularly at the higher levels. Pupils make good progress in their writing in the junior classes so that by the end of Year 6 standards are good. Fluency of writing is developed through the use of similes, metaphors and complex sentences. In stories there is a greater depth of characterisation, and opinions are well argued and expressed, in book reviews for example. There is accuracy in using speech marks and associated conventions; the majority of pupils use paragraphs accurately. Standards of spelling throughout the school are good, with evidence of pupils using phonic strategies to tackle unknown words. Pupils also increasingly develop strategies to look up and learn spellings, through word lists and using dictionaries. Handwriting is systematically taught throughout the school, with pupils given regular practice in developing a cursive style. Handwriting books indicate good standards. However, presentation of work in class books throughout the curriculum is often careless and not to such a high standard. Pupils use ICT to draft and redraft their work, and to create class anthologies of their work.

83 Pupils' response to English is good throughout the school. They are attentive, interested and generally work well throughout lessons. They respond well to known routines, and their independent working skills are good overall, although on occasions they need prompting to work in greater depth. Collaborative work is a strong feature of the subject,

supporting each other in group work, and making evaluative comments to help improve each other's work.

84 Three lessons were observed during the inspection period. The quality of teaching is good overall, ensuring that pupils make good progress during Key Stage 2 (ages seven to eleven). The staffing changes during the year in Years 1 and 2 have resulted in more limited progress for these pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of the literacy strategy and plan lessons well to ensure good pace. Pupils understand very clearly what they will learn during the lesson, and are reminded of this at the end of the lesson. A range of activities sustains pupils' interest. However, putting the guided reading element immediately following the literacy hour in Year 5/6 resulted in reduced concentration by pupils towards the end. In the most effective lessons, teachers provide expert modelling of reading, as in the reading of 'The Cat That Walked by Himself'. Classroom assistants are very effectively used to support individual pupils and groups, and are well trained to support pupils, though not during the shared text activity. In all classes pupils are organised into ability groups, but extension activities are not always planned to challenge higher attaining pupils. Pupils' work is marked regularly and effective feedback provided where marking is linked to pupils' individual targets. There is, though, a lack of consistency in the quality of feedback so that pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve. Assessment information is recorded on planning to ensure that this information feeds into the next steps. Homework is set regularly and extends pupils' learning within the classroom.

85 The management of the subject is good, and has been instrumental in ensuring significant improvement since the last inspection, particularly in relation to the standards achieved by eleven year olds. Test and other assessment outcomes are analysed to identify areas for development, and challenging annual targets set for each year group, underpinned by curricular and learning targets for pupils. All aspects of the subject are thoroughly monitored to ensure quality teaching and pupils' progress, though the marking needs to be better and children need more guidance on how they can improve. Links to individual targets need to be monitored more closely. All staff, including classroom assistants, have been fully trained, and additional support strategies have ensured pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The subject action plan clearly identifies the school's priorities in relation to the subject: to raise standards of writing, with particular emphasis upon extended writing to ensure more seven year olds achieve the higher levels; to review the current schemes of work to integrate further the Foundation Stage into this; and, to ensure that provision is fully inclusive.

86 A range of activities is provided to enrich the curriculum and to raise pupils' interest and enthusiasm. These include theatre trips, book weeks and book fairs, school productions, a poet in residence and a visiting storyteller, and annual published anthologies. Displays are used to stimulate pupils' interest in language. Dual language books were on display in the library during the inspection, inviting pupils to have a go at reading them. The 'Magic Box' anthology produced by younger pupils was linked to a display of the class teacher's chosen items. The subject makes a very good contribution to the ethos of the school, and to pupils' personal development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87 In the 2001 national tests for seven year olds, pupils' attainment was well below the national average and very low when compared with similar schools. However, when the school has small year groups, the standards do fluctuate enormously. This does not mean to say the standards are acceptable and the school recognised a weakness in the teaching of mathematics.

