

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. THOMAS BECKET CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Birchanger Road, London

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101796

Headteacher: Mr. Phil King

Reporting inspector: Jo Cheadle 23233

Dates of inspection: 15th – 19th April 2002

Inspection number: 194650

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Becket Close Birchanger Road London
Postcode:	SE25 5BN
Telephone number:	020 8654 3006
Fax number:	020 8656 6282
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Peter Stodart
Date of previous inspection:	19 th – 22 nd May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23233	Jo Cheadle	Registered Inspector	Science	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What does the school need to do to improve further?
9537	Caroline Marden	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
23487	Patricia Kitley	Team Inspector	English; history; physical education	Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress
20948	John Linstead	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology; geography; special educational needs	
27654	Robina Scahill	Team Inspector	Mathematics; music; the provision for pupils speaking English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27225	Anna Sketchley	Team Inspector	Art; design and technology; the provision for children in the Foundation Stage; equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Thomas Becket is a large Catholic primary school for boys and girls aged 4-11. It serves a suburban area of London in which most families have favourable social circumstances. All pupils come from practising Catholic families. The school has grown in size over the past few years and there are now 409 pupils. The percentage of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is above the national average, but most speak English fluently and it is the language they use at home. A very small minority of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs for a range of learning difficulties and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals are both below the national average. Attainment on entry covers a wide range, but is generally average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. It is a very caring and happy community. The very good relationships between pupils and with staff have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Results of national tests in English, mathematics and science, at the end of Year 6, are generally above the national average. However, some pupils in Key Stage 2 are not achieving as well as they should do in these subjects. The overall quality of teaching is good, and particularly strong in the reception classes and Key Stage 1, but it varies considerably. In some classes and subjects at Key Stage 2, whilst the quality of teaching is satisfactory, there are weaknesses. The school's curriculum is not robust enough to support weaknesses in teaching and learning. The reason for weaknesses in some aspects of the school's work is that leadership and management are unsatisfactory. They are not providing a strong enough lead in identifying and tackling weaker aspects of teaching, learning and the curriculum. Overall, however, owing to the good quality of teaching in most classes, the school provides satisfactory value for money

What the school does well

- Children in the reception classes and Key Stage 1 achieve well and reach standards that are well above average in national tests at the end of Year 2.
- Test results at the end of Year 2 are improving at a faster rate than the national trend.
- Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been consistently as good as or higher than the national average over the past three years.
- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- The school fosters pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour very successfully, and their social, moral and cultural awareness is very well developed.
- The leaders and managers of the school promote an environment for learning that is very positive and caring for staff and pupils.

What could be improved

- The leadership and management of the school in ensuring that statutory aspects of the school's work are fully implemented, that the school's curriculum is well planned, that teaching is of a consistent quality and that pupils make the same rates of progress in Key Stage 2 as they do in Key Stage 1
- Standards achieved by higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The percentage of pupils who reach the expected Level 4 in mathematics in national tests at the end of Year 6.
- Standards attained in information and communication technology and physical education by the end of Year 6.
- The provision for music throughout the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in May 1997, there has been satisfactory improvement overall. In relation to the key issues of the previous report, the school has made significant improvements to the quality of education for children in the reception classes, which is now judged to be good. The development of pupils' cultural and multi-cultural awareness is now judged to be very good, which is also a significant improvement. School improvement planning is now satisfactory. The number of support staff has increased and the school has looked closely at available finances to find ways of allocating classroom support to meet pupils' needs. In both of these areas there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Improvements to the monitoring and evaluation of planned developments, and assessing the effectiveness of school procedures have been unsatisfactory. The school has no formal structures for reviewing the progress it is making towards the targets it has set. The governors do not challenge the school to explain why targets are not being achieved. Senior managers are not effective in measuring the impact of the school's work on the standards pupils attain. Subject managers play no role in monitoring the standards achieved by pupils or in developing their subjects and the quality of teaching throughout the school, to ensure that it is consistently good. However, the percentage of good teaching has improved since the last inspection and there is now a substantial proportion of very good and excellent teaching. The school's accommodation has been improved, and there are now good outdoor play areas.

