

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **Our Lady's RC Primary School**

Fenton, Stoke on Trent.

LEA area: Stoke

Unique reference number: 124321

Headteacher: Mr J Chadburn

Reporting inspector: Mr M Carter  
20714

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> July 2000

Inspection number: 194425

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior and Infant with nursery class
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Our Lady's RC Primary School Watkin Street Fenton Stoke on Trent
Postcode:	S4 4NP
Telephone number:	01782 235385
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Jones
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> December 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M Carter	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
		History	How high are standards?
		Areas of learning for children under five	What should the school do to improve further?
			How well are pupils taught?
Mr W Twiss	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs P Underwood	Team inspector	English	Equal opportunities
		Art	
		Geography	
		Music	
		Physical education	
Mr J Iles	Team inspector	Science	Special educational needs
		Information technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
		Design and technology	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in an urban area of Fenton, part of the city of Stoke on Trent. It is a Roman Catholic primary school with a full-time nursery class and has 239 pupils on roll in all. About half come from Catholic families and there is some pressure on the available places. Few come from ethnic minority backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. Pupils enter the Nursery class in the Autumn before they are four, when the attainment of most is a little below average. They enter the reception class in the Autumn before they are five and a baseline assessment indicates that attainment is slightly above average. Thirty-five pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is broadly in line with the national average. Socio-economic indicators for the area are below the national average. Seventy-one pupils have special educational need and this is slightly higher than average. There is a smaller than usual number of pupils with statements of special educational need.

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

This is an improving school. Following a number of staffing changes and some low results in tests, standards are now rising. There is a sound will to improve and a number of strategies have been introduced by the headteacher and are helping. The pupils' good attitudes also support effective learning and the present standards are generally average at the top of the school. However, while teaching is satisfactory overall, there remains too much variation in its quality. Management roles so far are insufficiently rigorous in evaluation. The governors are keen to see further improvements and they help to plan the school's finances accordingly. The cost per pupil is slightly higher than average but the school offers satisfactory value for money.

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

- The pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are good and positively affect their progress.
- Improvements over the last year, especially in standards in Key Stage 2 and some management initiatives.
- The provision made for pupils with special educational needs and their progress.
- The provision made for pupils under five and their progress.
- The way in which the pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is fostered.

#### **What could be improved**

- Achievement in both key stages in English, mathematics and science and especially in writing at Key Stage 1.
- Consistency in the quality of teaching.
- The regularity, rigour and effectiveness of monitoring.
- The role of assessment and target setting in promoting well-matched learning, especially for higher-attaining pupils.

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

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

The school was last inspected in December 1996. At that time standards were generally higher than at present. The school has undergone a number of serious staffing difficulties, including a period without a permanent headteacher. These factors have limited the school's ability to maintain standards. However, the school's performance is now rising and there are a good number of strategies in place to effect improvements. The quality of teaching has improved and learning is now satisfactory and often good in Key Stage 2 and for the children under five. Many of the key issues identified in the last inspection have been improved. For example, there are now policies and schemes of work for the subjects of the curriculum and recording systems have been improved. Learning resources have been increased and finances are linked to the school's development plan. However, there is still some unsatisfactory teaching and long-term planning lacks guidance about progression in pupils' skills and understanding. Little has been achieved to increase the school's provision concerning multicultural education but reports give parents appropriate information, although little about how pupils should improve. Nevertheless, overall, there have been sound improvements since the last inspection, but many are only recently beginning to take effect.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	D	D	E	E*	very high                      A* well above average        A above average                B average                        C below average                D well below average        E very low                        E*
mathematics	D	E	E	E*	
science	C	E	E	E	

These results are based on pupils who have now left the school. They show a drop in standards which has been arrested by pupils presently at the end of Key Stage 2. Unpublished results of the tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 reflect inspection judgements that standards are now generally satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and a large majority of pupils achieve the expected standards for their age in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects the pupils' learning is satisfactory and in history learning is good, although in information technology they have had too few opportunities to develop their skills. In Key Stage 1 there have also been recent improvements, but not as marked as for Key Stage 2. Most seven-year-olds achieve the expected standards in mathematics and science but there are still too many with weak writing skills. In speaking and listening the pupils throughout the school gain good standards and many become articulate and confident at communicating orally. The school has set realistic targets, which have been exceeded for 2000. Pupils with special educational needs have good support and their learning is good. However, pupils of high attainment are sometimes insufficiently challenged and consequently the proportion of pupils achieving above average standards is smaller than it should be in both key stages.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils are mostly interested in lessons and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall. In most lessons the pupils behave well and this helps them to concentrate.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils often help each other and take on responsibilities conscientiously.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with national averages.

Unauthorised absence has been reduced significantly and most pupils are prompt for lessons. The pupils' good speaking and listening skills help them to be enthusiastic and participate well in lessons and the school promotes these aspects through good systems of praise and encouragement. There have been few exclusions and very little oppressive or bullying behaviour. Most pupils are respectful of others and they build good relationships with their peers and the staff. They enjoy the many opportunities they are given to be responsible and to help others.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection but there is still a significant proportion of unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with about two fifths of the lessons having good teaching and about one eighth very good teaching. Just over a third of the lessons are satisfactory and just over a tenth are unsatisfactory. This profile represents too much variability and monitoring procedures are not sufficiently developed to overcome the weaknesses. However, the teaching throughout the school has many strong features. Homework is used well in Key Stage 2 to enhance the pupils' learning and marking is usually accurate. Many lessons use resources well and have a sound pace with changes of activity. Sometimes the work is not well enough matched to the prior knowledge of the pupils and this is often for higher attaining pupils. Although in many cases the work for them is harder, it is not sufficiently aimed at the next National Curriculum level. However, in most cases the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily taught and often used well to support learning in other subjects. Learning is best when the teachers know exactly what each child needs to learn next, as is often the case in the nursery class. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is carefully planned to develop their skills using the good provision of extra support and the targets in their individual education plans. Learning is slower in those lessons where there is weak class management and the pupils become less interested.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is generally balanced, but time spent on different subjects is not monitored. Homework, enriching experiences and extra-curricular activities augment the curriculum well. The opportunities for pupils under five help them to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The appropriate code of practice is met fully and there is good provision of appropriate learning and support. Parents play an important part in the pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils to gain social skills is very good and they are offered many opportunities to build friendships and understanding of others. Spiritual and moral development are well provided for in lessons and through assemblies. Cultural provision is satisfactory and could be improved in aspects of learning about multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Class teachers know the pupils and their personal needs well, although a few parents feel they don't attend sufficiently to their emotional needs. Assessment and recording systems are good for children in the nursery and those with special educational needs.

Most parents have positive views of the school. Often parents are able to help the school in a variety of ways. However, a few parents feel more could be done to keep them in touch regularly. Teachers are very accessible for parents and curriculum meetings are well attended. Parents help in raising funds, supporting their children in homework and some help in school, for example, in classrooms or on educational trips and extra-curricular activities. There are improved systems to assess the pupils in finding out what they know and can do, but

these are not yet used fully to identify individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses or to help teachers match the next work accurately to the needs of individuals or groups. However, the work in Literacy and Numeracy makes a good contribution to learning in other subjects.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher and senior staff manage the school effectively and are introducing a range of strategies to make further improvements. The role of subject co-ordinator is under-developed and more training is needed in this.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors play an important and concerned role in the school's development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. A start has been made in using information to evaluate the school's most important needs but this is not yet used fully, for example, in identifying inconsistency in teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Grants for specific needs are used fully for their purpose and money is efficiently spent after governors have considered the school's development priorities.

Led by the headteacher the staff have a shared desire to raise standards. Staffing difficulties have been overcome and there is an appropriate number of teachers for the number of children and the needs of the curriculum. A number of strategies to improve performance have been initiated, including a system of self-review and evaluation recommended by the local education authority. The management of provision for special educational needs is good, but the quality of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching generally and of the curriculum lack rigour. Resources for learning have improved and are satisfactory, although the pupils' opportunities to practise information technology skills are limited. The school's buildings and grounds are well kept and offer adequate space overall. The school is concerned to obtain the best value for money from its expenditure.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The children enjoy school.</li> <li>The pupils are expected to work hard.</li> <li>The school helps the pupils to become mature.</li> <li>Progress is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency of homework</li> <li>Information about progress</li> <li>Closer working with parents</li> <li>Range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