88 Standards in mathematics are much higher this year because the year group has fewer pupils on the special educational needs register and a larger proportion of higher attaining pupils. Standards are above national expectations and almost half of the Year 6 cohort are expected to achieve a higher than average level 5 in the 2002 national tests.

89 Standards by the age of seven are still below average. A small number of pupils, mostly the more able in Year 2, and the average attaining pupils in the junior school, where pupils are grouped by ability, do not always make the best possible gains in learning because:

- they sometimes get work which is too easy for them and which they clearly already understand, before they receive suitably challenging tasks;
- some lower attaining pupils struggle because the work they are given is the same as higher attainers;
- expectations by teachers of what pupils can achieve are sometimes not high enough;
- teachers sometimes overuse work sheets as a resource for learning, such as in Year 2. This reduces pupils' motivation and involvement, and sometimes does not challenge them.

90 Most pupils in the infants achieve satisfactorily in the development of understanding of number, and shape, space and measures, and make sound gains in learning in their ability to handle data. By the end of Year 2, pupils recognise and use mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes. They solve simple number problems using mental calculation, understand place value of digits and sequence numbers to 20. However, higher attainers in Year 2 have shown that they can comfortably use numbers to 100 and are often given problems that are too easy. Pupils in Year 2 communicate and extract findings of collected information in tables and block graphs, although they are less successful in interpreting the information. Most, but not all, pupils make good progress in all aspects of mathematics in the junior classes. By the end of Year 6, pupils start to use their understanding of place value to multiply and divide whole numbers and decimal numbers. They know and work out the mean, median and mode from a given list of numbers and can work out the probability of an event happening on a 0 – 1 scale. In a very good display of mental agility, pupils in Years 5 and 6 rapidly explained what factors and prime numbers were, giving examples, and reeled off the square numbers of 15, 25, 35 etc. as 225, 625, 1225. Pupils construct and interpret simple line graphs. They measure angles, and correctly identify acute, obtuse and reflex angles.

91 Throughout the school investigative approaches receive good emphasis in most years. This is an improvement on the last inspection. These approaches help to develop pupils' ability to think and solve problems for themselves. For example, older pupils develop their own strategies for solving problems and confidently communicate them. Teachers use 'real-life' mathematics well so that pupils appreciate that numbers are all around us in our everyday lives, and generate increased interest and enjoyment. However, although examples of the use of mathematics in other subjects are evident, they are not systematically planned for and are under-represented.

92 Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. However, in Years 3 to 6, it is consistently good and sometimes very good. This represents an improvement on the last inspection, where some teaching was unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good, teachers' high

expectations result in challenging work, and pupils put more effort into getting it right. Teachers have very clear objectives for what they want pupils to learn. They explain to pupils what they are going to learn. Purposeful questioning develops clear understanding of new knowledge. These good features were observed in a lesson on positive and negative numbers in the Years 3 and 4 class. They choose appropriate resources and use them well. Lower attainers in the Years 1 and 2 class particularly enjoyed their data-handling exercise of making a bar chart to show how many different coloured sweets are in a tube. High levels of enthusiasm from the teacher, good relationships and a brisk pace help to keep pupils motivated and involved. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge but in Years 1 and 2 the teacher does not always challenge higher attainers with level 3 work. The main reason for this is the teacher is new to the class and does not know how well they have achieved this year. This class has been subjected to a number of teachers and their progress has been inconsistent. With stability in staffing there is now much potential for improvement in Year 2 standards in the future. A weaker feature of mathematics teaching is that some teachers do not sufficiently encourage pupils to take pride in their work through neat, careful presentation. Marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to move forward in their understanding. Some teachers do not give sufficient time during the final section of the lesson to considering problems encountered by pupils. Teachers are increasingly using ICT to support learning in mathematics but this is recognised as an area to develop further.