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	A	B	C	D
mathematics	B	B	B	D
science	B	B	B	C

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

Pupils' results in English have declined over the past three years. In 2001, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher level, Level 5, was lower than in previous years and lower than the national average. The decreasing number of pupils who attain at Level 5 in English is causing the decline in overall results year by year. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 was higher than the national average, but at the expected level, Level 4, results were lower than the national average. The school did not achieve the targets that were set for attainment in mathematics. Overall rates of improvement in test results at the end of Year 6 are lower than the national trend.

The group of pupils taking tests in 2001 included over 20 per cent who did not begin at the school in the reception classes, many of these starting school during Key Stage 2. A high proportion of pupils joining the school needed support for a variety of learning difficulties. For this reason, comparing the schools' results with those of similar schools, on the basis of the percentage of free school meals alone, is not valid.

Many of the children joining the school in the reception classes have good skills and knowledge, but the overall levels of attainment on entry are average. By the time they join Year 1, most children achieve standards that are at least average for their age. Many children attain levels that are better than would be expected. These good standards are maintained through Key Stage 1 and attainment by the end of Year 2 is above average. In English,

mathematics and science, standards by the end of Year 6 are average. In other subjects, with the exceptions of ICT, music and physical education, standards are in line with expectations. In ICT and physical education, pupils do not attain the levels expected by the end of Year 6. During the inspection, there was insufficient evidence to support a judgement regarding pupils' attainment in music in either Key Stage 1 or 2.

Attainment on entry to the school is normally above average, as shown in the results of assessments carried out soon after children start school. As a result of good teaching in the reception class, and a stimulating curriculum, children's achievements (the progress they make in relation to their initial attainment) are good in all areas of learning and very good in their personal, social and emotional development. Almost all are likely to reach the standards expected by the time they join Year 1 (the Early Learning Goals), and many will exceed them. In Key Stage 1, pupils continue to achieve well and their learning experiences encourage good progress in lessons and overtime. Pupils' experiences in Key Stage 2 do not build well enough on previous learning, and rates of learning slow down. As a result, achievement on prior levels of attainment is only satisfactory through this key stage.

Pupils have well-developed reading skills and their speaking and listening skills are very good. They make good use of these skills in many lessons and this makes a very positive contribution to standards attained in other subjects. Pupils are proficient in mental calculations and, for the most part, know their multiplication tables well. In mathematics and science, pupils very well developed speaking skills enable them to explain in precise detail the way they are working and the results they achieve. Basic skills in ICT are not as well developed. Although knowledge and use of the Internet and e-mail are good by Year 6, pupils' overall attainment is below expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils listen attentively and work hard and this contributes to good progress in many lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in all aspects of school life. Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions and play well together in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate well to each other and all adults in school. They reflect the Catholic ethos of the school in caring for one another. Pupils' ability to work very well with each other makes a positive contribution to their learning. All pupils are included in all activities and racial harmony is excellent.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is higher than the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good, but there are inconsistencies in Key Stage 2 that have a direct impact on pupils' rates of learning. A higher proportion of very good or excellent teaching was observed than at the time of the last inspection. Teaching and learning was judged to be unsatisfactory in five per cent of lessons.

In the reception classes, the teaching seen was consistently good or very good. Teachers provide a range of well-organised, high quality learning experiences, which ensures that all children know what is expected of them and are very interested in their work. As a result they learn well. In Key Stage 1, there was a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching. Teachers plan well together and pay careful attention to the needs of the range of abilities within their classes, so that pupils are challenged at a suitable level. Lessons are lively and enjoyable and pupils make good rates of progress.

In Key Stage 2, teaching was good or better in almost half of lessons. However, the weaknesses noted in satisfactory lessons were a significant factor in slowing down pupils' learning. In these lessons either the pace was slow, challenge for the range of pupils' abilities was not suitable, or there were not enough opportunities for pupils to work independently. Moreover, lessons judged to be unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2 were insufficiently planned, much longer than the original planning showed, and lacked stimulation. As a result, pupils became bored, or carried out time-filling activities that were not conducive to good rates of learning. Teachers extend some lessons unnecessarily, so pupils work too slowly.

