

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ELISABETH'S CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106110

Headteacher: Mrs Shirley Tootell

Reporting inspector: Mr Jean-Pierre Kirkland
4483

Dates of inspection: March 11 – 14 2002

Inspection number: 194475

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Elisabeth's Way Reddish Stockport
Postcode:	SK5 6BL
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend N. Hawley
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

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4483	Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Registered Inspector	Geography Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school How high are standards? How well pupils are taught? How well is the school and managed? What should the school should do to improve further?
19443	Nancy Walker	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal achievements How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
6282	Parveen Raja	Team Inspector	Mathematics History Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
31046	Christine Nuttall	Team Inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Elisabeth's Church of England Primary School is voluntary controlled and has 261 pupils on roll. This includes forty children who attend the nursery part-time. The school is slightly larger than most primary schools. There has been a ten per cent fall in numbers since the school was previously inspected, largely due to smaller class sizes and increased rigour over appeals. The school is a Grade II listed building situated about 2 miles north east of Stockport town centre. It is at the centre of a fifty street community, where economic and other circumstances are far from favourable. Unemployment is high and local industries are in decline. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low; not all the children in the nursery remain in the school and in general, higher-attaining pupils seek education nearer their homes. Attainment on entry to the reception class is well below average. Currently two out of every five children are on the school's register of special educational need. About half of these are involved with outside specialists, with a significant majority having moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural problems. The number of pupils on the register of special educational need and those with specific statements are well above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. It is effective in enabling most pupils to make good progress over time, largely due to good teaching and learning in classrooms. There are very good support and care facilities, and the provision for the special educational needs pupils is very good overall. Leadership and management are good with some very good features. As a result, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The bulk of its pupils make good progress and achieve well; standards for junior pupils are above average in art and design, music and religious education;
- Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery and reception classes;
- Teaching and learning are good overall;
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, who make achieve well;
- Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for their care and welfare;
- Good management and leadership, with some very good features, enable effective strategic decisions to be taken, thereby improving overall provision.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics throughout the school and science in the juniors;
- The learning opportunities for the small proportion of higher-attaining pupils;
- The marking of pupils' work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall improvement since the previous inspection in 1997 has been satisfactory with some good features. There have been great strides made in the provision of care and welfare of pupils, especially in the area of behaviour management. Pupils with special educational needs who account for two out of five pupils in the school are supported very well. Key issues from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed. These include good improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, planning and schemes of work, developing very good assessment procedures and ensuring better standards in the presentation of pupils' work. Despite significant improvements in teaching, higher-attaining pupils are not reaching the levels they should. Some teachers are beginning to plan more challenging work, but this is not yet a consistent feature of all lessons. However, pupils' achievement overall has improved. The good quality of leadership and management places the school well to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E	E*	E*
Mathematics	E	E	E*	E*
Science	E	E	E*	E*

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

On the basis of these results in the national tests in 2001, pupils at the school were in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. The school had a large proportion of lower-attaining pupils and although they did their best, their results compromised the overall outcomes. These results are not typical generally. In previous years, standards had been rising slowly, and at a similar rate to the national trend. However, pupils have not been successful in getting the higher grades in Year 2 and Year 6 in the national tests. This largely accounts for the well below performance in national tests in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, and the low grades overall in Year 6. In the work seen, inspectors found standards to be better than those recorded in last year's national tests. In English, pupils' work shows standards to have risen from well below to below average. There is a similar picture in mathematics. Standards of reading and number work are currently average overall. Writing, although improving, and other aspects of mathematics are below average. In science, inspectors found standards to be average for pupils in Year 2, and below average in Year 6. These represent good levels of achievement throughout the school. Despite these improvements, the small numbers of higher-attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they could in each year group. The progress being made by the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs throughout the school is consistently good, especially in literacy. Pupils reach above average standards in art and design, music and religious education in Years 3 to 6. Standards in all other subjects are broadly average with good progress overall between Years 1 and 6.

Children make a good start to their education in both the nursery class and reception class. Standards are well below average when children enter reception and progress is good. Despite this good progress, the majority of children are still not ready to start the National Curriculum by Year 1. Targets set by the school for the current year are high enough and achievable. They are significantly higher than last year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils like coming to school and they settle down to work well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good behaviour is a significant strength of the school; at work and at play, pupils have learnt the basic principles of good behaviour effectively. No pupils were excluded last year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils respond well to the successful emphasis on their personal development. Relationships are very good and pupils enjoy taking responsibility.
Attendance	Satisfactory; in addition, most pupils arrive on time and the school has high expectations of a prompt start to learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good overall and there has been a significant improvement in both since the previous inspection. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has fallen substantially and the amount of good or better teaching has risen significantly.

Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is consistently good. Teachers and support staff provide a good range of interesting, stimulating and relevant experiences for children. Basic skills are learnt effectively and progress is good. Children with special educational needs are identified early, and good strategies are put in place to ensure that their needs are met.

Teaching and learning in English are good and in mathematics they are satisfactory. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught and learnt well. Teaching and learning are at their best for pupils in the nursery and reception classes, and for pupils in Years 3 to 6 generally. The strengths include:

- Setting clear targets for pupils to achieve in lessons: pupils know what they are learning and why;
- Good planning with plenty of opportunities for independent or group work;
- Very good management of pupils who learn well in a very positive atmosphere;
- Good use of resources, including computers, and deploying support assistants well.

This ensures basic skills are learnt effectively and pupils' interest is sustained.

Where teaching is less successful, mainly in Years 1 and 2, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils might achieve. The pace of learning is slower, and in some cases the higher-attaining pupils do not get challenged sufficiently well. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and their learning of basic skills and technical language is generally good. Homework is satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; the curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. The level of additional activities is good and helps to enhance effectively the quality of learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is very good; as a result, pupils achieve well throughout the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good and a significant strength in providing a stable and effective learning environment for pupils. Special strengths lie in the provision for moral and social development and in ensuring that all pupils are included in all activities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall, with significant strengths in ensuring pupils' health and safety and in promoting good behaviour. The assessment procedures are very good. Insufficient use is made of this information to challenge pupils in lessons, especially higher-attaining pupils.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has a good partnership with parents. The school makes parents welcome and it listens effectively to their concerns and problems. There is a very good partnership established with parents of children in the nursery and reception classes.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall, with a significant strength in the head and deputy head having a clear vision of where the school is heading. The work of the school is guided well by a good school improvement plan.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors support the school well and have a sound knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. Good systems are in place for analysing and evaluating the school's performance, but insufficient emphasis is currently being placed on the standards reached by higher-attaining pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school seeks to obtain the best value it can when taking decisions about spending. Resources are generally used well for the benefit of improving learning. The quality of accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory, staffing levels are good and support assistants are deployed effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The good progress their children make;• Care and welfare of pupils;• The way the school listens to parents and takes them seriously;• Extra-curricular activities;• Support for SEN pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework;• Standards, which are low.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. Homework was found to be satisfactory overall. Standards in English, mathematics and science were found to be improving but still not up to national average levels. Inspectors judged that this was largely because the higher-attaining pupils were not being challenged sufficiently highly and consistently throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Inspectors found that pupils' standards are below average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. This is a similar finding to the previous inspection. Standards are below average in Year 2 in English and mathematics, which is similar to the previous inspection. Standards have risen to average in science, showing improvement since the previous inspection.

Strengths in pupils' standards and achievements are:

- good achievement in the nursery and reception classes;
- above average standards in Year 6 in art and design, music and religious education;
- good achievement by pupils with special educational needs;
- good achievement in the majority of subjects.

Areas for improvement include:

- the below average standards in English and mathematics for pupils in Years 2 and 6;
- the below average standards for pupils in science in Year 6;
- the insufficiently good achievement made by higher attaining pupils in some lessons.

2. The results of national tests in 2001 in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science showed pupils' standards to be very low and in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. The picture was identical when compared to similar schools. However, that particular year group contained some pupils of very low attainment, with twenty per cent having joined the school after Year 2. These results are not typical of the school. In previous years, although results were well below average, trends had been rising. Inspectors found that this was still the case with the current pupils. They were performing at below, rather than well below average levels in the three main subjects. The pattern is very similar in Year 2, except in science, where inspectors found standards to be broadly similar to the national average. One of the reasons for the unsatisfactory performance of pupils is the lack of higher levels reached by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Further, inspectors found that throughout the school, a small but significant minority (about ten per cent) of higher-attaining pupils are not making as much progress as they should. This is very much outweighed by the large numbers of other pupils, including those with special educational needs, approaching three out of five pupils in the Year 3 to 6 classes, whose overall achievement is good, given the low starting points.
3. Children enter the nursery with very low attainment. Through very good provision, they achieve well. However, only about half continue on into the reception class, where they are joined by others who have not attended the school's own nursery. Initial assessments of all these children shows that standards vary year-on-year, but are well below average overall. Children make good progress overall, but despite this, a significant majority, in the region of seventy per cent, are not ready to start the National Curriculum when they enter Year 1.