93 Teachers analyse the test papers well. They use their knowledge of what pupils find difficult in the papers to strengthen the teaching in those aspects in lesson planning. It also helps them identify pupils who need extra help in 'booster group' lessons. In these, lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and traveller children whose education has been disrupted receive additional teaching which enables them to make significant progress. The teachers in these groups build up in their pupils a strong positive image of themselves as confident learners, where everyone feels they can succeed. Consequently pupils' behaviour in lessons and in groups is good. They are willing to persevere and concentrate well.

94 The subject is well led and there are clear plans for its continued development. The regular monitoring of teaching and learning, and the good arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, are helping to raise standards over time.

## **SCIENCE**

95 The small year groups at St Michael's mean that test results in any one year do not give a reliable picture of how standards compare with other schools. One pupil can make a significant statistical difference. Over time, the results for eleven year olds have generally been below average and well below the levels achieved in schools with a similarly low free school meal entitlement. This is similar to the picture reported in the last inspection, reflecting the relatively high number of pupils with special educational needs and indicating that results have not improved to a significant degree. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level has risen, but relatively few pupils in the past have achieved the higher levels. Comparison of last year's Year 6 results with the teacher assessments four years earlier, in Year 2, shows satisfactory progress but, again, because of the turnover of pupils in that time the data is not comparing like with like.

96 Standards now at the end of the juniors are in line with other schools and appropriate for most pupils. Largely because of disrupted teaching in the Year 1/2 class, standards by the age of seven are below average and too low, as they were in the previous report. Currently, attainment is higher in the areas of life and living things and physical processes, with a general weakness in pupils' skills of scientific enquiry. Expectations need to be raised if all



higher attaining pupils are to achieve their potential. For example, some pupils – usually, but not always, boys – need to take more care in collecting and recording their information methodically. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress with the support of classroom assistants.

97 By the age of seven, pupils can set up a simple electrical circuit and understand what happens when things are heated up or cooled down. Most have a good understanding of what plants and animals need if they are to thrive. A real strength of this work is the way pupils are taught to care for living things, helping them understand their moral responsibilities towards life on the planet. They can confidently and accurately name the main parts of plants and animals. Most pupils can observe carefully and compare properties such as the best material to make an umbrella for Barnaby Bear. They are less experienced in putting forward ideas about how to collect data to answer scientific questions and most have little understanding of how to make a test fair.

98 By the age of eleven, pupils have covered a balance of relevant areas including the earth in space, soil investigations and the human body. As in the infant class, some good opportunities are offered to link science with other areas of learning, such as making a musical instrument in the younger junior class or measuring pulse rate in a physical education lesson in the oldest class in order to investigate the effect of exercise on the heart. Pupils have begun to make predictions based on scientific understanding and can classify, for example, articles that are transparent or translucent. Most have a satisfactory understanding of fair testing, although generally find it difficult to organise an investigation for themselves because they have limited opportunity.

99 Very little direct teaching was seen during the inspection because of the school timetable. However, from the evidence available, teaching and learning are satisfactory in the juniors. Some weaknesses are evident in infant pupils' work over the last year, but there is insufficient first hand evidence to make an overall judgement.

100 Teachers make very good use of visits, visitors and special events to raise the profile of the subject and to stimulate pupils' learning. For example, all junior pupils have visited the science museum in London and attended a local workshop. The older pupils have prepared good quality presentations for other classes and a visit to an activity with the intriguing title 'Dangerous Science' is planned to the secondary school. These experiences add to pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. The scheme of work, introduced since the previous inspection, has improved balance and continuity. Although not yet impacting fully on standards, recent initiatives are beginning to increase opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for carrying out their own experiments. Teaching in the Year 5/6 class includes a good range of methods, helping pupils learn and remember important scientific facts and vocabulary. These are supporting their performance in national tests. Throughout the school, high quality displays of finished work contribute to the raising of standards.

101 Teaching in the infant and younger junior classes is still too dependent on all pupils filling in the same worksheets, a fault noted in the last inspection. There are three consequences:

- pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to record their findings in their own ways;
- where they all have the same worksheet, lower attaining pupils often cannot complete it in time and some older or brighter pupils could achieve more;
- pupils do not improve their presentation which is often untidy.