Parents' views of the school are very largely positive and they feel that their children like school. A minority feels that the school could be more forthcoming with news and with information about their children's progress, but nearly all think the school helps the children to be responsible and to learn well. A minority thinks that homework is inconsistent and that there are too few extra-curricular activities. Inspectors found that the pupils have good attitudes to school and to their work and that they do become mature. There are appropriate systems for informing parents of their children's progress and these include the teachers' availability for discussions. Very occasionally, information about progress has been delayed, but the school is now prompt in such matters, although news about general school events could be more frequent. Homework effectively supports the pupils' learning in several subjects and is similar to that provided in other schools. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and these also enrich the school's curriculum.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Results of National Curriculum tests have been poor over the last three years. However, there are recent indications that standards are improving. Inspection evidence shows that the proportion of eleven-year-olds achieving the expected standards improved greatly in 2000 and this is reflected in the unpublished results of this year's National Curriculum tests. These Key Stage 2 results are also a good improvement upon the 1996 ones recorded in the last inspection report. However, there is still underachievement, especially by higher attaining pupils and in Key Stage 1, where standards are still lower than they should be.
2. On entering the nursery class, at age three, the children's general level of attainment is a little below what may be expected for their age but, while under five, they make good progress and so attainment by the age of five in the reception class, is generally average. However, at the end of Key Stage 1, the present pupils' attainment is still below average in writing and mathematics, although there have been some recent improvements. The pupils make at least satisfactory progress during the junior years and the attainment of the present Year 6 pupils is average overall and in some respects above average. For example, more pupils than is usually the case achieved the expected standards in English, mathematics and science.
3. Using a points system and the results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the performance of the eleven-year-olds was well below average. In comparison with similar schools performance was also well below average. Furthermore, the trend in average National Curriculum points over four years was below the national trend. Performance had fallen. However, inspection evidence indicates a much improved situation and this is reflected in the unpublished results of the Key Stage 2 tests for 2000. In Key Stage 2, standards in English are now satisfactory overall. In speaking and listening they are good because the pupils are encouraged well to develop these skills. In reading, the standards of the present eleven-year-olds are satisfactory with most pupils reading at the expected level for their age and some at a higher level. A good majority of the pupils enjoy books. The eleven-year-olds' writing skills are satisfactory with a high proportion achieving the expected standard. They can write for a good range of different purposes and these skills support, and are encouraged by, learning in other subjects. Good literacy teaching encourages the juniors to make rapid progress, and their learning is good overall in English. In mathematics, all but a small proportion of the present eleven-year-olds work at the expected level and a small number have higher attainment. Their learning is sound and they can apply their skills to solve real-life problems well. In science, very few pupils have a lower than expected standard and about a fifth work at a higher level. They have a wide-ranging knowledge of the curriculum, but are not systematic in their recording of investigations and experiments. In information technology, the pupils know about many aspects of subject, but have had insufficient time to develop their skills in using computers. The pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory in art, music and design and technology. In history the pupils learn well, because teaching is enthusiastic. In geography the pupils' knowledge is just satisfactory and in physical education progress is good and there have been significant improvements since the last inspection.
4. In English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education the curriculum is statutory and targets for performance are required in English and mathematics, which the school has set for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. There is an overall aim, which is to meet the national targets by 2002. However, detailed targets were set for English and mathematics for 1999 and 2000. These targets offered a good degree of challenge, although they were based on low levels of previous

performance. The targets in English and mathematics for 1999 were not met, but the recent unpublished National Curriculum test results indicate that the targets for 2000 have been easily exceeded. Teachers' assessments of the pupils' levels in 1999 were also higher than the results in English and mathematics. Additional tests now carried out in the junior years provide more information to enable target setting and teacher assessment to be more accurate in future years.

5. In English in Key Stage 1, the pupils' standards of speaking and listening are good and this helps them to be sociable and to join in with discussions at a good level. The standards of reading of the present seven-year-olds have improved slightly since 1999 and about three-quarters of the pupils now achieve the expected standards but few achieve a higher degree of skill. The standards of the present seven-year-olds' writing are unsatisfactory because many pupils do not use punctuation, spelling and vocabulary well. In mathematics, standards are below average because about a quarter of the pupils do not reach the expected level, although there have been some improvements this year. In science standards are close to average at the end of Key Stage 1, having improved this year. They are similar to those reported in the last inspection. However, there are weaknesses in investigative work. In information technology the pupils gain a broad knowledge of aspects of the subject but have insufficient teaching and time to develop skills. In the other subjects of art, geography, design and technology and history, the pupils learning and progress is generally satisfactory. However, in music it is good because the pupils are taught well and in physical education their progress in movement is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the overall standards shown in the National Curriculum assessments for English, mathematics and science have declined since 1996 and only in the present year has this fall been arrested.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when matched against the targets set out in their individual education plans. Parental support is encouraged strongly and their ability to work with the school is an important factor in promoting the pupils' progress. The school uses a range of methods to plan work, which is appropriate to pupils' needs. The structure of literacy and numeracy, together with the additional support, help the present pupils benefit from challenging work and they often have good support enabling them to learn well. The pupils have made good progress, especially those in Key Stage 2. It is not uncommon for pupils to reduce their level of special educational need.
7. Pupils of high attainment seldom have individual targets for their learning and the progress they make is at best satisfactory. In the last inspection a good proportion of seven-year-olds was reported as having high attainment in mathematics in 1996. The present proportion of high attainment by these same pupils, who are now eleven, is lower than the average for schools last year. However, throughout the school there is now a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and there has been a small number of pupils leaving and some joining the school within the primary years. Since the last inspection some severe staffing issues have affected the stability of leadership and continuity of teaching adversely. The pupils' achievement is beginning to recover as reflected in the overall attainment of the present Year 6 pupils. The juniors' learning is now often good in lessons and progress is at least satisfactory for the majority. Expectations are rising.

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

8. The behaviour of the pupils in and around the school is satisfactory. Their attitudes to the school and to their work are good. Relationships are also good and the school provides good opportunities for their personal development. The majority of the parents, pupils and staff value the work that the school does in helping the pupils to develop into respectful and responsible citizens.
9. The pupils' attitudes to their work are good. The vast majority show an interest in their work and are motivated by it. In a Year 3 class, for example, all of the pupils found out information about the Poet Laureate as part of a homework task. The pupils become confident and mature learners as they move through the school. They develop a good sense of enquiry and are not afraid of asking questions. Most pupils are able to articulate what they are learning and can talk with enthusiasm about books that they have read. In Year 4, for example, one pupil described, with remarkable zeal and fluency, what he had

read about the Vikings. The majority of the pupils concentrate well. They work diligently in their classes and settle into their work routines quickly. They respond appropriately to opportunities for independent learning. In a history lesson, the pupils were encouraged to read on their own so that they could find out information. This interested the pupils and engaged their attention throughout the remainder of the lesson.

10. Overall, the pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. In classes, they generally behave in an orderly way and act responsibly. Especially when the teachers achieve a challenging pace and purpose to their lessons, the pupils behave well. In a Year 6 lesson, a wide range of mathematical activities ensured that a high standard of behaviour pervaded throughout the lesson. On a few occasions there are lapses in the standards of behaviour. In a physical education lesson for the younger pupils, they showed a lack of attention resulting in misbehaviour when using apparatus. An orderly picture of behaviour is apparent at lunch times and during breaks. Pupils play and mix together and no incidents of oppressive behaviour were seen. The school temporally excluded two pupils in recent years for their persistent misbehaviour.
11. Relationships between the pupils, their teachers and visitors to the school are good. The pupils are courteous and polite. They greet visitors in a friendly manner and are anxious to know what they are doing. On a visit to a local museum, the Year 2 pupils treated their host with respect and good humour. They felt very comfortable in asking questions and volunteering their views to their guides. This made a good contribution to their learning about local history. In lessons, the teachers develop a good rapport with their pupils. Good relationships result and in a Year 3 literacy lesson, appropriate praise and encouragement motivated the pupils to enjoy their class and group work.
12. The pupils are given good opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative. They regularly help with duties such as preparation for assemblies and the Year 6 pupils have important responsibilities as prefects. The pupils show care and consideration for others and their environment. There is no deliberate damage to the buildings or the school property. Indeed, even the youngest children showed a sense of pride in their task when they were asked to put away nursery toys.
13. The personal development opportunities offered to the pupils are good. They develop a good range of social skills and get on well with one another. The system of table leaders at lunchtime helps to ensure that they take turns, observe hygiene rules and leave their dining area in a tidy state. The pupils are keen to become involved in the life of the school. They raise money for charities and show interest in what sort of things their money will be used for. Many take part in team games and give performances to the wider community. The school celebrates achievements for example, through "special mentions" in assemblies.
14. Levels of attendance are in line with the national picture. Unauthorised absence has been reduced significantly and is now just below the national average. Pupils enjoy their schooling and the vast majority come to lessons on time. Parents support the school's efforts in maintaining satisfactory levels of attendance.
15. The previous inspection report highlighted positive attitudes to learning and effective relationships. These features are present today in the school and they continue to make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Very positive attitudes are reflected by pupils towards those with special educational needs. They are paired with selected pupils to help raise their self-esteem. The pupils with special educational needs are sometimes given responsibilities to boost their confidence. In Year 6 all the pupils are "prefects" and are allocated to classes where they help, for example, by sitting with younger pupils during Mass and talking to them at break and lunchtimes. These factors help the pupils with special educational needs to maintain interest in their learning and make good progress.

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

16. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However, it varies considerably. The range is from very good to unsatisfactory, although the profile is positive with about one lesson in eight being of very good quality, two out of five being of good quality and over a third being satisfactory. The remaining eleven per cent are unsatisfactory. The best teaching is for pupils under five, where most lessons are good. The average lesson in Key Stage 2 is of slightly better quality than the average Key Stage 1 lesson.

While the overall profile of the quality of teaching is presently similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection, it is too varied to have kept pace with the nationally improving picture.