4. Standards are not yet high enough in English and mathematics, and in science in Years 3 to 6. However, pupils' achievement throughout the school averages out as good in most subjects. It is never less than satisfactory in English and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well in English and reach average levels in reading by Year 6. Despite much effort by the school, writing, although improving, is still not up to scratch by Year 6. Most pupils learn to speak clearly and with confidence. In mathematics, work on number is average in most classes, but other aspects, such as space, measurement and data handling, lag behind. In science, there have been improvements in Years 1 and 2 so that pupils are currently working at average levels. This is not yet the case in Years 3 to 6, but pupils have improved since last year's national tests results. Pupils reach above average standards in art and design, music and religious education by Year 6 and these are improvements since the previous inspection. The tables below show standards and achievement from Year 1 onwards and further detail can be found in the subject paragraphs in Part D of this report.

Standards for pupils in Years 1 and 2:

SUBJECT	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE
English	♦		
Mathematics	♦		
Science		♦	
Art and design		♦	
Design and technology		♦	
Geography		♦	
History*			
ICT		♦	
Music		♦	
Physical education		♦	
Religious education		♦	

Standards for pupils in Years 3 to 6:

SUBJECT	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE
English	♦		
Mathematics	♦		
Science	♦		
Art and design			♦
Design and technology		♦	
Geography		♦	
History*			
ICT		♦	
Music			♦
Physical education		♦	
Religious education			♦

Pupils' achievements:

The two tables below show the amount of progress pupils make in each of their subjects.

Achievement up to Year 2:

SUBJECT	UNSATISFACTORY	SATISFACTORY	GOOD
English		♦	
Mathematics		♦	
Science			♦
Art and design			♦
Design and technology			♦
Geography			♦
History*			
ICT			♦
Music			♦

Physical education			♦
Religious education			♦

Achievement up to Year 6:

SUBJECT	UNSATISFACTORY	SATISFACTORY	GOOD
English			♦
Mathematics		♦	
Science		♦	
Art and design			♦
Design and technology			♦
Geography			♦
History*			
ICT			♦
Music			
Physical education			♦
Religious education			♦

* Very little history was seen being taught during the inspection and insufficient to make a secure judgement on progress or standards.

5. Pupils with special educational needs, who form the largest single group in the school, achieve well. Sometimes pupils are taken out of lessons to improve basic skills. This works well, with good progress being made towards the targets in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In-class support is good. Some of this support is focused on those pupils with emotional or behavioural problems, and this is very effective in helping them learn. Higher-attaining pupils do not always receive such a good deal. Sometimes, expectations of what they might achieve are too low, and they do not always make the progress of which they are capable. The school has plans to improve this aspect of learning. A recently agreed policy for the more able, including the gifted and talented has now begun to help staff identify these pupils; the school is aware that the next step is to provide more appropriate work for them, which currently is lacking in a significant minority of lessons. The achievable targets set by the school for eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics this year are significantly higher than last. However, they do not yet take account of the potential of these more capable pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. This area is a strength of the school, principally in the following areas:
- pupils' attitudes and behaviour in classrooms and other parts of the school enable improved learning;
 - pupils' personal development and relationships are very positive and a great boost to learning;
- One minor area for improvement:
- encourage some pupils in Years 1 and 2 to adopt the high standards set by children in the nursery, reception class and in the rest of the school.
7. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. Parents confirm that their children are keen to attend school and the fact that the school attendance figures are consistently matching those of all schools across the country is testimony to pupils' attitudes. Punctuality is much better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils enjoy their lessons and they try hard to produce their best work and they are proud to show it. Despite some lessons being rather slow, the majority of pupils maintain these good attitudes. However, some of the pupils in Years 1 and 2 have not yet developed this level of self-discipline and easily lose interest and struggle to concentrate. This is usually the result of less inspiring teaching.

8. Pupils' behaviour is good and no pupil has been excluded for a number of years. During the inspection, behaviour amongst pupils in Years 3 to 6 was very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are polite to each other and to adults in the school. However, the school's records show that a minority of pupils, mostly those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, behaves badly at times and are prone to temper tantrums. The school manages these aspects of behaviour very effectively. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are, however, often noisy and unruly in the corridors and need a high level of supervision to keep them under control.
9. Personal development and relationships are very good indeed especially amongst older pupils. They are extremely tolerant of one another and totally accept that some pupils are very clever or talented and yet others are not but the latter are not ridiculed in any way. They understand that some of their friends have difficulties with their behaviour and do not hold a grudge if they have been the brunt of their anger at some time. Pupils get on very well together and share ideas and equipment very well. They also show independence in their learning. For example, Year 6 pupils will sensibly go and find a reference book or piece of equipment in the classroom to help them rather than bothering the class teacher. They also take on responsibility very well. For example, groups of Year 5 pupils take it in turns to be 'Playground Squad'. They ensure that everyone has a friend, or encourage them to join in games. If anyone has an accident they immediately come to their aid. Another good example of pupils' sensible and mature demeanour was seen at the pupils' School Council; they chose to stick to their own agenda and keep to the priorities decided on by their own classmates and commendably would not be cajoled into discussing a topic raised by the headteacher.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. Teaching and learning are good overall. This is a strength of the school and there has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has fallen substantially and the amount of good or better teaching has risen significantly.
Strengths in the teaching and learning are:
 - significant improvements since the previous inspection in the quality of teaching and learning;
 - setting clear targets in lessons - pupils know what they are learning and why;
 - good planning with plenty of opportunities for independent or group work;
 - very good management of pupils who learn well in very positive atmosphere;
 - good use of resources, including computers, and deploying support assistants well so that pupils with special educational needs make good progress;
 - a good start is made to learning new skills through good quality teaching in the nursery and reception classes.Areas for improvement are:
 - teachers having higher expectations of what some pupils might achieve;
 - the pace of learning and the challenge for the average and higher-attaining pupils in some lessons;
 - marking of pupils' work.
11. Unsatisfactory teaching has fallen from almost eighteen per cent to three per cent; there has been a significant improvement in the proportion of good and better teaching. This was judged to account for almost two-thirds of the teaching overall, ensuring improved progress and learning in lessons. In one lesson out of five, teaching and learning were judged to be at least very good with one example of excellent practice. As a result of these improvements, learning is getting even better. For example,

standards in science for seven-year-olds are now average and, standards for eleven-year-olds in music and religious education are above average. Standards in English and mathematics, while still below average, are much better than those recorded for seven- and eleven-year-olds in last year's national tests. The same is true of science in Year 6.

11. In English, teaching and learning are good overall, with the bulk of the better teaching being in Years 3 to 6. Where the teaching is good, pupils learn basic skills of reading and writing. Their handwriting is a clear focus and very good progress in improving quality of style and presentation is made. Reading standards are good, with pupils being provided with plenty of opportunities to read texts in classes beyond English, as well as books for reading at home. Teaching and learning in mathematics are satisfactory overall. There is insufficient challenge in many lessons for higher-attaining pupils, and they do not get as good a diet as they need in all aspects of the subject. Generally, the satisfactory teaching is keeping pupils on track in lessons, and mental sessions provide some stimulus and excitement. Less emphasis is placed on problem solving, especially for average and higher-attainers, and measurement and recognition of shapes. As a result, learning in these areas is not as good as in number work.
12. Teaching and learning are at their best for pupils in the nursery and reception classes, and for pupils in Years 3 to 6 generally. Teaching of children in the nursery and reception classes is consistently good. Teachers and support staff provide a good range of interesting, stimulating and relevant experiences for children. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy, as well as communication and personal development are taught well and are learnt effectively. Progress in developing these skills is consistently good for these younger children.
13. Very good teaching and learning occurs when the teacher sets very clear targets, keeps time boundaries clear, and moves the pupils on from one task to a more challenging one during the lessons. Good examples of this were seen in Year 3 and Year 6 music, in Year 6 ICT and in Year 5 and 6 English. Clear objectives for the lesson were shared with pupils at the outset. Pupils then understood what they were going to learn and why. They were given tasks which suited their capabilities, but which made them think. Teachers ensured that all pupils were included in questioning, which was designed so that pupils were to be made give more in-depth answers. Pupils had ample opportunities to discuss their work with one another, or in groups. In music, they were provided with opportunities to share what they had achieved. In ICT they were given a chance to come out and 'experiment' with the computer to achieve the correct answer. Practising their speaking and listening skills was a prominent feature of most English lessons. In these lessons, with a good steady pace, the quality of learning advanced very well, with highly motivated and interested pupils, eager to achieve their task, please their teacher and enjoy success for themselves.
14. Children with special educational needs are identified early, and good strategies are put in place to ensure that their needs are met. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and their learning of basic skills and technical language is generally good. Where pupils are given additional help, either in lessons with support assistants at their side, or separately outside the lesson, learning is faster. Staff work with a range of interesting and stimulating materials. Pupils learn to relate pictures to words they find difficult to pronounce. They are asked to repeat sounds until they get them correct. They are asked to practice their multiplication tables or writing until they improve. This enables these pupils to understand what is happening in other subjects far more readily when these skills are required.