102 Thus in planning, there is insufficient focus on what the two age groups in each class will be doing and how the needs of different ability groups, including pupils with special educational needs, will be met. Marking is unsatisfactory. Teachers rarely comment on the scientific learning or the lesson objectives so that pupils are not getting the necessary feedback about what they have achieved and what they need to do next.

103 The subject has not been a recent school priority but the subject manager has made good use of the monitoring information available through looking at planning, collecting books and examining the test results. A striking and effective feature is the comments he writes in books from other classes. The pupils appreciate these, providing, as they do, a good model of how marking could improve generally. A satisfactory assessment system is in place and the subject manager has rightly identified the need for staff now to work together to agree the different levels of work and the school's expectations and targets for each year group. There has been insufficient opportunity to observe teaching in order to identify areas for development. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual development, for instance through the appreciation of the living world.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104 Three lessons or part lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence for judgements was also gathered through discussions with the co-ordinator, a scrutiny of schemes of work including medium-term planning, pupils' portfolios and sketchbooks, and art displays around the school. The school has recently achieved a Gold Arts Mark award from the Arts Council in recognition of the high standards achieved in the arts, including art. The photographic evidence of pupils' work throughout the school, and the artwork on display indicate that standards are above average, and often well above average. Standards of work seen in lessons, and in pupils' portfolios and sketchbooks, are at least in line with expectations, and sometimes above average. Evidence shows that pupils are given the opportunity to work in a range of materials, and to develop their understanding of the effects of colour, tone and texture, different dimensions, and their control of tools and techniques. They are introduced to the work of artists such as Monet, Picasso and Cézanne in practising the development of their own techniques.

105 A range of art activities was seen during the inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were experimenting with different tools and techniques, applying their designs to clay through imprints and modelling. The dragon models indicate that most pupils had carefully observed features such as scales, claws and nostrils, and used appropriate tools to capture these features on their model. In the plenary session, a number of pupils were able to evaluate which tools had worked best, and why. In Years 3 and 4 pupils were working on two tasks: one focusing upon symmetrical drawing from a given picture, the other giving practice in drawing and ink management skills through overprinting a second colour on an observational drawing made on a polystyrene tile. Pupils' work and their explanations show an understanding of the effect of deepening lines on paint absorption, and how this will result in two-colour print. Those pupils observed in printing were able, with supervision, to produce good quality prints. One pupil had reversed his drawing of the school on his tile so that, when printed, it showed correct positioning.

106 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were making individual collages, using materials they have selected to achieve the required textures and features. These developed from initial plans made in their sketchbooks. One group of pupils was introduced to the ideas of artist Andy Galsworthy in working only with natural materials, and gathered their own natural materials for their collage. Pupils were able to discuss the effects they were trying to achieve. One pupil had chosen shimmery green/blue paper to create a calm, water effect; another talked of

the contrast between the hot red and yellow colours of a volcano against the dark blue and black of the sky. Many pupils modified their original plans as they worked with their chosen materials, which sometimes proved difficult to manipulate on paper.

107 The quality of teaching overall is good, and sometimes very good. The key features that contribute to this are that pupils are given an element of choice in their work and resources are well organised and appropriate. A high proportion of the lesson is given to pupil activity, sustaining their interest and enthusiasm. Effective questioning and guidance enable pupils to reflect upon their work and how to improve it. Classrooms assistants are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs appropriately. Work is assessed at the end of each topic, and informal records made during these topics. However, in the lessons observed there was little evidence of work being planned to extend more able pupils.

108 The appropriately qualified subject co-ordinator, who also has responsibility for the arts, provides very good leadership. The recent, very detailed audit she has undertaken in applying for the Gold Arts Mark award has enabled her to monitor the subject thoroughly. This is in addition to the termly monitoring she undertakes of planning, of pupils' work and of displays. Portfolios of work and photographic evidence provide further evidence about standards and progress. This now needs to be annotated to provide clear examples for staff.