17. Quite often the pupils' learning in lessons is good. Learning is stronger in Key Stage 2 and for the under-fives than for Key Stage 1. The pupils are encouraged to try hard and usually work well, with a reasonable pace. They concentrate well for their age and gain appropriate independence. These features are strongly supported by the pupils' good speaking and listening skills, which themselves are positively promoted by the way the teachers ask questions and give each pupil's answer full consideration. Pupils with special educational needs are also encouraged well and this helps them to make good progress. The present pupils satisfactorily acquire skills, knowledge and understanding and overall the quality of teaching helps pupils under five and the juniors to learn well and the infants to learn satisfactorily.
18. Teaching in the areas of learning for pupils under five is good overall and particularly effective in introducing the children to school life and helping them to become verbally confident. The pupils learn quickly and are well prepared for formal schooling by the time they are five. In Key Stage 1, the teaching of English is barely satisfactory. The teachers help the pupils to gain skills in reading and writing and give good guidance in speaking and listening, where they offer many opportunities for pupils to learn and try new vocabulary. However, there is insufficient insistence upon the use of skills, such as handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Higher attaining pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenged by the tasks set in literacy lessons. In mathematics, the teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. Discussion in many lessons is at a good level and pupils gain a sound understanding of the number system, but they are not securely taught basic number facts and this limits their ability to complete some of the tasks following discussion. Teachers have adopted the Numeracy Strategy satisfactorily and lessons are planned following the guidance, but the content is insufficiently progressive in the teaching of number skills and sometimes the tasks set are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of the different groups within each class. The teaching of science in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory with some weaknesses in the approach to investigations and occasionally in class management. There are improvements in the teaching about living things and scientific language is introduced well. In information technology, the pupils' learning is limited by some teachers' lack of confidence in the subject and by insufficient time allocated for pupils to use computers. In art, design and technology and history teaching is satisfactory with some strong aspects such as the enthusiasm with which history is taught. In physical education the teaching leads to too little progress in the quality of movement, but in music the very good subject knowledge and enthusiastic teaching lead to good progress. There was too little evidence to comment on the teaching of geography.
19. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory with several strong features. There are few unsatisfactory lessons and many that are good and occasionally very good. Literacy lessons are well planned and promote sound learning of basic skills. The teaching helps the pupils to gain a love of literature. Sometimes there is insufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils, but overall the teaching of English in Key Stage 2 is good and has enabled considerable improvements in standards recently. In mathematics teaching is satisfactory and the teachers help the pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding to real life problems well. The teachers appropriately plan the work at the level of difficulty needed for pupils to achieve the expected standards for their age. However, there is sometimes insufficient challenge for pupils to achieve a higher level. In science, the teaching also varies in quality, but resources are used well to motivate pupils. Homework and information technology are also used significantly to support the pupils' learning. However, teachers are not consistent in promoting appropriate systems to record investigations. In information technology, the teaching is limited by time and access to computers and by a lack of records of the pupils' progress. However, teachers satisfactorily offer all the aspects of the subject and much training is planned. In history and in design and technology the teaching is good and effectively helps the pupils to gain skills and understanding. In physical education, standards have improved indicating improved teaching since the last inspection. In art and music the teaching is satisfactory, but in geography there was insufficient evidence to comment.



20. The strongest feature of teaching throughout the school, is the way in which the pupils are encouraged to listen, reflect and explain. This helps the pupils to have above average standards in speaking and listening, to maintain interest, to gain self-esteem and to respect others' views. Teachers have good questioning skills. They are keen to raise standards and subject co-ordinators use the time available to look at pupils' work and sometimes to observe teaching. However, these activities are not carried out with sufficient rigour to enable critical evaluation and promote sufficient improvement. For example, there is a lack of agreed standards about what constitutes effective teaching and consequently a wide variation of teaching quality remains. However, another strong feature is the way in which most teachers share lesson objectives with their class and refer to these in the final part of the lesson. This good start now needs to be extended to provide amended objectives for groups of pupils of different ability. Teachers often make an evaluation of a lesson to assess its effectiveness, but seldom do they use this to assess what the pupils have actually learnt to help match the next lesson's work accordingly. Throughout the school classroom assistants are used well and provide effective support. Their liaison with the class teacher is effective in making the best use of time, but teachers do not yet use this help to record pupils' achievements in discussion sessions. Most lessons are well organised and have a sound pace, but where lessons are unsatisfactory it is partly because the pupils are not well managed. In this small number of lessons, the teachers are not consistent in their approach to discipline and allow themselves to be distracted or interrupted. A greater range of strategies to maintain interest, limit interruption and promote good behaviour is needed in these cases. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is generally satisfactory throughout. For example, the planning of English lessons indicates that teachers are knowledgeable about the Literacy framework and most teachers have a sound knowledge of the other subjects. However, there are some weaknesses in information technology, where further training is planned. In some subjects, such as mathematics, science and physical education there are occasions when the teaching is insufficiently progressive and the work for higher-attainers is not aimed to help them achieve a higher National Curriculum level.
21. In many lessons the teachers set tasks of varying difficulty for different groups of pupils, but do not match these sufficiently closely to the different pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Consequently, there are occasions when high-attainers are under-challenged and when low-attainers have work that is too hard, although this is only in one class. Through the school's various improvement systems and assessments, the teachers are improving their knowledge of the National Curriculum levels and this information should be used more to help plan well matched learning for groups and individual pupils. Generally, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and this is partly because they have specific learning targets identified in their individual education plans. There is some under-achievement and this is particularly of higher-attaining pupils. Homework is used effectively, especially by Key Stage 2 pupils and there is an appropriate amount given although it is not always regular in some classes.

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

22. The curriculum is appropriately broad. It includes all the required subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and meets the current statutory requirements. The overall time used for teaching and learning is well within recommendations for the different age groups. The time allocated for different subjects is affected by the high proportion used for physical education, especially in Key Stage 2. This is largely because the juniors spend more time in swimming than in most schools. In keeping with its mission, the school also spends more time on religious education than many schools. More time than average is also spent on English, in keeping with the school's desire to implement the National Literacy Strategy and to improve standards in English. However, less time than average is spent on the foundation subjects of art, design and technology, geography, history and music. Some of these subjects are also taught for part of the year only and art and design and technology are sometimes taught together. Consequently, the sequential learning of skills and understanding has insufficient emphasis and monitoring of the curriculum's balance of time is difficult. Presently the school does little to check the balance of time spent or the progression of skills and understanding.

23. Subject co-ordinators are able to review the teachers' planning for their subjects, but there are no formal ways in which the information gathered is used to gain improvements, although there has been some informal feedback in English and mathematics and discussion at meetings. The school has appropriate plans to develop the curriculum by amending the subject schemes of work, taking account of the new requirements for September 2000. Presently there is no overview of time and the parts of the curriculum to be taught, except for a list of topics for each term. Subject co-ordinators are allocated time, but seldom develop a whole-school overview of their subject in order to locate strengths and identify the areas in need of improvement. There is a lack of skill and confidence in evaluation.
24. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection when a key issue was to produce policies and schemes of work for all subjects. The curriculum has been reviewed and policies written for all subjects. The school has adopted some of the schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), for example, in science and information technology and this is supporting continuity and progression in learning. There is some evidence that this is helping teachers to provide lessons that are well targeted to raise standards in the National Curriculum levels, especially in Key Stage 2. However, in some cases, there is still insufficient guidance for teachers in providing detailed progression in the learning of skills and the gaining of understanding, for example, in providing progression in the key elements of history. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively. The teaching strategies are often used to support learning in other subjects. However, provision for information technology is unsatisfactory because there are too few computers and insufficient time is allocated for the direct teaching and pupils to practise their skills. Children under five in the reception and nursery classes receive an appropriate curriculum that promotes learning towards meeting the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five and leads purposefully towards work from the National Curriculum. There are effective systems for co-ordinating the curriculum for children under five and the first levels of the National Curriculum. In the nursery, children have access to an appropriately broad range of interesting activities.
25. The school's curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and supports the learning targets identified in pupils' individual education plans. The appropriate code of practice is followed and parents are effectively involved in their children's learning. The school is aware of the need for equality of access for all to the full curriculum. Good efforts are made to enable this, especially for pupils with special educational needs. However, in some cases, the progress of high-attainers is limited by a lack of work at a sufficiently challenging level. The provision that teachers make for pupils to gain skills in speaking and listening is very good. Within many subjects throughout the school, teachers use questioning and discussion well to help the pupils listen, think and respond.
26. Homework is used effectively throughout the school to support the curriculum. The junior pupils are sometimes asked to research aspects of their lessons at home. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities including opportunities to play chess and develop skills and interest in sport, music and cycling. They are generally popular and well attended. Parents give good support to these activities. The school has an appropriate curriculum to support the pupils' personal, social and health education. Although not clearly outlined in the prospectus, arrangements for sex education are made for Year 6 pupils. However, provisions to enable pupils to understand the dangers of the misuse of drugs are insufficiently clear.
27. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and standards are similar to those described in the last inspection. The provision makes a significant contribution to a happy, friendly and well-ordered community in which everyone is valued, positive aspects of life are emphasised and solutions to problems are sought.

28. Opportunities are given to pupils to reflect on fundamental events in their lives in assemblies and lessons. In a good school assembly, pupils were helped to reflect on making and keeping promises. A lighted candle provided a focus for guided reflection. In this way pupils were helped to recognise their responsibilities to others. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good. Throughout the curriculum teachers are quick to use opportunities to develop self-esteem in pupils, especially for those with special educational needs, by valuing their contributions both within the school and in the community. Collective worship fulfils statutory requirements and makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
29. The school effectively promotes the principles, which distinguish right from wrong and provision for the pupils' moral development is good. Values are rooted in the gospels, promoting great emphasis on caring for others. The school meets well the values of its mission statement. Through observance of the school rules, the pupils are taught right from wrong. Adults provide good role models to enable the pupils to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
30. The pupils' social development is very effectively promoted through many opportunities to take responsibility. They include collecting registers, setting up the hall for assembly and holding doors open for others. They are encouraged to put the needs of others before their own and they understand why taking responsibility is important to the life of the school. When working in groups, they respect and often help each other. Charities are well supported by the school. The strong links with the community, especially through the church and other local schools, make a very significant contribution to the provision for the pupils' social development. The school forms an important part of the local Catholic community and is involved in other local events.
31. Cultural development was identified as a key issue in the last report and there has been satisfactory improvement in promoting awareness of cultures, past and present, through subjects such as history and science, for example, when pupils study at the similarities and differences of a range of breads. However, the multi-cultural dimension remains a weakness and pupils have too few opportunities to experience a broader range of cultures within their locality. Overall provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory.