15. Teaching is less successful for a very small proportion of lessons, when the pace of learning slackens. This particularly affects the progress being made by the small proportion of higher-attaining pupils. They sometimes finish their tasks early, and are not given anything which challenges them to extend their thinking. Sometimes, especially in mathematics, they are given more of the same to practice. Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what these pupils might achieve. Although most staff give different work to different groups of pupils, it is not always appropriate.
16. Marking is generally unsatisfactory. Much of it is routine ticking with comments, usually praising good work. This is fine, but there are many occasions when work needs improving. Teachers are not recording what pupils need to do to improve. This disadvantages those pupils who are keen to learn but do not know where to go next.

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

17. The curriculum overall is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 has improved since the previous inspection. Principal strengths include:
 - very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
 - a good curriculum for the nursery and reception classes, enabling a good start to be made to learning;
 - a good range of activities to enhance the curriculum;
 - effective links with the community and other local schools.

The area for improvement:

 - improve opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to learn more effectively.
18. The very good back-cloth to learning that the school provides through its spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective in enhancing learning. Periods of reflection, sometimes accompanied by prayer, ensure that pupils think about what they are doing. These periods occur in lessons, assemblies and following rare instances of unacceptable behaviour. The strong moral code is known and understood by all pupils. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and respect from pupils. Pupils are made very clear about right and wrong in assemblies and lessons. Pupils are provided with frequent opportunities in and out of the classroom to mix and to collaborate. They are given opportunities through the School Council, or in lessons, to make decisions. For example, in geography, in Year 3, pupils were learning through debate, the advantages and disadvantages of the building of a new local supermarket, including emphasis on environmental concerns such as increased traffic. Cultural provision is good. Many subjects such as art and design, geography, history, English and religious education provide good opportunities for pupils to experience a taste of their own and world-wide cultures. This helps ensure that pupils develop an understanding of the faiths and beliefs of others, while learning the skills of tolerance and respect.
19. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes provides a good range and variety of opportunities in the six areas of learning. The extent and range of opportunities are good. These contribute effectively to the good progress made by the children. Overall, the curriculum based on the national guidance continues to provide the children with an education that promotes their intellectual, physical and personal development and prepares them for the next stage of their education.

20. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection to revise the whole curriculum to meet new national requirements and to ensure that it carefully builds on pupils' learning from year to year. The school has made good use of national guidelines to help develop its planning. The effective development in policies and planning has successfully addressed the weaknesses identified in the previous report. There is good focus on developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
21. There is good emphasis on English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6, reflecting the priority of raising standards in these subjects. The school gives specific curriculum time to developing pupils' personal and social skills, extending coverage to include supporting pupils in developing healthy lifestyles. This focus on developing their personal and life skills has had a positive impact on improving pupils' attitudes to learning, underpins the school's approaches to behaviour management, and plays a significant role in improving standards. It also promotes racial harmony and understanding appropriately. Effective policies and strategies are in place for sex education and ensuring pupils understand the dangers of drugs.
22. A good range of extra-curricular activities and a wide range of educational visits enrich and support the curriculum. Pupils of all ages gain valuable, historical, geographical, scientific, musical and cultural stimuli and experiences as a result. These include visits to colleges, museums and historic houses and the local historical places of interest, which particularly enhance learning in history and art and design. A residential visit provides for outdoors and adventure activities in geography and physical education. Visits to theatres and concerts at local venues and working with artists and writers in residence and theatre companies stimulate pupils' creative and cultural development. These visits and activities not only contribute to the taught curriculum, but also give valuable opportunities for pupils to learn necessary inter-personal and social skills.
23. The school has established good links with the local and wider community. The school has strong links with the local church. It has established good relationships with the local organisations working with children and some local businesses such as the bank. These contribute significantly to improving the quality of care provided in the school. The school runs a breakfast club at the school which is very well attended by pupils of all ages. Local technical college students give drama and music performances. A teacher from the same college teaches French to Year 6 pupils for one session per week for a term. The school has established effective links with the local primary schools and the high school and ensures a smooth transition on transfer.
24. The contribution of the local community to the pupils' learning is good. A number of visitors come into the school and enhance learning and promote awareness of their role in the local community. For example, in the teaching of local history, staff from the Hat Museum in Stockport work alongside teachers in the school. Pupils use the local facilities to extend their learning. For example, once a week, all pupils have opportunities to use the local Sixth Form College ICT facilities in a local mill to develop their skills further. The school makes effective use of the Internet to establish links beyond the immediate community and to enhance lessons.
25. There are sufficient opportunities for pupils of most interests and aptitudes to make progress. However, higher-attainers do not always receive activities of sufficient challenge to ensure that they work to their capacity. The school pays particular attention to ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of the lower-attaining pupils and the significant numbers of pupils identified as having special educational needs. The targets set for these pupils are clear and the support and learning experiences provided for them are good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

26. The school provides a very good level of care and welfare for pupils and this is a significant strength. This is better now than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Main strengths include:
- staff show very sincere concern for the welfare and safety of their pupils;
 - there are good procedures in place to monitor the growth and development of pupils;
 - very good procedures for assessment of pupils;
 - very good procedures for eliminating bullying or any poor behaviour.
- An area to improve is:
- to use what is known of pupils' academic performance to set them more challenging targets, especially the higher-attaining pupils.
27. The levels of care in the school are very good. There are very good relationships between pupils and adults in school and so pupils feel valued and they want to come to school. In fact, contrary to the norm, several Year 6 pupils do not want to leave in a few months' time but wish they could stay here at St Elisabeth's and 'do it all again'. Pupils clearly like their teachers and sing their praises, proudly saying, 'they are the best'. Pupils do not hesitate to ask for help when they need it because they know that they will willingly be given it. Teachers are calm and patient; they listen to pupils, spend time with them and take a real interest in them. For example, they will often chat to pupils outside lessons about their hobbies and what they have done at the weekend or about their brothers and sisters. In addition, each class has a system known as 'bubble time' whereby pupils can post a note to their class teacher to let them know that they would like some time to talk to them individually. This may be something they are upset about or equally something they are very pleased about.
28. There is a very clear understanding of the school's responsibility to protect pupils from harm. Child protection procedures are very good. All aspects of this are given a very high priority by the headteacher and staff. For example, staff know the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils and they notice if something is wrong. They recognise the signs of possible child abuse. They do not hesitate to record and report concerns. There is equal attention paid to pupils' health and safety. For example, pupils are given valuable guidance in living a healthy and safe life through planned lessons in personal, social and health education. This includes the dangers of talking to strangers, railway safety, and the basics of what to do in an emergency situation. Site inspections are thorough and minor concerns are remedied very quickly. Before pupils are taken on any visit off the school premises, the headteacher insists on a thorough and written risk assessment of the intended venue so that any potential dangers can be avoided.
29. The school has good procedures for monitoring, and in turn, for helping pupils to develop their individual characters. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly targeted and they make good progress. A significant number of parents choose to attend reviews of their children on the special educational needs register when appropriate. There are very good procedures to encourage good behaviour and eliminate any form of bullying. For example, there are very clear rules and staff expect pupils to behave to a high standard, gently reminding them when needed. There are a number of incentives for pupils to aim for, in particular 'golden time'. This is when pupils have the chance for an hour every Friday afternoon to choose from a range of activities across the school but they only get the full hour if they have worked and behaved appropriately. Any misbehaviour or lack of effort results in minutes being

deducted from their 'golden time' but deducted minutes are not irretrievable and can be earned back again if the pupil makes amends. Pupils really look forward to 'golden time' and they try their best to get the full hour.