109 A key strength of the subject is the contribution it makes to pupils' personal development through enhanced curriculum activities. These include a weekly art club, an annual arts week, art gallery activities and whole-school projects such as the millennium wall hanging to which all pupils contributed. Recently there has been an artist in school and an outcome his work has been the production of a sculpture of the school. Pupils have been able to witness the stages involved in its creation. A Year 5 pupil has been able to attend a master class, and her work is displayed in the entrance hall of the school. In addition, art displays around the school are used to emphasise cross-curricular links such as the pond project, and brass rubbings arising from the school visit to York. Pupils' enjoyment of this subject is clearly demonstrated in the art-rich environment which the school provides.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110 Standards by the ages of seven and eleven are in line with the expectations for their age and similar to those found in most schools. Pupils are achieving appropriately in lessons and over time in all aspects of design and technology. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection although, because staff confidence has improved through the adoption of a well-founded scheme of work, the balance of the work is better. Standards in designing and evaluating are generally more secure than some aspects of making such as the stitching skills shown by some Year 2 pupils or the accuracy of measuring and cutting needed to make an efficient working model of a fairground ride. This is because in the past the skills have not been taught systematically enough. No evidence was available of standards in food technology, but it is regularly included in the well-balanced programme of work.

111 By the age of seven pupils have learned a number of techniques to join paper or card, applying these to move the arms and legs of a pre-printed clown. In a project to make a hand puppet, the teacher wisely included some lessons to learn and practise stitching techniques which many pupils found difficult. Pupils can consider alternatives when coming up with their own ideas, because the teaching includes imaginative methods for pupils to examine different professional versions of the articles they will make themselves. Most seven year olds can comment on their work, identifying features they like and do not like and to a lesser extent how they could improve them.

112 By the age of eleven pupils can produce quite detailed designs. Although not generally drawn to accurate scale they sometimes show construction details such as the plan for a Year 3/4 money container showing the side panels that would allow the container to expand. In this class pupils learned about pneumatic power to bring movement into a range of models. Standards for making and decorating are around average. Weaknesses reflect earlier gaps in the curriculum and the relatively infrequent opportunities pupils have to develop their making skills. Many pupils show maturity in objectively evaluating their work as in a Year 5/6 lesson where teams reflected on their models, identifying the causes of any difficulties and how they might solve the problems another time. It was clear from their response that they had very much enjoyed the project and had sustained concentration over a period of time. Few evaluations explicitly compare the finished product with the original design brief.

113 The teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, with some good features in all classes. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge, supported by the scheme of work. All stages in the designing and making process are covered, with a particular strength in enabling pupils to develop their own design solutions. As a result pupils show creativity and originality in their ideas. Some teaching encourages pupils to work together, promoting their social development well. In the infant class the subject is usually taught intensively over a short period so that time is used effectively and young pupils do not lose interest. Much of the teaching in the junior classes is open ended and practical so that pupils learn to make decisions at their own level. Generally, however, the planning does not identify the needs of different groups of pupils clearly enough. Relationships and classroom management are good so that pupils work safely and sensibly, taking pride in the finished products. All teachers include the teaching of specific skills at appropriate times.

114 Whilst the subject has not been a key priority, management is sound and developments well judged. The subject manager has little time to monitor or lead improvements across the school, but she examines planning to ensure coverage and, through the collection of work, photographs and looking at displays, has a sound understanding of the standards being achieved. Funding has been allocated to enable some training, linked to the scheme of work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

115 In the last inspection standards in geography were too low primarily because the scheme of work was inadequate. The school has now implemented a well-balanced programme which teachers follow, although there is currently no subject manager to oversee the work and to support staff. Because of the timetable, very little direct teaching of geography was seen and no overall judgement about standards or teaching can be made.