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

32. The care and guidance offered to the pupils is satisfactory with some good features. The school has a sound child protection policy, which has recently been supplemented by appropriate training. Consequently, staff are fully aware of the procedures and are appropriately vigilant. Similarly, the school's health and safety policy provides helpful guidance to promote safety in the school. Regular audits of safety hazards occur and timely action is taken to rectify any shortcomings. There were no significant outstanding health and safety matters at the time of the inspection.
33. The school works hard to provide health care for the pupils. The school nurse provides useful advice and undertakes routine health screening. The pupils are alert to the need to look after their health. In the area close to the reception class, for example, they have put together an interesting display on dental care. Good use is made of the professional support services and, for instance, the Educational Psychologist provides sensitive support and advice for the small number of pupils who need help in moderating their behaviour. Through its links with the health services, the school has been able to bring in expert counselling to help pupils to overcome traumas that they occasionally experience. Programmes of personal and health education alert the pupils to the trials and tribulations of growing up.

34. The school monitors the personal progress of the pupils through such methods as celebrating their achievements in and out of classes. The staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the pupils and their personal circumstances. In one class, for instance, the teacher showed great concern when she realised that one of the pupils had left his glasses elsewhere. The teachers are alert to the needs of individuals. They are able to readily identify the pupils who need extra help with their learning. As a result, the parents are usually fully involved in making decisions with the teachers about the level and type of support needed. This is successful in helping the pupils to make good progress with their studies and to feel that their personal worth in the school is recognised.
35. The school is making progress with its procedures for assessing the academic achievements and capabilities of the pupils. It uses formal testing together with analysis and teacher assessments to assemble a range of useful data. There are a number of good features, which are emerging from this practice. In some cases, day-to-day assessment is used to adapt lessons plans such as in numeracy where the lessons are occasionally changed if pupils do not grasp the learning objectives. In the nursery, well-developed systems are deployed to carefully assess what the pupils can do. Throughout the school, the teachers exchange information on pupils' work as they move up through the classes. This helps to provide their new teachers with a picture of the pupils' needs. It has for, example, influenced the grouping of pupils and assisted the school in targeting the booster classes for literacy towards the pupils who would achieve the maximum benefit from them.
36. Whilst the assessment systems are becoming more regular, the management team and co-ordinators recognise that assessment information is not used fully to provide work that is accurately matched to the needs of all individuals and groups of pupils. They know, for example, that there is some inconsistency in practice within the school. Where progress is strongest, for pupils under five and those with special educational needs, learning targets for individuals and groups of pupils help the teachers match the work accurately. Teacher assessment and target setting are not consistently accurate and more secure knowledge is needed in some subjects of the relevant standards that constitute the different National Curriculum levels. The co-ordinator has planned to re-write the policy guidance and design relevant training for the teachers in these levels and the use of assessment information. Through this, the school believes that it will be able to more closely match the level of work set to the achievement potential of individual pupils.
37. Very good care is taken of pupils with special educational needs enabling them to be fully integrated in all aspects of school life, and this has a positive impact on their attainment and personal development. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly. Parents are always invited and they attend the reviews. The school enjoys good quality liaison with support agencies, for example, an educational psychologist works very closely with the school. The provision for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school.
38. The school's procedures for promoting good attendance have been improved and more rigorously applied over the last year. As a result there has been an impressive reduction in the level of unauthorised absences. The procedures for eliminating all forms of oppressive behaviour are contained in a formal policy. These are largely successful and over the last two years only two children have been excluded for short periods in order to reinforce the school's expectations of acceptable standards of behaviour.
39. Induction arrangements are well established. The parents of children who are new to the school are given an informative brochure and are invited to see what the school offers. Their children are also welcomed to sample school life before they formally start. The school works in harmony with the main secondary school to which the majority of the pupils go to continue their education. Facilities like exchange visits and discussions with teachers about pupils' needs contribute towards a smooth transition.

40. The previous inspection report identified a culture of care in the school. This position has been maintained and several of the positive features reported remain in the school today. The pupils' interests are respected, for example through the way that teachers listen carefully to what they have to say. Their self-esteem and physical safety are properly considered. Systems to evaluate their progress are not used fully but generally, the sound standards of care and guidance make a positive contribution to their achievements.

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

41. The school's relationships with the parents are satisfactory. The school enjoys the support of the majority of the parents but some comments from the parents' meeting and pre-inspection questionnaire indicate a few concerns. A minority of parents was, for example, unsure about the level of information provided about their children's progress. The inspection found that there is a well-developed system of reporting to parents and of holding consultation meetings. Targets for improvement are not yet included in the reports nor are they shared with the pupils. However, overall, the school does provide an adequate range of information for parents. This includes a termly curriculum plan and a useful, although not frequent, newsletter, which sets out coming events and there are also curriculum meetings that have helped the parents to understand what is taught. The parents of children who need extra help with their learning are invited into school to talk about the provision which is available and to help set relevant plans for improvement. This aspect of the school's work is now a strength. However, occasionally information about extra help has been relayed insensitively but this is not a common feature of the school's communications with the parents. The teachers are accessible to the parents before and after school and this form of communication is valued by the parents. Several used the facility during the inspection to talk to teachers about such things as forthcoming trips and what their children had done at home.
42. An active parent/teacher association supports the work of the school. It is successful in organising social and fund raising events and in doing so it receives the support of the pupils, parents and the community. The association makes a good contribution to the school's resources for learning and it has currently set itself a target of buying ten computers to help raise standards in information technology. A committed band of the parents regularly offers to help in the school. The school carefully matches parental skills to its needs. Parents also help with things such as educational trips and enriching activities. In one class, for example, a parent is making well-produced number cards for use in the numeracy lessons. A successful chess club and cycling proficiency classes are run by parent volunteers after school each week. Attendance at these is good.
43. A home school agreement is in place. This sets out the broad responsibilities and expectations of the school and the parents. It usefully supplements the recently revised prospectus. A minority of the parents felt that homework was insufficient. The inspection did not find evidence to support this point of view. A reading diary, for instance, records the pupils' home reading and several examples of research homework, such as finding out about science topics were seen and effective in supporting classroom learning. However, the amount of homework set is variable and expectations are not always clear.
44. The work of the parents in helping the school makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' learning. The previous inspection report contained a number of sound features in the school's relationships with parents. Throughout a period of significant change in leadership and staffing, it has worked efficiently to maintain these.

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

45. The leadership and management of the school are sound. There have been some significant staffing difficulties, which are now resolved and the present headteacher, who has been in post for about 18 months, has helped the school overcome these. During this time, the overriding priority has been to improve the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds. The unpublished National Curriculum test results

for 2000 indicate some success in this. The management team fully endorses the school's Christian ethos and its vision for enabling all pupils to achieve their maximum potential.

46. Most teachers have a subject co-ordination responsibility. They are supported in this role by a small allocation of time for development. This is an important initiative and reflects the value placed on co-ordinators, in terms of making improvements. The time is used, for example, to plan and to review some of the pupils' work. More training is needed in these activities since some teachers are not confident about collecting and evaluating information about pupils' National Curriculum levels. In many of the subjects there is little guidance, for example, in the form of pieces of levelled and agreed work by pupils against which the teachers can judge the standards being achieved. Co-ordinators are also able to review teachers' planning for their subject. However, this is not yet sufficiently evaluative, and neither does it extend to monitoring the time balance within the curriculum.
47. The subject co-ordinators' and senior managers' role in the systematic monitoring of the teaching of their subjects is under-developed. The headteacher and management team recognise its value and a start has been made on observing teaching, largely for literacy and numeracy. The work has contributed to the successful implementation of the strategies for teaching both subjects. Although the monitoring process identifies criteria against which teaching is evaluated, strengths and weaknesses are not always clearly identified with sufficient rigour. This is partly because of a lack of an agreed school view about what constitutes effective teaching. The school realises that more needs to be done to gain the maximum benefit from monitoring, and has planned some extra training. It currently lacks rigour and regularity and hence, the monitoring culture is not yet fully established as a tool to promote consistency and high quality in teaching. Although planned in accordance with new regulations, there is presently no formal appraisal system for teachers.
48. The governors are supportive of the school. The governing body is properly constituted and it generally fulfils its statutory duties. The governors have a clear picture of what the school is achieving and they expect the headteacher to be accountable to them for the school's progress towards its aims and priorities. The governors actively review the school's plans and policies for improvement before they are put into practice. They view further improvements in the standards achieved in English, Mathematics, science and information technology as key priorities. However, the governors' annual report to the parents lacks some details about finance and about the progress the school has made on the action plan following the previous inspection report.
49. The school makes satisfactory use of the funds, which are available. Its administrative and financial control systems are good. The school makes good use of up-to-date computer systems to monitor its expenditure against the budget. The headteacher and governors agree suitable allocations of moneys from the annual budget to support the school's priorities. Recently, for example, much of this allocation has been focused on providing extra help in the classrooms and on progressively up-dating resources. Since the previous inspection the school has improved its development planning. The plan, which covers the year ahead in detail, reflects the school's priorities and targets appropriately. The principles of "best value" are beginning to be apparent in planning and, the costs, benefits and successes expected from implementing the plan are clearly shown.
50. The school has an adequate number of staff and matches them appropriately to the demands of the curriculum. The support staff skilfully help the teachers in the classes and are usually well directed. The staff are conscientious in their approach to their duties. They support extra-curricular activities well. All of the teachers share a genuine desire to see further improvements in the standards achieved by the school.
51. The headteacher conducts a termly professional development discussion with the teachers. From this, targets are set for improvement but they are not always sufficiently measurable. A programme of staff development is in place and this has, for instance, concentrated on such important things as the teaching of literacy, numeracy and the use of assessment. The management team sees clear benefits from the use of in-service training. The school recognises the need to provide training for the subject co-

ordinators so that they can contribute more effectively in developing their subjects and raising standards. The school makes satisfactory provision for the support of any newly qualified teacher.