30. Assessment procedures are very good and enable staff to have full information on all their pupils, including those with special educational needs. The data is carefully analysed, especially information relating to the national tests. However, the information is not yet being used for the full benefit of all pupils. Teachers are beginning to modify the work in classrooms to suit the needs of different groups of pupils. However, teacher expectation of what the higher-attaining pupils and some of those who are average is not high enough. Marking does not inform pupils of how to improve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

31. The school is working hard to foster a good working partnership with parents. Strengths are:
- parents are confident that the school will listen to them and take their concerns seriously;
 - parents receive good quality information about their children and the school.
32. The school has a good partnership with its parents and parents hold the school in high regard. They are pleased with much of what the school does. They are especially pleased that their children are happy at school and that their children, and indeed themselves, feel able to approach members of staff with any concerns or to ask for help. However, a few parents, particularly of pupils in Years 3 to 6, are worried that teachers are not expecting enough of their children and so they do not do as well as they could. Inspectors agree with parents' concerns.
33. The quality of information provided for parents is good. There are regular and informative school newsletters, keeping parents informed of the general life and events of the school. Class newsletters inform parents very well about what is being taught in lessons. Most make suggestions as to how parents can help their child. There are many other ways in which the school keeps in contact with parents such as home-school reading records and homework books. All staff always meet parents in the playground at the end of the day.
34. The quality of the end of year reports has improved and they now satisfactorily inform parents of their child's progress in all subjects. This information is very well supplemented at the parents' evenings each year, when parents are shown individual written targets specifically for their own child and so they are able to help if they want to. Parents are supportive of the school and help where they can. For example, fund raising events are well attended and parents are generous and so the school has been able to buy additional equipment. As a result of the school's efforts in building good relationships with parents, there is now 100 per cent attendance at parents' evenings. This is a big improvement and better than very many schools achieve. However, few parents attend the school's many and regular information evenings to learn more about what and how their children are taught.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

35. Leadership and management are good overall with some very good features. These are strengths of the school in keeping it on the right track towards better provision. Principal strengths include:
- very good leadership from the head and deputy;

- a very strong commitment to ensuring that pupils are supported effectively, cared for well and encouraged to do their best in an improving educational climate;
- good use being made of resources, including ICT, and a determination to obtain the best value for money for the pupils;
- good support and involvement from the governing body.

Areas for improvement include:

- through improved monitoring of teaching, enabling all staff to recognise the need to raise their expectations of what the higher-attaining pupils might achieve.

36. The school is very effectively led. The head and deputy head work as an effective team setting clear goals and targets for future development and improvement. Other key staff are fully consulted and involved and all share in the vision for improvement. This begins in the nursery and reception. Here, good overall provision leads to pupils acquiring their basic skills such as communication, numeracy and personal and social development in a secure learning climate. Management of this area is very good and effective in enabling the youngest children to make a good start to their education. Co-ordinators for the curriculum in Years 1 and 2, and for Years 3 to 6, ably supported by the assessment leader, ensure that learning is continuous and progressive. Other co-ordinators manage their subjects appropriately, with good developments taking place in many, such as English, ICT and music.
37. The work of the school is guided effectively by a good quality school development and improvement plan. This has prioritised well those issues from the previous inspection needing improvement, as well as setting realistic targets for the future. Providing a strong system of care and support to meet the complex needs of many pupils has been a firm priority. There has been significant success in achieving this goal. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural problems are given very good levels of support, guidance and help. Other pupils needing personal or social guidance are also supported very well.
38. The school's finances are effectively managed. All reserves are earmarked for training or improved resources. The funds allocated for supporting pupils with special educational needs are effectively used. The school employs a high number of teachers and other classroom support staff. As a result, all pupils get more individual attention and, in particular, this helps pupils with a special educational or behavioural need to make good progress. Improvements have been made to the accommodation and it is now adequate for the current number of pupils. An additional classroom and teacher have been added. As a result, class sizes have been now reduced to around thirty pupils.
39. Governors provide good support and they have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school. Understanding of the weaknesses of the school is less secure. Many governors come into school regularly and have links, such as to the curriculum, literacy or numeracy. Governors appreciate that the school has had to focus strongly on providing support for many pupils given the high proportion of pupils who have special and complex educational and behavioural needs.
40. The monitoring of teaching and its evaluation are satisfactory. The school is beginning to recognise that it needs to change its direction slightly, and focus more on the academic needs of pupils other than those with special educational needs. There is currently insufficient guidance being given in feedback to staff on how to challenge the

higher-attaining pupils. The school is hoping to achieve this through more training for staff and further awareness raising. Subject co-ordinators have not recognised the need for more effective marking of pupils' work.

41. Statutory requirements are met in full. Given the overall progress that pupils make from their low starting points, and the average costs incurred, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards and improve the educational provision, the staff and governors should:

1. Raise standards in English by:
 - improving the quality and quantity of work provided for all the higher attaining pupils in order that are more challenged;
 - improving the opportunities for practising speaking and listening skills, especially through the use of drama in lessons;
 - using marking more effectively to inform pupils on how to improve their work. (paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 31, 57, 58, 63)
2. Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that higher attaining pupils are more effectively challenged by providing a wider range of stimulating learning activities;
 - ensuring that all areas of the National Curriculum are covered in appropriate depth, especially by providing more opportunities for mathematical investigations and problem solving;
 - ensuring that all pupils develop skills and have opportunities to record their work in a variety of ways and this work is recorded in far more depth. (paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 16, 65, 67, 69,71)
3. Raise standards in science in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - increasing the depth of knowledge and understanding in each of the topics studies;
 - placing greater emphasis on pupils' use of ICT and mathematical skills in investigations and research. (paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 72, 73, 75, 77)
4. Raise teachers' expectations of the potential performance of higher-attaining pupils in all areas of the curriculum by:
 - ensuring that the work they are given is clearly matched to what is known of their capabilities;
 - providing work that challenges their thinking, explores their imagination and helps them to develop their creativity effectively. (paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 18, 26, 31, 41, 57, 65, 72)
5. Use marking and other assessment information to set appropriate targets for pupils to achieve and to ensure they know what to do to improve their performance. (paragraphs 10, 17, 31, 63)

The school improvement plan is already committed to raising standards throughout the school. It also contains details of the proposed developments concerning higher-attaining pupils, including those who are gifted and talented.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	30	24	2	0	0
Percentage	1%	20%	42%	35%	3%	0%	0%

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

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)	20	241
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	55

FTE means full-time equivalent. 20 FTE nursery pupils equate to 41 part-time pupils.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	106

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	17	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	11
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	25	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (73)	74 (66)	76 (76)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	15
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	27	27	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (73)	79 (76)	91 (83)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	17	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	5	7
	Girls	12	9	14
	Total	15	14	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (56)	45 (54)	68 (73)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	4	6
	Girls	12	9	14
	Total	15	13	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (46)	42 (59)	65 (76)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	239
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	113

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	529,877
Total expenditure	513,568
Expenditure per pupil	1902
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,878
Balance carried forward to next year	29,187

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	261
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	27	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	40	0	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	33	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	42	14	2	2
The teaching is good.	67	30	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	27	2	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	23	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	30	2	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	65	32	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	75	23	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	33	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	46	5	0	8

Other issues raised by parents

- Very pleased with support given for SEN pupils;
- Made to feel welcome in a very good school;
- Children are happy at St. Elisabeth's.

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

42. The school gives all children a good start to their education. This is a strength of the school. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and is good.

The main strengths are:

- the very good links the school sets up with parents before children join their classes;
- the good opportunities the school gives for parents to be partners in their children's education;
- the good range of interesting activities that teachers provide each day;
- the teachers' success in developing children's confidence and social skills;
- the children's enjoyment of learning through both play and work.

Areas for development are:

- ensuring better balance in children's daily activities in the nursery;
- improving arrangements to track and record the progress of children's learning each day.