116 In the infant class, pupils gain an understanding of parts of the world by following the travels of Barnaby Bear. Many can relate this to their own holidays, for example understanding different forms of transport. Local geography has introduced pupils to the village and to a nearby open air museum. As in the older classes there is a very strong emphasis on pupils using visits to stimulate their learning and introduce fieldwork skills.

117 The juniors use their residential visits to York and Wales to develop greater understanding of different localities. Thus the Year 3/4 pupils learn to read maps and use keys and compass directions to find or record important features such as the York city walls. Because they have actually spent time there, many were excited to rediscover places they had seen. The visits are extremely popular and benefit the pupils in many important ways.

The younger juniors have also developed some understanding of life in Africa, partly through looking at a good range of artefacts, and have researched into different countries.

118 A detailed study by Year 5/6 pupils into coastal geography has developed understanding into geographical processes such as coastal erosion and the use of maps to different scales. An effective feature in this class is the opportunity for pupils to prepare and deliver reports to the rest of the class about their research – for instance into mountain ranges – giving purpose to the collection and organisation of geographical information. Greater use could be made of the Internet to gather data. Thus, while most pupils are reaching the expected level by Year 6, very few are moving beyond that.

119 Teaching is generally organised into units of work that are studied for several weeks. In the oldest class the resulting folders are usefully completed with a contents page and most Year 5/6 pupils show care in presenting their work. Pupils started their study of Africa in the younger junior class by recording what they already knew about the continent. This gave valuable feedback to the teacher to help focus subsequent lessons. Too often, all pupils in the class are expected to complete identical work, resulting in a lack of challenge for some and insufficient focus on the development of key geographical skills year on year.

## **HISTORY**

120 The school plans for work in history to alternate with that in geography. As a result, no teaching of history was seen during the inspection. Judgements are based primarily upon scrutiny of the scheme of work, scrutiny of pupils' work, and discussions with pupils. There is currently no co-ordinator with responsibility for managing the subject.

121 Standards overall are in line with national expectations. In the previous inspection, standards for seven year olds were judged to be below average, and those for eleven year olds to be average. This indicates an improvement in standards.

122 Pupils aged seven have an understanding of change over time. For example, they are able to identify the main features of a Victorian kitchen, and to describe the differences between this and their own kitchens. In talking about toys, they were able to identify old or new toys by the different materials used. Their written work on the Great Fire of London shows a sound understanding of cause and consequence of events. Their developing sense of chronology is shown through their ordering of dwellings into an order of time. In discussions, pupils are able to explain that a museum is where we can learn about the past. This links to the visit they have made to a local museum.

123 As pupils progress through the school their knowledge and understanding of history develop. In Year 3 pupils use the Internet to research information on a given topic. The best work shows pupils' discrimination in selecting information for relevance and understanding. While the range and quality of written work in exercise books is limited, pupils' best work is demonstrated in the project work they have undertaken individually. In these they write at length, generally to a high standard. In Years 3 and 4, for example, a project on life in Britain during the Second World War had led some pupils to interview great-grandparents about their experiences of being evacuated, or in the armed forces, and to write personal accounts of what they had learnt. Other projects included selected examples of primary and secondary sources, and commentary on what these tell us about the past. One pupil was able to talk about bias in relation to government figures about casualties. Year 6 project work on the Tudors demonstrates a deepening understanding of the impact of events upon subsequent life – the Battle of Bosworth being an example. Pupils explore the role of archaeology in

learning about the past in their work on the Indus Valley, and the importance of primary evidence in their work on the Mary Rose.

124 Visits are used to bring the subject alive to pupils. In addition to the visit to the toy museum by younger pupils, there have been visits to the Jorvik Museum in York, and to Hatfield House. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through the range of topics taught, and pupils' reflections upon their impact. Discussions with pupils indicate that they enjoy the subject.