52. The grounds and buildings are well cared for. Although the accommodation enables the curriculum to be taught, some of the classrooms are small and only just adequate for the number of pupils. Presently the school can find no space for its aim to provide a computer suite. There is a large playground and playing field close by. However, there is no area with dedicated facilities for the nursery children's outdoor play. The school's resources for learning have been improved and whilst they are satisfactory overall, there is no climbing apparatus for children under five and much of the school's stock of computers is ageing.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

*Issues that the school has already identified or has started work on are marked (\*).*

53. The governors, headteacher, senior staff and teachers should raise the standards that pupils achieve, with an urgent initial focus on writing in Key Stage 1, by:

- (i) raising the quality and consistency of teaching by;
  - increasing the effectiveness of lesson observation in identifying improvements to be made,\*  
(paragraphs 71 and 46)
  - using ambitious and realistic targets in appraisal statements for teachers,  
(paragraph 47)
  - increase opportunities for more training in those subjects and for teachers where there are weaknesses,\*  
(paragraphs 72, 78, 82, 110 and 103)
  - developing clear criteria and expectations of what constitutes effective teaching  
(paragraphs 47 and 76)
- (ii) regularly monitoring and analysing pupils' achievement by;
  - improving the role of the subject co-ordinator, through training and feedback systems,\*  
(paragraphs 84 and 51)
  - checking the balance of time that pupils spend learning different subjects,  
(paragraphs 23 and 102)
  - collating and evaluating data and information about standards to identify areas and groups of pupils where improvement is needed,\*  
(paragraph 79)
- (iii) improving assessment and target setting procedures to;
  - form learning targets for individual pupils or groups of pupils, especially those of higher attainment,  
(paragraphs 46, 71 and 74)
  - promote the setting of well-matched work from higher National Curriculum levels where possible.  
(paragraphs 66 and 77)

54. In addition the governors should consider the following weaknesses for inclusion in their action plan:

- time and facilities for pupils to gain skills in the use of information technology,\*  
(paragraph 101)
- education about the misuse of drugs,  
(paragraph 26)
- aspects of education about Britain's multi-cultural society,  
(paragraph 31)
- provision for outdoor play for children under five,\*  
(paragraph 61)
- arrangements for sex education that are not accurately described in the prospectus\*  
(paragraph 26)

- the information governors provide for parents about finance and progress on action points from OFSTED inspections.

(paragraph 48)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	59

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12	40	36	11	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	209
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	71
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	2

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### *Attendance*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.2	School data	1.5
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	14	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	9	14
	Girls	11	13	11
	Total	13	22	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72	69	78
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	10
	Girls	12	13	8
	Total	24	25	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75	78	56
	National	82	86	87

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	11	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	9
	Girls	8	5	8
	Total	13	12	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52	48	68
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	9
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	14	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56	60	64
	National	68	69	75

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	201
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	29.8

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	400813
Total expenditure	396854
Expenditure per pupil	1661
Balance brought forward from previous year	31400
Balance carried forward to next year	35359

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	239
Number of questionnaires returned	135

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	32	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	36	6	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	38	10	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	42	16	9	2
The teaching is good.	51	39	4	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	36	16	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	33	3	11	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	33	1	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	25	46	19	8	2
The school is well led and managed.	30	44	14	7	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	44	2	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	36	16	5	10

### **Other issues raised by parents**

A majority of parents is supportive of the school and positive about the education it offers. However, a minority have a number of criticisms, such as an unexpected meeting for some about their children making insufficient progress. Most parents appreciate the openness and time that the teachers offer in informal conversations. However, they noted the variation in the approach that different teachers have to matters such as caring for the children's emotional development and the regularity of homework.

**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**

55. Children enter the nursery class in the autumn before they are four. The nursery is full time and staffed by two nursery nurses who work well together sharing duties. The work is usually overseen by a teacher who co-ordinates learning for the early years. At the time of the inspection this co-ordinator was absent but the work was overseen by the headteacher. In addition to those in the nursery, there were six pupils in the reception class still under five. The children transfer to the reception class in the autumn before they are five. Good provision was made for the under-fives at the time of the last inspection and this has been maintained. Pupils starting in the nursery class have slightly below average standards overall. By the time they are five, standards are average and sometimes slightly above average. This good progress replicates that described in the last inspection report. Most children meet the appropriate desirable learning outcomes for five-year-olds. Progress is good particularly in the language and literacy and the personal and social areas of learning.

Personal and social development

56. This is a happy, calm nursery class in which the children begin to learn to enjoy each other's company. Younger ones are a little shy, but older children are confident and often able to converse well and to think of the needs of others. For example, they are beginning to help each other and they share materials well. Teaching is good, providing many opportunities for co-operation and for the children to help each other, for example, in team games, or in the role-play area. The staff provide good role models for the children and share their tasks appropriately. All the pupils were well adjusted to school life at the time of the inspection, although records indicate that this is not so when they first start in the nursery class. By the time they are in the reception class and are five they have met and often exceeded the appropriate desirable learning outcome for this area.

Language and literacy

57. The children in the nursery can write their name, although a minority still write letters that show a very early stage of development. When they are in the reception class, most can write short phrases and a few can write a whole sentence including the full stop. In the nursery class they all understand about the importance of print and how writing communicates. Most children have a growing knowledge of letters and the sounds they make. They can relate a story and discuss what happens in it. By the time they are five, the children are well launched on reading and have good attitudes to books. Attainment at this age is better than average overall. While there are still a few children in the nursery class who are a little shy to speak in front of the whole group, most are confident at speaking and do so in long phrases or sentences. By the time they are five, they use these skills to converse and collaborate well in lessons. There are many opportunities provided for learning in this area. Some of these are formal and in front of the whole class, some are encouraged by staff working with small groups and some enable the children to practise on their own. This is a good balance and, together with the high quality of the discussions that staff promote, teaching is good in this area of learning. Nearly all the children meet the appropriate desirable learning outcome and a good number exceed it.

Mathematics

58. About three-quarters of the pupils meet the desirable learning outcome before they are five and attainment is average. Children in the nursery class know simple numbers and, for example, can show five fingers easily. By the time they are five, many can count to twenty and a few can do so backwards. They know the names of common three-dimensional shapes such as cube and a few know more complex ones such as "a pyramid." Provision in the nursery class is wide-ranging and appropriate and in the reception class the work is challenging and builds on the children's earlier experiences, but sometimes it is too hard for low attaining four-year-olds. In both classes the children are offered extra

help and their progress is carefully monitored and recorded. Teaching is satisfactory and offers a good balance between group, class and individual activities.

#### Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. By the time the children are five most reach the desirable learning outcome and a minority exceed it. The children in the nursery class know how pets need to be cared for and the role of shopkeepers in taking money. The good provision in the role-play area helps the children learn such things from each other as well as from the occasional intervention of staff. Many other activities are provided that also widen the pupils' knowledge and understanding, for example, through discussion the children could easily identify the main differences between birds and themselves. Such work is continued in the reception class where discussion is used as the main teaching method to help pupils learn, for example, about the life cycle of frogs, caterpillars and of people. The teaching is good overall and the pupils gain knowledge and understanding as well as increased interest in the world around them. They also learn to use computers appropriately and gain mouse skills in both classes.

#### Creative development

60. In both the nursery and the reception classes, a wide range of activities is provided and the pupils enjoy these greatly making satisfactory and often good progress. In the nursery class they learn to use a brush and paint appropriately and in the reception class they extend this skill to become accurate and careful, although not yet to mix colours. The children are introduced to a good range of other activities such as singing, making music, listening to poetry, techniques of making pictures, drawing and modelling. In the reception class some pupils are inventive in using large construction apparatus, although in the nursery class the range available, is limited. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good and so, by the time they are five, most pupils meet the appropriate desirable learning outcome.

#### Physical development

61. Children in the nursery are given a range of opportunities, which help them to develop confidence, competence and agility in using their bodies and moving, as well as in manipulating tools and materials. They make good progress so that by the time they are five the large majority meet the appropriate desirable learning outcome and some exceed it. Most use pencils and crayons carefully to draw and colour in accurately. Younger children manoeuvre wheeled vehicles appropriately and are learning what to do in team games. They respond well to adult instructions. The nursery uses a large playground for such activities but has no specific area or large outdoor fixed apparatus available. The children in the reception class have no specific outdoor area available either. However, they respond well in lessons of physical education designed from the National Curriculum programmes of study and show good control and movement skills using large apparatus in the hall. The quality of teaching is generally good and helps pupils to be aware of each other and of relevant safety issues.

### ENGLISH

62. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999, attainment was well below the national average and very low in comparison to similar schools. The results achieved by seven-year-olds in 1999 for reading were well below the national average and very low in comparison to similar schools. Their results for writing were well below the national average and well below in comparison to similar schools. The results for both girls and boys were well below average, although the girls' performance was better than the boys in both key stages. The proportion of pupils achieving highly was very small in Key Stage 2 and in writing at Key Stage 1 there were none. All these results relate to pupils who are now a year older.