43. The school has a nursery and a reception class for children in the first stage of their education. They attend the nursery half time, either in the morning or afternoon, starting at the beginning of the school year in which they will be four. Children join the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they will be five. When children start nursery, their attainment varies widely but is well below average overall. Half the children leave at the end of their nursery year to start full-time education at other schools. The attainment of children at the start of the reception year is well below what is usual for children of their age.

44. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers manage pupils very skilfully. They have very good knowledge and understanding of young children. As a result, they make best use of time, high-quality resources and teamwork. The curriculum is very good. Its good breadth with interesting and stimulating ideas promotes good learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

45. Teachers have worked hard to develop this area of learning well. Many children lack confidence and independence when they start nursery. Before children come to school, staff make sure that they and their parents know the teachers, the building and some of the routines of school. As a result, children are sure they will be welcomed and well cared for when they join the nursery. They are therefore ready and eager to explore new learning on arrival. The good provision for their personal, social and emotional development helps them settle quickly in the nursery and continues for the children in the reception class, building up their confidence and friendliness. In both classes staff encourage all children to take responsibility for their actions and to make decisions for themselves. As a result, children learn to co-operate, share and take turns. For example, a four-year-old in the nursery asked if she could play with a group role-playing a family. They immediately agreed and said she could be the father. By the start of Year 1, nearly all children are likely to have attain the expected standards in this area of their development.

Communication, language and literacy

46. Standards are likely to be below average at the end of the reception year. When children start in the nursery, many are shy when talking to adults. Some use only a few words, do not speak clearly and are often unused to listening for long periods. Teachers expect and encourage high standards of listening from the start. Good teaching also encourages all children to answer questions and talk about what they are doing. Because all staff listen very carefully to everything children say, there is good achievement. Children steadily gain confidence to take part in and to start conversations with other children and adults. Those who have significant problems get the good quality individual support they need. In the reception class, lots of enthusiastic singing of nursery rhymes and action songs each day, improve the clarity of all children's speech and achievement is good.
47. Children's early reading skills are below average when they start in the nursery. Most of the teaching is satisfactory. Teachers ensure that there are daily opportunities for children to look at books and listen to stories. However, a weakness in the teaching in the nursery is that children do not always choose enough activities to help develop early reading. In both classrooms, good quality labelling and displays of key letters and words help to build up early reading skills. In the reception class staff teach reading well. For example each morning, children work on letter sounds, and they have a daily reading lesson. In their last term in the reception class, children have a literacy lesson each day, following the recommended national guidance.
48. Most children have not taken the first steps in writing when they start in the nursery. In both year groups staff encourage children to think of themselves as writers, whatever their stage of development. Teachers plan activities that encourage writing. For example, in the nursery, there are sand trays for children to practise writing the letters of their names. Teachers expect children in the reception class to sign in on clipboards as soon as they arrive each day. Role-plays in both classes also develop writing skills effectively. For example, children in the reception class made lists and filled in forms in their classroom Post Office. This helps ensure that the children achieve well in writing. However, because language standards are well below average when they start, children are not likely to reach expected standards by the end of their reception year.

Mathematical development

49. Teaching and learning are good. The staff provide plenty of interesting opportunities for children to count, add and subtract numbers. Such learning is always an important part of registration each day. In the nursery, children make good progress in learning to count and recognise numbers to ten. For example they use the programmable toy to 'eat up' a line of cardboard leaves that the teacher gradually built up to ten. When teachers repeat and develop this work in the reception class, they get the children to count beyond ten, and move learning forward at a good rate. In this way, the work in the reception class builds effectively on what children have learned in the nursery. For example, teachers encourage children to do a lot more adding and subtracting in their heads. They are very good at including mental response and oral work in all sorts of practical activities, which extend mathematical understanding. When working with sand and water, children also begin to understand through talk the mathematical concepts of volume and measurement. For example, children in the nursery learn the names of colours and shapes and copy simple patterns. This learning develops well in the reception class. Children move on quickly to devising and recording their own patterns, or creating more complex patterns. Despite such good progress, most

children are not likely to achieve the expected levels by the end of the reception year. This is because standards are very low when they start.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

50. Children achieve well in this area of learning. However, the standard of most children's knowledge and understanding of the world is likely to be below that expected by the end of the reception class. This is mainly because children's below average language and mathematical development slows down their progress in understanding the world about them. For example, they take longer than usual to learn and recognise the names of plants and animals. By providing opportunities for speaking and listening, and directing discussions, the staff check and extend children's understanding of family relationships, celebrations, events and how the children have changed since they were babies. Teachers also make effective use of registration time to talk about important news, the weather and days of the week. Skilled use of stories widens children's knowledge and understanding of different nations, situations and people.
51. Teachers are very good at planning activities that include all the areas of learning in a single theme related to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, children in the nursery enjoyed learning effectively about the life of small creatures and their environments. This was because the teacher gave them many opportunities to observe, count, mime, model, colour, describe, paint, touch, discuss and sing about insects. Children in the reception class learned effectively, by using all their senses in lessons on the theme of bears. For example, they made good use of resources to hand, using speech and imagination in a very well directed role-play of a bear hunt in the play area.
52. Computer skills are as expected for the children's ages. This is because teachers make sure that classroom computers continuously offer high quality programmes that are very interesting to children and easily accessible. As a result the children quickly pick up keyboard and control skills, while at the same time widening their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Physical development

53. Good quality teaching and resources ensure that children achieve well. Teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to practice a range of body movements. Pupils' development benefits from easy access to a safe outdoor play area, a spacious hall and opportunities to play with wheeled toys, such as bikes, cars and prams. As a result, nearly all are likely to expected levels by the start of Year 1. Children in the nursery move to the sound of music and stop when it does. They enjoy stretching, bending, crawling and miming. They quickly learn to move around without bumping into one another, and to sit really still when listening to the teacher. In the reception class, nearly all children change for physical education without help. Most children also make good progress in the physical skills needed when using paintbrushes, pencils, crayons, sand, clay and water. They all have good opportunities to develop their skills in using materials such as 'play dough'. Most children use scissors to cut accurately. As a result of these developments, good hand and eye co-ordination allows the children to use the keyboard and mouse accurately to respond to computer programmes.

Creative development

54. Good teaching helps children make rapid progress towards the planned objectives for their creative development. Consequently, by the time they start in Year 1, most are likely to achieve the skills expected for their age through this very good achievement. They create imaginative pictures and models from a wide range of materials. Teachers ensure that children have frequent opportunities to use the school's good range of musical instruments. They teach children to hold them correctly and, through regular use, children learn their names and know what sounds they make. Children also know where instruments such as castanets and guiros come from. Any spare moments are used for singing or action rhymes, and by the end of the reception class most children know an expected range of songs and rhymes. Children's imagination develops well when they act out parts. This was evident when a small group of children took on the characters of postman and clerical staff in the reception role-play area.

ENGLISH

55. Standards in English are below average throughout the school. This is a similar picture to the one at the time of the last inspection.

The main strengths in English are:

- improvement in writing particularly for different purposes and audiences;
- use of the highly focused guided reading sessions to improve reading;
- provision for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress in their learning;
- strong leadership of the subject with a clear knowledge of strengths and weaknesses.

Areas for development are:

- raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and providing more challenge for the higher-attainers, including better marking of work;
- improving speaking and listening skills through drama and links with other subjects.

56. Standards in English have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. Results from national tests over the last four years at ages seven and eleven show the school's performance remaining well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, the performance of both age groups is also well below average. Inspection findings show clear signs of improvement in both reading and writing throughout the school, but these are not yet sufficient to have a significant impact in national tests. Higher-attainers do not achieve as well as they could and they do not receive sufficient challenge to make an impact on their standard of work.

57. The quality of writing throughout the school shows that teachers have put considerable effort into developing pupils' vocabulary in the context of composing poetry, diaries, letters, newspaper reports and stories. The main strength in the school's teaching of writing is the focus on the development of pupils' active, written vocabulary for a wide variety of purposes. Pupils in Year 1 retell the story of the Three Little Pigs and Year 2 pupils successfully recreate a well known fairy story in their own words. Year 3 pupils make particularly good use of vocabulary in their instructional writing about a variety of topics including 'How to play Monopoly' and 'How to walk a dog'. In Year 6, the writing of poetry improves vastly, as pupils interpret and analyse classic poems including 'The Spinner' by Gwenn Dunn.