125 Schemes of work are in place. These, plus the range of pupils' work seen, indicate that pupils are making satisfactory progress. However, the lack of leadership in history makes it difficult to raise standards further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

126 Standards reported in the last inspection were too low because pupils were not covering the necessary programme of work and some staff lacked expertise and confidence to teach the subject, which was given a relatively low status. The school has worked hard since then to improve provision and staff training, taking advantage of national initiatives. Consequently, standards have risen and are now around those expected at the ages of seven and eleven. They are higher in the junior classes where provision has been more consistent. Specialist teaching, combined with the growing confidence of class teachers, is enabling the pupils to operate a good range of computer programs. By the end of Year 6 many reach above average standards in word processing and in using the keyboard or mouse.

127 By the age of seven most pupils can input simple text, using the keyboard to change between upper and lower case letters or to start a new line. With support they can change fonts and save or print their work. Almost all can use a drawing programme and have begun to learn how to find things out from the Internet. They have sound experience of control technology.

128 By the end of Year 6 pupils can search the Internet to locate specific information, for example to research a history topic. They can input data to make graphs. Their word-processing skills have developed well to include different formats such as lists and quiz sheets where they choose the layout and effects with discrimination. Higher attaining pupils can complete very competent written work directly onto the computer screen. They have experience of using a digital camera, but less opportunity to develop control technology, mainly because resources are limited. However, most pupils have a secure understanding of the significance of ICT in everyday life and achieve satisfactory standards that are significantly higher than reported in the previous inspection.

129 Teaching and learning are satisfactory in both the infants and the juniors. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is a blend of specialist direct teaching, using the recently completed computer suite, and some cross-curricular work, although this is less well developed. Teachers' subject knowledge is now sound overall, some class teachers having not yet completed the training linked to the national scheme to improve ICT in schools. Direct teaching is best when the teacher's good subject knowledge is combined with perceptive support for individual pupils and high expectations.

130 Pupils are very enthusiastic and interested in this area of school life. The best teaching draws on these positive attitudes so that pupils follow directions sensibly and show independence, such as correcting their own work without being asked. Direct teaching is less

successful when time constraints result in all pupils having to follow a set of instructions with insufficient time to consolidate or practise what they have learned. The computer suite is best suited to half-classes and the good staffing ratio for ICT is used effectively by arranging the teaching in individual year groups.

131 Some good examples were seen of ICT supporting other subjects. For instance, writing is often enlivened by the opportunity to develop a word-processed version. Similarly, research for a history topic is extended when pupils download information from the Internet. In other subjects such as mathematics and science, teachers are not planning sufficient opportunities for pupils to use the computer as a learning tool. Good provision is made for some pupils to explore the computer further in a weekly after-school club.

132 The subject has been given appropriate priority in recent development work with both the subject manager and the headteacher helping to lead and monitor developments. There has been insufficient opportunity to observe teaching or to analyse pupil attainment in order to identify strengths and weaknesses, although planning is monitored well and useful class portfolios are being put together, showing the range covered in the course of the year. The subject manager recognises the need to develop these to include examples of the different levels expected within each year group. She also plans to check the need for any additional training when the nationally funded programme is completed.

## **MUSIC**

133 By the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven, standards in music are above those found nationally and this is an improved picture when compared with the last inspection. By the age of seven, pupils achieve the standards expected of their age. Pupils of all abilities are given a range of good opportunities to develop an interest in and an enjoyment of the subject. Those who have special educational needs and pupils who are recognised as gifted and talented receive the school's full support.