63. Analysis of the last four years' of Key Stage 2 test results shows that standards in the school had been rising until 1999, when they fell to be within the lowest five per cent of similar schools nationally. However, inspection evidence shows that the percentage of present Year 6 pupils achieving the expected levels, is very substantially higher than last year and the percentage achieving above the expected levels is also substantially improved. The results of the tests for 2000 reflect this finding. In Key Stage 1 the test results over the last four years show a decline in standards with writing and reading being well below average in 1999. Inspection evidence shows that the standard of the present Year 2 pupils' writing is still below average with about a third of the pupils below the expected level and none with high attainment. However, in reading the results are now closer to the national average. In both key stages, there is now a greatly improved proportion of pupils with high attainment, except in writing at Key Stage 1.
64. The standards of speaking and listening are above average across the school. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are becoming confident, articulate speakers. When given the opportunity they readily respond to questions and volunteer information about the chosen text in the literacy hour or about the differences found in the pottery industry comparing the present with the past. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers reading stories or giving instructions and respect each other's views and ideas. The older pupils offer detailed answers to questions and participate in class and small group discussions well. For example, Year 6 pupils discussed poems by Ted Hughes and their conversation showed a good understanding of alliteration, personification, similes and other writing devices. The pupils are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to explore the use of language. The teachers do this by valuing each pupil's contribution and giving an opportunity for every pupil to reply to a question, wherever possible.
65. Standards in reading are improving. In Key Stage 1, books are handled with care and a variety of texts are read with varying fluency, understanding and expression. All pupils are developing skills to decode unfamiliar words and identify other cues to gain meaning. Some are able to talk about their favourite books and authors and explain why they enjoy them. Others can retell stories they have heard or read. Many pupils are familiar with appropriate vocabulary such as title and author. They are developing research skills and most are familiar with the contents page and the index, although they have little opportunity to use the skills needed for independent research. All pupils in Year 6 are independent readers, enjoying a wide variety of stories, poetry and reference books. Many junior pupils are fluent and accurate and some read with good expression. They are able to discuss the plots, the characters and their favourite part but only a minority are sufficiently confident to make a prediction about the story line. Opportunities for independent research into a variety of topics are given particularly in Year 6, where most pupils are developing appropriate skills of skimming and scanning.
66. Standards in writing in Key Stage 1 have improved slightly since the 1999 National Curriculum tests but are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are able to write for a good variety of purposes but many do not spell well and fail to use punctuation effectively, for example, omitting full stops and capital letters. Most pupils write using meaningful phrases but the vocabulary lacks interest and originality. Pupils are sometimes provided with an outline or helpful words to support their writing of stories and poems, but seldom do they redraft work or correct their own mistakes. Pupils write for many different purposes including; instructions for making a circuit; character descriptions; book reviews and retelling fairy stories. Teachers also provide tasks designed to develop the pupils use of grammar, punctuation, comprehension and phonics for spelling. This work is clearly matched to the needs of the lower-attainers, but insufficiently challenges the more able pupils. The skills of handwriting are taught in specific lessons but few pupils use them in their everyday work.



67. Last year, at the end of Key Stage 2, standards in writing had fallen since the last report, but those of the current Year 6 pupils are significantly improved and just exceed those reported in the last inspection. Pupils write for an increasing number of purposes, in different styles and formats. A wide range of interesting tasks are offered to the pupils including writing; a summary of Macbeth; a report of a visit; descriptions of characters; poetry; play scripts; the Diary of Anne Frank; persuasive text about the environment; stories using “flash backs” and many others. Many pupils’ spelling is sound but a few are still not certain of the rules of spelling conventions. Pupils use punctuation appropriately including speech marks. They have a sound understanding of grammar and often use complex sentences and imaginative vocabulary, such as, “water sapphire blue...” and “tranquil tide...”.
68. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the implementation of the literacy hour have been successful, and teachers have clearer ideas about the most effective ways to teach the various elements of the subject. There is an appropriate balance between guided writing and guided reading. Some good quality teaching particularly in Key Stage 2 is helping to promote improvements in reading and writing. There are some interesting examples of literacy in other areas of the curriculum such as history, writing about evacuees, religious education and science.
69. The pupils’ learning throughout Key Stage 1 is now satisfactory in reading and most pupils make appropriate progress in lessons. There are also clear improvements in the quality and quantity of writing and in presentation during the key stage, although attainment at the end of the key stage is still below average. In Key Stage 2 the pupils’ learning is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and good in Years 5 and 6. It is possible to track the development of literacy skills through pupils’ work and see the development of the necessary skills. In speaking and listening pupils’ learning is good across the school and they are encouraged to express themselves with confidence. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as teachers carefully match work to their needs or ensure they receive additional support so that they can learn from the set task.
70. Pupils in both key stages enjoy literacy sessions and are keen to participate. They listen well, with interest during the introductory part of the lesson and often respond with enthusiasm to the teachers’ questions and any ensuing discussions. For example, when Year 4 pupils discussed a poem called “My Pet”, they responded positively to group reading and enjoyed sharing the text and recognising the pattern of rhymes, contributing well to a class poem. When asked to co-operate with each other in discussions, pupils do so well, sharing ideas and respecting the views of others. The majority of pupils are able to work independently with little or no adult supervision. Generally they concentrate well. They share resources and often help those who are unsure of the task. A majority of the pupils is well behaved during lessons. Most take a pride in their work, writing neatly and ensuring there is a title and the date. Most pupils express enjoyment, and often pleasure in reading and many read regularly at school and at home.
71. The quality of teaching varies from unsatisfactory to very good but the majority is good. Teachers plan well and use the structure of the literacy hour to good effect. They promote a love of literature and the enjoyment of language with enthusiastic introductions to the chosen text. Learning objectives are clear and often explained to the pupils. The teachers provide suitable activities that are mainly well matched to the pupils’ needs, particularly those of lower-attainers. However, there is often a lack of sufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils. The final whole class part of lessons is used effectively to reinforce the learning objectives and to share what pupils have done. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, inattention and poor behaviour are insufficiently well managed and consequently learning is slower. In both key stages teachers establish good relationships with their pupils, giving them confidence by listening to, and valuing, their written and oral contributions. This is exemplified in many of the lessons observed. All the teachers use questioning effectively to increase the pupils’ knowledge and extend their understanding. Where applicable, classroom assistants are well briefed about the work they are expected to carry out with groups and pupils’ learning is enhanced by this close liaison. The well-planned and enthusiastically taught lessons have a positive effect on pupils’ learning.

72. There is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator who regularly monitors teachers' planning and the pupils' work and observes teachers' lessons. The school is aware that standards in writing, particularly in Key Stage 1, are unsatisfactory and this area is being targeted as a priority next term, when further training is planned for teachers. The pupils are encouraged to perform in the Christmas production and in class assemblies. The school regularly holds book weeks when pupils dress up as characters. A visit from a live theatre company performing a Viking drama and a puppet theatre help to enhance the pupils' learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

73. The pupils' attainment at the end of each key stage, as shown in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was well below the national average and very low in comparison to similar schools. Since the last inspection, results in these tests have fallen, although for Key Stage 2 the 1999 results were slightly better than those for 1998. In both key stages very few pupils achieved standards above average and a large proportion achieved only low standards. The difference between the standards of boys and girls was not significant.
74. The standards of pupils presently at the end of each key stage are significantly improved. In Key Stage 2 over four fifths of the pupils have the expected standards for their age and this is a good proportion. A small number achieve above this level and this proportion remains lower than it should be. Work in the pupils' books largely shows that they are gaining an appropriate range of strategies to calculate numbers and they have learned a sound range of aspects of the programmes of study. However, there is little work aimed at helping higher-attainers to achieve above average levels. These findings are reflected in the unpublished results of the National Curriculum tests for 2000. Discussion with pupils and the work in their books show sound progress and wide learning from all aspects of the programme of study. Pupils can also apply their past learning to solve problems, such as furnishing a fictitious room within a budget. Their work is mostly at the level expected for their age, with few examples from a higher level. For example, pupils have little experience of multiplying unknowns in algebra, or of calculating with more than two places of decimals. Consequently, a good proportion of the eleven-year-olds has average standards and fewer pupils than last year have low standards. However, few reach high standards.
75. At the end of Key Stage 1, the present pupils' attainment is still below average, but achievement is now spread more evenly across a range of standards, showing a better profile than that for 1999 and with over two-thirds having the expected standards. This is reflected in the unpublished National Curriculum test results for 2000. There is still a high proportion of pupils not achieving the expected standards but about half the national average now achieve highly. Although pupils are able to make mathematical deductions well and show a good understanding of place value, there is little work in their books at a high level. However, the progress shown is generally good for seven-year-olds but in discussion many are insecure in aspects of their basic knowledge of numbers, for example, those that add up to make ten.
76. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but mixed between classes and between different features of teaching. It is sometimes good, usually satisfactory and very occasionally unsatisfactory. Lessons are based on the National Numeracy Strategy and this is effectively providing well focussed lessons, especially in mental numeracy, although more time is needed to secure consistent improvements. In the best lessons, the mental calculation section includes the teacher's questions at a variety of levels to suit pupils of different ability. Another good feature is where the pupils are helped to explain the strategies they use for calculating numbers. In several lessons the pupils learnt by carefully reflecting in order to answer the question and others learnt from their answers. The most effective mental sessions are planned to help pupils meet the key objectives for the year and to link effectively with other parts of the lesson. However, in some lessons, the work in these sections is not sequenced progressively or tests the pupils rather than teaches them new skills.