58. Standards in handwriting are good. The school has high expectations for pupils' handwriting in exercise books and for the presentation of their work as a whole. The current practice of teaching handwriting through early morning sessions is working well and provides a positive start to the school day. Standards in spelling are improving, although they are below average. Pupils use the 'look-cover-write-check' pattern but do not successfully transfer their knowledge of spelling patterns to their original writing.
59. The school gives additional time to the teaching of reading because teachers are aware that many pupils read very little at home. Standards are below average overall. The introduction of guided reading sessions is having a positive effect on improving reading throughout the school. Carefully constructed reading records give important information on each pupil's progress towards specific targets. Pupils read from sets of books they share in guided reading as well as from books selected from a graded scheme. The school library also provides a good source for pupils to select both fiction and non-fiction books. Each class has a regular library session every week. Some pupils read fluently and with expression. The majority of pupils enjoy fiction and are happy to discuss the plot and characters. They have favourite authors and know how to use information books, by using the contents page, index and glossary appropriately.
60. Speaking and listening skills are below average throughout the school. Given pupils' poor communication skills on entry, the school does not plan sufficiently rigorously to ensure that pupils develop speaking and listening skills effectively. Generally, pupils listen well to teachers and show that they have understood by maintaining eye contact, nodding and smiling. Most of the opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills occur within whole class question and answer sessions at the beginning and end of lessons. Pupils participate well in these class discussions and also develop their speaking and listening skills when they work with a partner or in a small group. There are some opportunities for pupils to work together in a more formal setting. In one Year 6 session, for example, pupils worked on a choral presentation of a poem they were studying. These examples of good practice could be further improved through the systematic teaching of drama and links with other subjects like using the 'hot seating' technique in history. Some good examples using drama techniques were seen in religious education lessons in Year 4 and Year 6.
61. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good, with several examples of very good practice throughout the school. In addition, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs in classes or small groups is at least good and often very good. Throughout the school, the class teaching sessions are consistently more effective than the group activity sessions. This is because many of the tasks teachers set for pupils to tackle independently are too simple and not sufficiently challenging particularly for the higher-attaining pupils. Common strengths include teachers' thorough planning, preparation and use of resources. The choice of text is usually appropriate and wins pupils' interest. The use of literacy partners was used well in Year 2 where pupils sat and worked together in their sentence level work at the start of the lesson. Teachers have clear assessment procedures although insufficient use is made of this information to guide the next stage in pupils' learning. Marking, for example, does not always show pupils how to improve their work.
62. Leadership of the subject is shared between two teachers. They are both knowledgeable and provide a strong lead and appropriate support for staff in their planning. As a result, the school is in a good position to improve in the future. The

subject leaders have monitored progress in English through a variety of methods and are well aware of the need to further raise standards.

MATHEMATICS

63. Standards in mathematics are below average throughout the school. This shows a decline in standards since the previous inspection.
The principal strengths in the subject are:
- overall, good progress in number and algebra and average standards attained by the ages of seven and eleven in this area.
 - good progress and sometimes very good progress made by the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Areas for development are:
- improving the standards of work throughout the school, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils;
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to record their work in a variety of ways and record their work at length, using ICT more effectively;
 - improving the consistency in the quality of marking procedures and assessment information in order to help all pupils improve their work.
64. The results for the Year 2 pupils, although still well below average, have improved. There is now a higher percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 and above. Results of the national tests in 2001 for the eleven-year-olds were significantly lower than the previous years. This was because of the high percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register with learning and behavioural difficulties in that group. The current Year 6 group has almost half its pupils on the special educational needs register.
65. Since the previous inspection, the school has placed great emphasis on developing pupils' confidence in handling numbers, as is evidenced by the work in their books and their participation in lessons. Overall, in all the lessons observed, with the exception of one, learning is never less than satisfactory. Analysis of work in books over a period of time and teachers' planning reflects an over-emphasis on the development of basic numeracy skills. The subsequent underdevelopment of other aspects of mathematics, particularly opportunities for pupils to apply their learning to investigations, constrains progress overall. Achievement of higher-attaining pupils is not as good as it might be. The best practice in lessons and in the scrutiny of work was seen in the Year 3 and the Year 5 and 6 classes where most pupils learn well. The work was recorded in different ways, standards of presentation were good and it was evident from the quality and the quantity of recorded work that lessons moved at a brisk pace. Teachers had written evaluative comments that helped pupils to know what was needed to improve their work.
66. During the inspection, there was little evidence of pupils' mathematical skills being effectively and consistently consolidated in other subjects. ICT skills are used appropriately to reinforce mathematical development appropriately. The school uses a narrow range of computer software and is aware of the need to extend this resource further.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers have high expectations for the lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. They plan appropriately challenging work, which is matched well to pupils' needs. For example in a very good lesson seen in the Year 5

and 6 class, a good range of activities suitable for different ability levels was provided. Learning games are used effectively to make work fun and pupils learn with enjoyment. Subsequently they develop good attitudes to learning and grow in confidence. However, expectations are not equally high for the higher-attaining and some average pupils who frequently work at a leisurely pace. The structure of lessons outlined in the National Numeracy Strategy is implemented consistently and generally to good effect. Teachers share the lesson objectives with the pupils in the introductions but too often, simply read the text from the numeracy framework. Good questioning skills, often seen in the introductory and closing sessions, search pupils' understanding and require pupils to explain their thinking and review their learning. However, this effective teaching strategy is not used consistently across the school. Where teaching is less effective, teachers demonstrate insecure discipline, they become distracted by the inappropriate conduct of one or two pupils and consequently the lesson moves at a slow pace. Throughout the school with the exception of the Year 3 class, teachers do not pay sufficient attention to the amount of work recorded in the books and elsewhere. Marking does not often inform pupils on how to improve further. Most pupils in the top classes recorded five to seven sums. This does not provide sufficient practice for pupils to consolidate their learning and to develop the skill of working at a quick pace.

68. Teachers' knowledge of pupils and skill in managing their conduct and performance enable all pupils to make at least satisfactory progress and often, good progress in relation to prior attainment. Ongoing assessment of pupils' learning and prompt feedback motivates pupils well. Pupils are expected to present their work neatly. In Year 3 there are good examples of comments made in pupils' books, which give clear idea of where pupils have succeeded and how they can improve. Target setting is used well so that pupil and parent have a clear idea of the next stage of learning. These targets are reviewed each term and adjusted accordingly. Additional 'booster' classes for Year 6 and 'Springboard' mathematics for Year 5, are making a significant impact on standards by offering pupils further opportunities to consolidate their learning.
69. The subject is managed efficiently by the co-ordinator. There are effective assessment procedures in place but assessment information is not used consistently to inform planning. Medium term planning is monitored regularly by the co-ordinator and teachers evaluate their short-term plans which secures the appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum. There is insufficient monitoring of completed work. National test results at the end of Years 2 and 6, and optional tests for Years 3, 4 and 5 are analysed in detail. The information gathered from this analysis is used well in identifying pupils who need additional support, which is targeted to their individual needs. The school is now considering including the specific needs of the higher-attaining pupils as well. The challenge for the school is to build on this improvement. It has the capacity to succeed.

SCIENCE

70. Standards are average at the end the infants but below average at the end of the juniors. The school has maintained the standards found at the previous inspection. The main strengths in teaching and learning are:
- good use of investigation as a starting point for new learning
 - success in getting pupils to think scientifically
 - good standards of presentation in recorded work in the junior classes
 - pupils' enthusiasm and persistence in their science lessons

Areas for development are:

- raise standards in the juniors by developing in pupils detailed knowledge and understanding of each topic;
 - increase the challenge of work in junior lessons so as to give the higher-attaining pupils access to the higher levels of learning of which they are capable;
 - the use of ICT and mathematics as tools of investigation and research.
71. There are one or two important features in the background to this picture. Standards in the national tests at the end of the juniors have been well below average for the last four years. Last year they were very low and in the bottom 5% of pupils nationally. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now making up lost ground because the quality of teaching and learning is good. However, there are still some big gaps in their knowledge, and teachers have got used to working at levels that are not always high enough. However, given the low starting points, achievement is good.
72. Nearly all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now achieving well in lessons in the more demanding work of the curriculum in Years 3 to 6. However, almost a third are not reaching the standard expected for their ages. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 explore and investigate well. However their knowledge of living things, including the parts and functions of the human body, the life cycles of creatures and plants is unsatisfactory. They show particular interest in exploring and investigating the physical world, for example light, heat, and electricity. Because of good working relationships and teachers' skill in leading whole-class discussions, pupils in Years 3 to 6 show good understanding of scientific principles. For example, they are very clear and definite about what is needed to make a scientific test fair. They take a lot of pride in recording their investigations carefully. However this work is often slow, short of detail and relies too much on drawing. Pupils are not yet making nearly enough use of charts and diagrams to collect results and make their findings clear. Nor do they make extended use of scientific language.
73. The quality of learning in Years 1 and 2 is sound, because teaching is never less than satisfactory. Below average writing skills prevent pupils in the infant classes also from recording new learning in much detail. Teachers are addressing this shortcoming by getting pupils to set down what they have discovered in little booklets. These allow pupils to record the different stages they observe in the form of illustrations, labels and simple sentences. However, average and lower-attaining pupils are still unable to complete enough written work. At times, noisy and unsettled pupils make practical sessions difficult. This is because they take up too much of the teacher's time and reduce the rate and amount of learning in the lesson. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are also learning well through investigations. For example, they are interested in discovering such things as reasons why ice melts at different rates and how pushing and pulling forces work.
74. Throughout the school, teaching is good. Teachers prepare lessons well. They make sure all of the equipment children need is accessible, and give clear directions for work. In the junior classes teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the topics and clear planning result in effective learning of basic scientific skills. Teachers manage the junior classes very well and make very good use of the time and the resources available in each lesson. In the infant classes all these features of teaching are satisfactory. All teachers give clear demonstrations and directions. Pupils therefore know what to do and why they are doing it. As a result they work well in groups in most lessons. Teachers are also good at referring new learning to pupils' ordinary experiences. This is one of the main reasons for pupils' interest in science and their willingness to try to get to the bottom of problems. Good teaching helps to improve

pupils' concentration, and so the quality of their learning, through clear reviews of previous work at the beginning of each lesson, also improves.

75. Many pupils in Years 3 to 6 work hard in order to take part in the local primary school science fair each year. From time to time, all pupils benefit when drama groups visit to put on performances exploring scientific ideas. Leadership and management are now good. The school has already identified the right priorities for development and standards are beginning to rise.

ART AND DESIGN

76. Standards have been maintained well since the previous inspection and they are now above the national average with some examples of very good work. This is a strength of the school. Generally, pupils enjoy art and their enthusiasm helps them to achieve well.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the good range of experiences provided for all pupils;
- the high standards achieved in sketching and painting;
- the recognition and celebration of pupils' work through high quality displays.

The area for improvement is:

- the use of sketchbooks to help pupils develop their ideas.

77. No lessons were seen during the inspection. However, work on display and in portfolios shows that pupils are developing skills systematically by using a range of media. Sketching is particularly good with examples of portraits, different containers and urban patterns. Pupils in Year 1 have sketched self-portraits well. In pupils' work in Year 3, figures have been grouped together then observational drawings made. Pupils have used a variety of paints including highly effective landscapes produced in water-colours. Work with different fabrics has created a stunning display in the library. Year 4 pupils have created brightly coloured kites from different materials and Year 6 pupils have used tie-dyeing successfully on material. Year 2 pupils observed the shape of a lily and then made a template to create an interesting pattern from nature. These examples of work all provide clear evidence of the school's success in teaching and learning of art and design.
78. Visitors often work with pupils to further enhance the learning in art and design. Recently, an artist in residence inspired the pupils to investigate Chinese art. A huge Chinese dragon now takes pride of place in the main entrance area demonstrating the high standards of work the pupils achieved. Very little three-dimensional work was available during the inspection. However, the school has plans for a visiting specialist to spend time in school to work on this aspect of the art and design curriculum. The use of sketchbooks is unsatisfactory and the school is aware of this. Plans are already in hand to purchase high quality sketchbooks to help pupils to develop their ideas.
79. The subject leader is knowledgeable about the subject and has a good vision for its future development. She gains information about what is happening in the subject by looking at teachers' planning and sampling work. There is a clear policy and scheme of work in place to guide teachers' planning and to ensure continuity in pupils' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. Standards are average throughout the school. This is the same as it was at the previous inspection by Year 2 and an improvement in standards in Year 6.
Strengths in the subject are:
- good knowledge of the design process.
 - enthusiastic and positive attitudes of the pupils.
 - good links with history.
- The area for development is:
- improve evaluation skills to enable pupils to enhance their work.
81. There has been a significant improvement in designing skills since the time of the previous inspection and achievement is good. Pupils in Year 2 design a moving vehicle after looking at several examples and discussing the designs. They talk enthusiastically about their own designs and what they hoped to achieve. Their making skills are not so well developed and most pupils find it difficult to evaluate the finished product in order to improve their work. This is an area the school recognises needs further development and action is planned to improve teachers' confidence so that they, in turn, can help their pupils.
82. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 where lessons were observed. Year 3 pupils link their work in literacy to design and technology as they design a sandwich for a picnic. They think carefully about the suitability of different foods and plan the ingredients and tools they will need to make the sandwich. They are still at the early stages of being able to evaluate their ideas as the process develops and this is an area for improvement. Year 6 pupils have designed and made slippers and they particularly enjoyed the links with their history topic about the Victorians. Other good links with history were seen in, for example, the designing of hats similar to those worn in Victorian times.
83. The subject leader is clear about the action that the school needs to take to improve standards in the subject. There is a good policy, an effective scheme of work and the subject leader is enthusiastic about her role.

GEOGRAPHY

84. Standards in the subject are average throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, especially for the oldest pupils in the school.
Strengths in the subject are:
- good teaching and learning of basic mapping skills;
 - a sharp focus on learning about the local area, with appropriate emphasis on environmental concerns.
- The main area for improvement:
- to enhance learning further by placing greater emphasis on the use of Ordnance Survey maps.
85. Pupils enjoy their lessons in geography because teachers make learning interesting and relevant to them. Achievement is good, and this is also an improvement since the previous inspection. There is an effective focus on developing mapping skills throughout the school. Pupils are introduced to local survey maps and street plans. Through this, they develop a realistic sense of scale and direction. Teaching and learning are good overall. Staff focus well on ensuring that appropriate language is used and developed. Pupils become familiar with terms such as 'the points of the compass' and 'wind speed and direction'. Older pupils in Year 5 and 6 are especially

good at reading and interpreting weather maps. Marking is satisfactory, but does not tell pupils how to improve.

86. The school ensures through its teaching that pupils become very familiar with the local environment. They draw maps of their routes to school, and of their parents' journeys to work. They recognise the environmental concerns well. In Year 3, for example, pupils were very skilled at weighing up the pros and cons of a new supermarket development in the area. Pupils came up with answers such as 'providing jobs and being more convenient for older people who will not have so far to walk'. Disadvantages included 'more traffic congestion and pollution, as well as being a threat to smaller businesses'. This level of understanding for pupils of this age is above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, become very interested and learn faster when the topics are made relevant to them.
87. The enthusiastic co-ordinator ensures that all planning is regularly monitored. Plans for development include greater use of maps. Pupils already have good skills in this area but they currently do not see and use a wide enough range of Ordnance Survey maps. Leadership is good and assessment techniques are very good. As a result, the subject has good capacity to improve further.

HISTORY

88. Only two lessons were observed. Due to the insufficient evidence, no overall judgements can be made about the quality of teaching, standards of attainment or achievement of pupils.
- From the evidence available the principal strengths are:
- the successful implementation of the national guidance and its modification to suit the needs of the school.
 - the use of the local historical places and museums to promote learning.
- Areas for development are:
- improving the quality and range of work in pupils' written work.
89. In Years 3 to 6, the written work is unsatisfactory, as it does not capture the range and excitement of lessons. There are too few opportunities for pupils to express their own ideas; often they have been given identical worksheets and tasks that focus on visual representation. These do not allow pupils of different abilities to build on what they know, or to make the progress of which they are capable. Higher-attaining pupils are particularly disadvantaged; some of the work is too easy, and is more suited to lower-attainers and to pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress overall. Not enough is done to encourage pupils to use their writing as an effective means of interpreting historical events, drawing on a range of sources and for selecting and recording information.
90. In the two lessons observed, teaching and learning were good in one and satisfactory in the other. Teachers have sound subject knowledge. The planned activities were appropriate to the objectives set for those lessons. Teachers shared the objectives with the pupils and gave clear instructions. In the effective lesson, the teacher made good use of questioning to recall previous learning in the introductory part of the lesson and used it well to help pupils in thinking about whether the Celts were better or worse off after the Roman invasion. The lesson moved at a brisk pace and learning was good. Pupils behaved well and participated in the lesson with interest and enthusiasm.