134 Pupils are generally highly motivated, although a small number of Years 5 and 6 boys are less interested. On the evidence of the few lessons observed during the inspection, overall progress is good. For a significantly high number of pupils (approximately 30 per cent of the school), additional learning through peripatetic music tuition and from lessons outside school greatly enhances the achievements they make. The school ensures that poverty is no barrier to learning by having systems to ensure lessons can be afforded by all pupils. Teaching by the part-time music specialist is good overall and at times it is very good. Her expertise is fully utilised in teaching the subject throughout the school. Her skill and enthusiasm were seen in a good lesson for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 where pupils compared two versions of the song 'Somewhere over the Rainbow'. Pupils listened attentively to a 'traditional' rendition of the song and the moving version by Eva Cassidy. This gave pupils an opportunity to listen to and appraise music, giving reasons for their likes and dislikes and expressing the feelings and emotions that the music stirred within them. The teacher's skilful questioning and prompting helped pupils to evaluate their ideas and explore these through their own performance as they sang the song. A further positive feature of the teaching is the development of pupils' singing skills. Pupils are taught from an early age to fill their lungs and control their breathing correctly in order to produce a good sound. Children are confident and tuneful singers and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding of pitch, pulse and rhythm to produce a pleasant sound. A talented pianist, who is a grandparent of a pupil at the school, is a much valued visitor and accompanist for singing sessions.

135 Assemblies and lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to listen to a range of music from different traditions and cultures. Pupils have time to reflect on what they are

listening to and to express their ideas and feelings. This happened to good effect in the Years 3 and 4 class when pupils listened to the music of Rimsky-Korsakov's 'Sheherazade'. The 'stormy sea' music inspired pupils to create textured pictures which represented the mood created. Assemblies, carol concerts and other performances offer times for pupils to perform to their parents and peers. Pupils develop a sense of teamwork through performing in ensembles and concerts. The school has successful choir, recorder and violin groups and a number of children are learning to play the piano. Pupils and parents alike are eagerly looking forward to a production of 'The Wizard of Oz' at the end of term. Pupils also experience live music and musical events from outside agencies. For example, children and staff were thrilled to attend a day course of Javanese Gamelan music, and a Steel Pan workshop and some pupils attended the local authority singing workshop. Music plays a valuable role in the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development and the school's achievements have been recognised in the Gold Arts Mark award.

136 The music co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and has worked hard since the last inspection to complete and implement a music policy and scheme of work. This is to be reviewed in the next academic year to cover matters such as the Foundation Stage, inclusion and assessment. Whilst assessment is satisfactory, teachers do not record musical achievement in a way which can inform future planning. Overall, the school has good resources for music and is grateful for the generosity of the Friends Association in providing instruments and furnishing a music teaching area in the school hall.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

137 Very little evidence was available due to the timing of the inspection and it is not possible to assess how well the school has improved since the last inspection. Neither is it possible to judge the overall standard and the quality of teaching since only one athletics lesson was observed. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented, are encouraged to participate in all aspects of physical education and make good progress. Pupils enjoy games, dance, gymnastics and athletics lessons. Pupils throughout the school also have swimming lessons on a termly rota. Every pupil in Year 6 can swim 25 metres and this is the normal situation for pupils aged eleven at this school. Junior pupils also receive regular lacrosse coaching. Pupils in the juniors also have the opportunity to take part in more adventurous outdoor pursuits and team building activities when they make their residential visit to Cuffley Camp.

138 In the only lesson observed during the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 improved their sprinting techniques. The teacher has secure subject knowledge and he and the support staff set a good example by being changed for the activities. The lesson included a sound warm-up, the development of techniques including a crouched start with fingers outstretched and a number of sprints to improve performance. Pupils also used their numeracy skills to time the sprints with stop watches. Whilst the lesson was satisfactory, it could have been improved by more demonstration and discussion so that pupils could appraise each other and make suggestions about how to improve. In this lesson pupils' behaviour was satisfactory but one or two boys in particular were not always paying attention and chatting. The teacher dealt with these instances firmly and fairly.

139 A good range of extra-curricular activities, many involving parents and voluntary helpers, is well attended. These include football, cricket, rugby, rounders and cross-country running and are open to boys and girls. Some clubs are so popular that there is a waiting list and pupils have to take turns. The subject co-ordinator has little opportunity to monitor teaching and use of assessment is limited though adequate. The subject plays a satisfactory role in promoting social development through its encouragement of teamwork and the annual



sports day in which all pupils take part. Local culture is further acknowledged as pupils participate in the Maypole dancing festival.