77. Teachers have satisfactory and sometimes good knowledge of what they teach. Teachers have had a good level of training and this is now to be extended to assistants. The teachers help the pupils to use the correct vocabulary and in most cases give clear explanations. On the few occasions where the teachers' explanations or demonstrations are not clear, the pupils do not concentrate as well and work is slower. A good feature of many lessons is when the teachers share with the pupils clear and specific objectives for their learning. This effective strategy has not yet been extended to sharing amended objectives for pupils of different ability. However, in about half the lessons there is a good match of the tasks set for groups of pupils of different ability. In the other half, the work is generally at the correct level for the class, but not sufficiently challenging for higher-attainers. This is because too little attention is paid to the scheme of work at the next level for these pupils. It accounts, in part, for the comparatively small number of pupils achieving above the expected level in tests done throughout the school. In just one lesson, the work was not well matched for the pupils with lower levels of skill and this was in the infants where there is still a high number of pupils with low attainment. However, generally, pupils with special educational needs are well provided for with suitable tasks and sufficient support. Consequently, they often make good progress.
78. Teachers manage the pupils satisfactorily. In a few lessons this is good. Occasionally, it is weak when teachers are unclear in their explanations, or when they use too few strategies to reduce interruptions. However, in many classes the pupils are keen to learn and have satisfactory or good attitudes to the subject. This enables a virtuous cycle, in which teaching promotes further interest. The pupils' good communication skills also help them to collaborate and there are many opportunities provided for this during numeracy lessons through the groups organised by teachers. The activities through which pupils are taught are varied from class to class but are effective overall in promoting progress. They vary from the use of a "feely-bag" to encourage the pupils to identify the critical features of three-dimensional shapes to the use of unrelated skill practice worksheets. The support of classroom assistants and of parent-helpers is usually well organised and effective in helping groups of pupils, although it is very occasionally insensitive to the teacher's intentions. The teaching helps the pupils, particularly the juniors, to work with good concentration and to try hard. They respond well to teachers' requests to present work neatly and try to finish reasonably on time, when they have sufficient reminders. Infants also often show that they can get on with work well independently, once they know what to do.
79. Lessons invariably finish with a section for the whole class to discuss what has been learned. These are usually helpful in promoting reflection, communicating results and drawing conclusions. In the best lessons the teachers also use this part to ask further questions and to assess what the pupils now know and understand. Classroom assistants are not asked to record pupils' responses, but occasionally teachers do this using a prepared sheet. However, there are generally too few strategies to help teachers plan the next lesson with appropriately challenging tasks for all the groups in the class. This is because of insufficient recording of what pupils have previously learnt. However, the co-ordinator has provided a good action plan for improvements, including the provision of a common record sheet for assessments and the setting of termly targets for individual pupils. Nevertheless, evaluation of the pupils' work and the effectiveness of teaching is insufficiently rigorous to identify how to help more pupils to reach higher National Curriculum levels. Homework is set, but it is not always specific enough for pupils to easily remember and complete the tasks. The pupils' learning from numeracy lessons is effectively used in a number of other subjects, such as geography and science.

## SCIENCE

80. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, attainment was well below the national average in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels was also well below average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards have improved this year. The unconfirmed test results for 2000 also show the proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected level has risen by a quarter. Very few of the present Year 6 pupils have lower than average attainment and the proportion with high achievement has increased greatly. This is because the school recognised the priority to improve standards in science and in partnership with parents designed programmes of work which linked lessons to homework and required intensive focus on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. Trends over time show significant variations between age groups. A severe dip in attainment in 1998 has been followed by improvements in 1999 and again in 2000. Although there is an imbalance in the proportions of boys and girls in some age groups, there is no significant difference between their attainment.
81. Based on the teachers' assessments in 1999, the percentage of seven-year-olds achieving the expected standards was well below the national average. No pupils achieved a higher standard. Analysis of the results shows particular weaknesses in experimental and investigative science and in the study of living things compared to other schools. Inspection evidence indicates that standards have improved this year, with more pupils achieving average and above standards. Standards at seven and eleven are now similar to those of the previous inspection.
82. By the ages of seven and eleven there is a good range of work evident in the pupils' books which reflects the coverage of the curriculum. Appropriate focus has been placed on addressing the weaknesses identified through the National Curriculum tests. For example, the present seven-year-olds can identify and name the parts of plants and understand that living things have a life cycle. They can sort materials into man-made and natural objects and know that some materials change when heated and that some of these changes are irreversible. Because homework has been well used to support learning in the junior classes, the pupils talk confidently about their experiences. Eleven-year-olds understand the circulatory system and make good use of the specific vocabulary introduced by teachers. For example, they use terms such as "micro-organisms," "seed dispersal" and name the main bones of the skeleton. In discussion, they give well-considered explanations of how to separate various solids and describe accurately reversible and irreversible changes. The pupils have positive attitudes to science and have been well supported by most parents in investigating problems and making use of home computers to access information from the internet. This work provides additional challenges for pupils, including the high achievers. There remains a weakness in the approaches to teaching investigative science. While the pupils have some opportunities to carry out investigations, for example, when discovering the effect of forces on moving objects, there is no systematic approach between classes to enable pupils to plan and record in a scientific way and progressively gain scientific skills. This is a weakness throughout the school.
83. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good or better, the teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils at the beginning of each lesson. They use language precisely and questioning helps the pupils to use scientific terms accurately and this secures good gains in progress. Teachers motivate pupils through the use of interesting resources, for example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils were challenged to recognise bread made from a range of raising agents as part of their micro-biology investigation. Weaknesses in teaching arise when insufficient attention is given to classroom organisation and planning to deliver lessons. For example, in a lower junior class, too much time was taken to distribute resources, which led to restless behaviour and wastage of teaching time. The lack of appropriate instruction to support pupils to record their observations resulted in the lesson's objectives not being met fully. Good links are often made with literacy and numeracy learning. The teachers encourage pupils to talk about their work and to make hypotheses backed up with evidence and numeracy is represented through the recording of pupils' work using lists, charts and graphs.

84. There are weaknesses in the co-ordination of the subject. The co-ordinator has limited knowledge of the Key Stage 2 curriculum and a part-time member of staff helps to co-ordinate this provision. The co-ordinator has been in post for a short time and has not yet had the opportunity to attend training to enable her to provide effective support to staff. Time is allocated for monitoring teaching and learning and the co-ordinator has an overview of termly planning and samples of pupils' work. At present these monitoring systems lack rigour and regularity and there is no systematic way in which any findings can lead to improvements.

## **ART**

85. During the inspection few lessons were observed, but from these, from discussions with pupils, the co-ordinator, a review of pupils' work and displays and of the teachers' planning judgements have been made. The pupils have a range of activities to help them develop appropriate skills. The standards achieved in both key stages are broadly in line with those found in other schools. The infants' work shows that they are developing skills of observation as they draw portraits of each other and they are exploring collage and marbling. In Key Stage 2, the pupils have used chalk and charcoal for sketching to explore the effect of light and dark shading. They painted the front of a Greek temple in some detail and made paper-maché masks. Other activities include mixing colours, copying paintings or painting in the style of a well-known painter such as Matisse, collage using a variety of textures and clay work. Each pupil has a sketchbook that is used periodically throughout the school but guidance is needed on how to use them to develop pupils' skills best. Discussion with Year 6 pupils confirmed their use of a variety of media but that they have had limited opportunity to consider the work of well-known artists, of non-western art or to use textiles. Aspects of the subject are used in other lessons such as history, information technology and religious education. There are many such examples displayed around the school.
86. The art co-ordinator is in the process of reviewing the scheme of work in the light of the new National Curriculum and in drawing up guidelines for the development of appropriate skills and techniques. Further training for teachers is planned to improve teaching in the subject. The subject is also enhanced by aspects of provision for others. For example, during the inspection some infants gained a better understanding of clay and links with local history by visiting a local pottery museum, where they attended a clay workshop to design and make plates and mugs.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

87. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 and only one in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on discussions with teachers and pupils, scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards are broadly similar to those found in the average school and to those described at the time of the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress.
88. Infant pupils are introduced to the processes of designing, planning, making and evaluating. Pupils in the reception class use a range of materials such as card, paper and fabrics to make spiders and webs, linking to their science investigations. They are encouraged to make decisions about the most suitable way of joining materials together. Through these practical tasks the pupils learn to assess the most successful adhesives to make joins, for example. The practising of skills, such as cutting with scissors, provides additional challenges for the youngest pupils. Seven-year-olds can describe how they have made a range of structures. Most can identify those that have been successful and evaluate how to improve their less successful ideas.

89. Progress in the junior classes is enhanced by the use of technology notebooks in Year 3 which identify the challenge, a range of ideas, the pupils' independent decisions about their chosen design and details of the materials chosen to complete the task. The pupils then record the steps they take to make the product and evaluate the outcomes and how they might improve their work. By the age of eleven, the pupils enthusiastically describe how the subject is linked to others such as history, drama and science. Good links are made with these subjects and enhance the pupils' learning, enabling them to describe the purpose of their investigations and recognise how techniques have changed over time and within different cultures. For example, they described how they used batteries to power model cars and how masks were used by the Ancient Greeks in theatres.
90. In the one lesson observed, teaching was of good quality and pupils made good progress in their learning. The teacher led a well-focused introduction, which gained the pupils' interest and set out precisely what was expected in the lesson. As a result, they listened carefully and responded positively to opportunities to ask and answer questions. They made decisions about how to make weather vanes based on their knowledge of the strength of materials and applied skills of estimating and measuring, cutting using a saw and joining different materials. Pupils persevered to meet the teachers' high expectations and achieved the lesson's objectives. Behaviour was good and health and safety rules were applied effectively. Good collaboration was evident as pupils shared ideas and drew diagrams to illustrate their designs. The teaching assistant gave good support to groups of pupils and was well briefed.
91. Discussions with the co-ordinator indicate that the subject has not been a recent priority for the whole school. The shared allocation of time between art and design and technology is not monitored. When art and design and technology are taught in the same lesson, there is a lack of clarity about the amount of time groups of pupils spend in these subjects. The co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning or to lead staff training. The curriculum is under review in the light of new national guidance and the school has adopted guidelines to help provide progression.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

92. Groups of lessons in this subject are often taught alternately with history. At the time of the inspection little geography was timetabled. However, one lesson was observed, a sample of the pupils' work was reviewed, displays and planning were seen and discussions were held with pupils and the co-ordinator. These show that the pupils are taught from a range of topics. Standards are similar to those found in other schools and learning is satisfactory in both key stages. The infants study the local area, particularly around the school. They begin to develop mapping skills by drawing simple route maps from home to school and using a key. Simple co-ordinates are introduced and discussions are held about what the pupils' like or dislike about their town. Links with the pottery industry feature in both this curriculum area and history.
93. The juniors identify similarities and differences between Stoke and India, looking at housing, transport, occupations and other aspects. They begin to appreciate the need for water, studying the water cycle and the course of rivers. Year 6 pupils carry out a traffic survey and analyse the results, using graphs to display their findings. On a residential visit, Year 6 pupils undertake a study of a settlement and compare it to their own environment. Further work is done on four-figure co-ordinates and using a compass, but most are not familiar with Ordnance Survey Maps, nor do they recognise the importance of the River Rhine (part of the rivers theme) as a means of transport. However, most pupils use appropriate vocabulary to describe rivers such as "meander, erosion, mouth and source". Overall, the pupils' general geographical knowledge is just satisfactory but with no high attainment.
94. Geography and history are included on the timetable so that one term has a history bias, the next a geography bias and the third term a joint topic; usually concerning the local area, or a comparison of two differing locations. The time allocation for geography is consequently hard to monitor and the progression of skills can be disjointed. The co-ordinator is reviewing the scheme of work and

amalgamating teachers' curriculum requests with nationally recommended guidelines. She is aware that the policy needs updating.