91. The school has based its long-term planning on the national guidance to ensure appropriate coverage. The co-ordinator has used the guidance from the local education authority in linking the history units of work to other subjects to develop effective links with other subjects. The school makes good use of local history and has established strong links with the local historical places such as the Hat museum. For example, Year 6 pupils have carried out a historical investigation using the 1841 census returns for the local area and compared the changes within the Victorian period. Pupils visit the museum and staff from the museum work with pupils in school. The school also makes use of the museum loan service although no displays of artefacts were seen in the school during the inspection period. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' medium term plans and provides useful information about supportive resources linked to the areas of study. For example, she has identified appropriate web-sites on the Internet for research purposes so that independent learning is encouraged appropriately.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

92. Standards are in line with expected levels throughout the school. Since the previous inspection, the quality of the pupils' work by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has improved substantially alongside the increasing demands of new technology and higher expectations within the subject. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in using their computer skills. These encourage positive attitudes to learning and have a significant impact upon the standards that they achieve.

The principal strengths of the subject are:

- rapidly rising standards;
- improved confidence in teaching the basic skills;
- cross curricular links are well-developed in most subjects;
- a very good scheme of work to ensure the progression of skills.

The area for development is:

- improve facilities within the school for whole class teaching of skills.

93. Only one lesson was observed in Year 2. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, pupils achieve well and they use the skills they have learned to enhance their studies in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 used the class computer in literacy to assist their understanding of alphabetical order. Lessons are planned to teach a series of skills to pupils. Although links to other subjects are improving, there is little evidence yet in subjects such as science and music.
94. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good. Pupils are learning and consolidating new skills rapidly because of the regular sessions led by class teachers following an excellent new scheme of work. Examples include pupils in Years 5 and 6 being shown how to create an address box for regular e-mails and how to copy pictures and text from the Internet to use in 'PowerPoint' presentations in geography. Pupils in Year 3 learn how to communicate with other schools using e-mail and how to find information from the Internet.
95. There are two computers available in each classroom and the school benefits from access to a superb computer suite provided by the Sixth Form College at nearby Houldsworth Mill. However, access to this facility is limited to one afternoon a week so only two classes can use it during the school week. During the lesson observed in Houldsworth Mill, Year 3 pupils were able to observe their teacher demonstrating skills on the interactive white-board and then each pupil could practice these skills at individual computers. During whole class lessons in school, teachers demonstrate on

small screens on a class computer and this restricts visibility for some pupils. Opportunities to practice the skills taught are then further limited by the lack of enough computers for the whole class. The school has already identified this and is seeking ways to improve the situation.

96. Teachers' confidence with using ICT has improved as a result of training and they now have a good understanding of what needs to be taught. Planning is detailed and the subject leader is providing a good lead building on the excellent start made by the headteacher who led the subject until recently.

MUSIC

97. Standards in music are average in Years 1 and 2 and above average in Years 3 to 6. This good achievement is a strength of the school. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- good quality teaching, focusing on developing pupils' creativity and imagination;
- providing pupils with a good range of resources, including extra-curricular activities.

The area for improvement is:

- to use ICT more effectively as an aid to learning.

98. Teaching and learning are good in music. Pupils start from a low point in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils achieve well. Teachers ensure pupils get ample opportunities to sound and play a wide range of instruments. Pupils learn the skills of clapping in rhythm. In Year 2, pupils began to follow the teacher well as they clapped syncopated rhythms; in Year 3, pupils are very adept at writing music and exploring their creativity and imagination well when composing simple melodies played on chime bars. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well.

99. Teachers enhance learning by providing pupils with a wide range of musical experiences. In the classrooms, pupils have good access to a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. These are used effectively in learning about pitch, rhythm and as accompaniment when singing in assemblies, for example. The school has a choir, which performs locally, especially in the local parish church. This provides good opportunities for pupils to enhance their singing and to experience public performance at first hand. There is an active 'samba' band, regular recorder learning and a guitar club. Attendance at these is good, and pupils enjoy and benefit well from such experiences.

100. The subject is led well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. There is very little use being made of ICT to enhance learning in classrooms.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. Standards in physical education are average throughout the school. These are similar findings to those of the previous inspection
- Strengths in the subject are:
- the good teaching in the junior classes and the good achievement made by pupils.
 - the contribution of extra-curricular activities to the quality and range of experiences provided to pupils.
- The area for improvement is:
- Assessment of progressive development in skills.
102. During the inspection period most of the classes observed were focusing on dance. Throughout the school, pupils show good awareness of the importance of warming up and recovery from exercise as well as the effect of activity on the body. For example, one pupil in answer to the teacher's question said that the heart beats much faster. Pupils move around with regards to safety and awareness of others. They respond well to instructions. Pupils in Year 1 use the 'journey into space' theme linked to the story 'Meg on the moon' to engage in imaginative work to develop a range of body management skills. Most pupils move with growing fluency and control. Pupils in Year 2 compose their dance in small groups and demonstrate their dance composition. Most pupils observe closely and evaluate each other's performance effectively. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoy the dance activities and are highly self-motivated. Pupils have developed refined movements and are aware of timing and rhythm. Most work hard at learning and refining the dance steps and practising to improve their performance. They move with confidence and good body-control and co-operate well with others. Pupils achieve well overall.
103. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in lessons seen in Years 3 to 6. As a result, older pupils have very good attitudes towards the subject, their response to physical activity is enthusiastic and vigorous at all times. Lessons are skilfully developed and build on previous learning. Pupils are helped to understand their personal achievement, refining their movement and sequence of steps in line with the rhythm and beat of the accompanying music. Teachers use a range of strategies such as the use of demonstration to show good practice. They have good class management skills and good teacher-pupil relationships, which contribute well to lessons which move at a brisk pace.
104. Extra-curricular clubs are supported well and give opportunities for both boys and girls to develop their games and sporting skills and to practise their dance skills at events organised by the school. A residential week provides good opportunities for Year 6 pupils to experience outdoor pursuits such as climbing, sailing and abseiling. External coaches, for example, in football and short tennis further develop and enhance pupils' skills. Currently the co-ordinator monitors planning, but there is no monitoring of teaching. Assessment is generally based on teacher observations in relation to the lesson objectives but as yet there is no assessment record system in place. Resources for learning are good and enhance attainment and progress.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

105. Standards in religious education are now above those prescribed by the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

The main strengths are:

- good quality teaching enabling pupils of all abilities to learn both about and from religions at the same time.
- teachers use of other subjects to deepen pupils' understanding of religions.
- teachers' success in relating religious knowledge to pupils' personal experience.
- The good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral education.

The area for improvement is:

- The quality of listening and participation by pupils in the infants school.

106. By the end of Year 6, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism. Pupils with special educational needs do as well as others in terms of the knowledge they gain, but sometimes write up their work in less detail. To reflect its status, the school gives more emphasis to teaching and learning from the Bible. Pupils in all classes also visit the parish church at least once a term, as part of their studies. For these reasons, pupils aged eleven have developed more understanding of Christianity than is usually the case. For example, pupils in Year 6 explored poetry as an act of worship. They learned how the real meaning of great religious events such as the birth of Jesus got lost. When they created their own religious poems, one group wrote: "It's regarding Jesus in swaddling clothes, Not eating turkeys out of large stoves."

107. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers have good knowledge of the topics and how to present them well. This is evident both in the depth of study and in the interesting activities planned for pupils. A particular strength of teaching is the good use teachers make of first-hand experiences to bring Bible stories alive. For example, in a well-led discussion of the story of Joseph, Year 1 pupils also learned about families and the importance of speaking the truth. Pupils in Year 2 concentrated well when they watched a good quality video about the end of Jesus' ministry. However, chatter and fuss prevented them from talking about and reflecting on what they had learned. Teaching is therefore less effective when unsatisfactory behaviour spoils learning.

108. Another good feature of teaching and learning is the way teachers and pupils use drama to investigate religious beliefs. For example, pupils in a class in Year 4 acted out three family situations in groups in order to explore of the idea of God as a loving parent. By the end of the lesson, they had gained a good understanding of God's sacrifice of his Son for the sake of mankind.

109. The main reason for the improvement in standards has been the good leadership and management of the subject since the last inspection. The school has shown determination to raise the quality of learning by improving behaviour in lessons, increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding and raising the quality of both teaching and the curriculum.