## **HISTORY**

95. Standards have been at least maintained since the last inspection and are now similar to those found in many schools in Key Stage 1 and better in Key Stage 2. In the juniors, the pupils learn well and make good progress because the teaching is usually good. There are challenging questions which help the pupils to reflect on what they have learnt and to make historical deductions. Consequently, most of the juniors remember information about the periods they have studied as well as the skills and understanding they have gained, such as being able to place events in order or distinguish between the myths and the real lives of the ancient Greeks. In the infants, the pupils' learning is satisfactory. Although it is limited in quantity, the work in the pupils' books shows satisfactory progress, for example, they have made effective comparisons between toys from previous periods and today's, but not made a time-line to show the periods graphically. Throughout the school the pupils' knowledge is better than their skills and understanding of the key elements of the subject.
96. In most lessons, the pupils show good interest and want to learn. They are keen to understand about the past and how it affects their lives presently. For example, pupils of Year 2 were interested to learn how pottery was made without the use of electricity in Victorian times. They were to visit a local pottery and museum. The teaching is often enthusiastic and also relates what the pupils are learning to their present lives thus helping to maintain a good level of interest.
97. Teaching is good in the juniors and satisfactory with good features in the infants. The teachers' good knowledge of the subject usually enables the pupils to learn information as well as understanding and skills, despite there being little guidance for the teachers, since there is no scheme of work in place. The policy correctly stresses the importance of skills and understanding but there is little guidance as to how these can be taught progressively alongside the information taught in the units of study. The co-ordinator plans to provide a scheme of work based on the new National Curriculum incorporating planned progression in the key elements of the subject. However, many teachers use discussion periods to promote learning in these aspects, and a set of published books help teachers provide information but seldom are artefacts used. The pupils are often asked to explain what they have learnt in their own words and this is effective in helping them to reflect, but seldom are tasks made easier for pupils of low attainment. However, these pupils are often given extra support during the lessons and this helps them to keep up, especially those with special educational needs. The teaching methods used are effective and augmented with relevant and interesting visits and other activities such as the use of videos or information technology to present findings and to retrieve information. Resources are satisfactory and include suitable books and printed materials for each of the study units taught. However, there are few artefacts available.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

98. The school's previous report judged standards to be in line with national expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. Only one timetabled lesson was observed during the inspection but discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator and the reviewing of the pupils' work enabled judgements about the pupils' achievements and overall provision. While standards remain similar to those of the last inspection there is some evidence of underachievement. This is because too many pupils have limited access to facilities slowing the progress they make. The higher-attaining pupils often have home computers or are in classes where the teachers are more confident and provide more frequent use of equipment.

99. By the age of eleven, pupils have experienced an appropriate range of activities, for example in word processing they are confident to copy and paste, load disks, change fonts, save files and print their work. Computer programmes have been used regularly as part of the revision timetable in preparation for tests. Opportunities for pupils to use control-technology devices include a floor turtle for infants and more advanced commercial products for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. During the inspection the eleven-year-olds were preparing a multi-media presentation about the Ancient Greeks. Some of the pupils' work in the subject is displayed including a range of word-processed poems and stories and a display of symmetrical patterns using two lines of symmetry. It is estimated that three-quarters of the present eleven-year-olds have a computer available at home. Good use is made of this facility to access information to support the pupils' homework. During the inspection there was a very good response from the pupils when they were asked to research information about the poet Ted Hughes at home. A significant proportion of the responses came as a result of the use of computers at home. However, many pupils' keyboard skills are slow. The school has recognised this and is introducing strategies to improve the pupils' speed and confidence in typing and locating function keys. Both boys and girls have equal access to school computers. However, pupils without the regular use of a computer at home are disadvantaged to some extent. The school has yet to find ways to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to extend their skills further.
100. Pupils observed using school computers work sensibly and are enthusiastic about their experiences in developing skills and knowledge. They have a good awareness that the equipment has to be used carefully and responsibly. They support each other well in their learning, co-operating well for pair work and sustain concentration and motivation well, overall.
101. In the Key Stage 1 lesson observed, a group of four pupils received direct teaching using the computer and gained the skills to use the CD ROM independently. However, other pupils in the class were not involved and quickly lost concentration in their tasks. There are still too few computers to enable the subject to be taught in a class setting. The school has the resources to provide additional hardware but an appropriate base for a computer suite has not been located. Consequently, the teaching of skills is not as regular as it should be and the pupils sometimes have too little time to practise any new skills.
102. Recording of what the pupils have been taught, what they know and what they can do is difficult because there is no regular whole school system for the storage of pupils' work or monitoring their progress. Teachers use their own methods. The headteacher reviews the teachers' planning and the co-ordinator reviews pupils' work in classrooms where possible. These systems lack rigour and ways in which the outcomes can lead to improvements. Furthermore, the time planned for teaching the subject and for the pupils' use of computers is often insufficient and this limits their progress. Whole class lessons are seldom planned and access by pupils to the class computer is not often identified, thus making the monitoring of the curriculum time balance uncertain. Plans indicate the intention to teach the subject in blocked units but not for regular, sequenced progression in gaining skills.
103. There has been unsatisfactory progress in improving the school's provision since the last inspection and the progress of pupils in gaining skills is unsatisfactory. However, the school has not yet received resources funded through national initiatives and training is planned for staff in the next academic year. The subject has already been identified as a priority for improvement in the school plan, and the co-ordinator has a clear vision for developments and is aware of the main aspects needing improvement. A nationally recommended scheme of work is gradually being implemented within the school. The co-ordinator is also presently auditing staff levels of confidence and expertise in preparation for staff training next year through the New Opportunities Fund. The co-ordinator also provides good guidance for colleagues and has good subject knowledge.



## MUSIC

104. Pupils' learning in music is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to clap quite complex rhythm patterns accurately. They can also sing expressively with enthusiasm, keeping in tune well. They are beginning to understand the importance of pitch and dynamics, learning the appropriate Italian names such as "piano" and "forte". The standard of attainment for this key stage is relatively strong and at least in line with that of most schools, whereas in Key Stage 2 it is just in line. In Key Stage 2, pupils were practising a short cantata "Jonah Man Jazz" to perform for the school at the end of term. The standard of singing during these lessons was satisfactory but some pupils' pitch was weak, particularly on the higher notes and here the words were less clear. However, during a hymn practice when the pupils were singing material more familiar to them the sound was much improved and the Year 6 pupils enjoyed the singing, being both enthusiastic and keen. The teachers' planning and a discussion with the music co-ordinator show that other aspects of the subject are taught, such as composition, the learning of notation both non-standard and standard and the recording of music using graphic scores. Pupils appraise music but have limited opportunity to listen to non-western music. There has been some experience of devising drone accompaniments and listening to Indian music.
105. Pupils enjoy music and particularly in Key Stage 1 show great enthusiasm for the subject. They are well behaved, concentrate and are keen to respond to the teachers' questions. They listen carefully to instructions and to each other.
106. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is very good and is largely undertaken by a specialist peripatetic teacher employed by the school. The pupils are offered a good range of experiences and benefit from the teacher's enthusiastic approach, achieving above expectations. The lessons are well planned, have a good pace and contain a variety of activities that keep the pupils' very interested. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Where it is good pupils are given appropriate activities to extend their learning and develop appropriate skills. In some lessons opportunities are missed for developing the pupils' singing techniques and the choice of material does not always reflect the pupils' singing ability. However, where the material is well matched to the pupils' needs, the teaching is more successful. In Key Stage 2 most of the lessons are taught by the co-ordinator and so the school makes good use of the specialist teaching in both key stages. The teachers have good relationships with all the classes and manage the pupils well.
107. The well-qualified music co-ordinator is reviewing the scheme of work in the light of new curriculum requirements and other national recommendations. The amount of time allocated for the subject varies from class to class and the stated allocation is small. In this respect provision has changed little since the last inspection. However, a number of enriching experiences is provided. Extra-curricular activities include a choir and recorder lessons. The pupils sing in the community at Christmas entertaining the senior citizens and have taken part in the City Schools Big Concert. At present brass instrumental tuition is offered but the school is hoping to extend this to include woodwind.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. A relatively small number of lessons were observed during the inspection and these did not provide a full range of evidence across the subject and the key stages. In Key Stage 1 the pupils are able to control their bodies when jumping and landing and the majority can perform forward rolls. However, the learning through Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory, as the movement skills of Year 2 pupils are no better than those of reception pupils. In Key Stage 2, the pupils of Year 6 have good skills in throwing, catching and batting. Many of the pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 learn to swim the required distance of 25 metres. The standards achieved by the end of the key stage are at least average, which is an improvement on the previous inspection when standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were below national expectations.

109. Planning shows that the pupils receive an appropriate range of activities; including dance, gymnastics, athletics and swimming for Years 4, 5 and 6. Year 6 pupils have a residential visit and carry out a course in orienteering. The pupils enjoy the subject and the older ones are keen to be involved in the extra-curricular activities, which include football, cricket, netball and athletics.
110. The co-ordinator is, at present, devising a new scheme of work based on nationally recommended guidelines, which will provide guidance for teachers to help pupils gain appropriate skills. Further training for teachers is also needed in the use of such guidance in providing sequenced progression in developing the pupils' skills.