The strategies for literacy and numeracy have been appropriately implemented. Teachers developed pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well in most lessons. Teachers' knowledge of the curriculum for ICT and physical education in Key Stage 2 is weaker than in other areas of the curriculum, and this has a direct impact on pupils' attainment. Teachers plan well in the reception classes and Key Stage 1, but planning in Key Stage 2 does not always pay enough attention to what pupils already know and can do. This restricts pupils' progress, which is inconsistent through the key stage. Teachers manage pupils very well and as a result pupils behave well and develop positive, respectful attitudes. Relationships and the environment for learning that teachers create are very good features of the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum for the reception classes and Key Stage 1 is good. In Key Stage 2, curriculum planning does not always ensure that lessons build on previous learning and some statutory aspects of the curriculum for ICT and physical education are not taught. Curriculum time is not used well. Some lessons are too long, and short periods of time are used inefficiently.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The special needs' co-ordinator, teachers and support assistants work well together to ensure that pupils with particular needs are well supported in lessons and make the same progress as other pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. A specialist teacher provides good support for pupils in the early stages of learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Teachers use opportunities to promote spiritual development well in a range of subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good and firmly rooted in the Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils' cultural development is also very good, with multi-cultural experience across the curriculum being a particular strength. Pupils' musical experiences to enrich their spiritual and cultural development are unsatisfactory. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' personal development through the taught curriculum, although the school's caring and supportive environment contributes to the development of social and personal skills.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. The school cares well for pupils. Staff know pupils very well and are very effective in promoting pupils' very good behaviour. Procedures for health and safety and child protection are appropriate, though training about child protection issue for staff new to the school is unsatisfactory. End of year assessments are used for target setting for the next year. However, teachers' planning does not identify opportunities for assessments of academic performance and personal development that can be used to measure pupils' progress throughout the year. The school presently makes poor use of information about pupils' existing attainment to plan future learning.

The school has good relationship with parents, who are supportive of their children’s learning and the school in general. The parents’ association raises substantial amounts of money to support pupils’ learning. Parents are very keen to be involved with their child’s school experiences.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory. While there has been much hard work to create and maintain a positive learning environment, the headteacher, senior managers and subject co-ordinators have not established effective systems for maintaining and improving standards. They do not monitor and develop the quality of teaching, the curriculum and assessment procedures in subjects. Roles and responsibilities are not effectively defined or delegated. The headteacher and staff demonstrate a good team spirit and a definite commitment to succeed. With support and training they have the necessary capacity to succeed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. As result of information provided by the headteacher, governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, they do little to challenge the school about how well it is progressing towards targets that have been set for improvement. Governors have not ensured that the school has implemented performance management procedures. There are omissions in statutory information in the school prospectus and annual report to parents.
The school’s evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school is not rigorous enough in checking that the action it is taking is leading to improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. Specific grants are used appropriately. There is insufficient thought given to making sure that money spent actually improves standards.

The school has good accommodation that is very well maintained. There have been improvements to the outdoor areas since the time of the last inspection. The outdoor play area for the youngest children makes a substantial contribution to their physical and creative development.

PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents say that their children enjoy coming to school, and that they are encouraged to work hard and make good progress. • Parents believe that the school promotes children’s very good behaviour and helps children to become mature and responsible • Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with suggestions and complaints. • Parents are pleased with the quality of teaching. • Parents think that the school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like homework to be organised in a more consistent way. • Some parents would like more information about how their child is getting on. • Some parents would like more sporting and musical extra-curricular activities. • Some parents would like more feedback on the actions that are taken following their suggestions and complaints.

Parents' positive views are largely supported by inspection findings, particularly in relation to the promotion of good behaviour and positive working attitudes, and also the quality of teaching in most classes. Inspection findings do not concur with parents' views that the school is well led and managed. Leadership and management of the school are judged to be unsatisfactory. Inspection findings support those issues where some parents would like to see improvements. Homework, although used regularly, is not used in a consistent way in each class. As the school makes inadequate use of assessment information, information to parents on how well their children are doing is not always very detailed. The provision for physical education and musical activities is not good enough. Leaders and managers do not have an organised system for responding to parents' suggestions and complaints on a daily basis.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. While some children begin school with well-developed skills and knowledge, particularly in language, in general children's attainment on entry to school is average. Evidence from assessments made soon after children start school supports this judgement. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage (reception classes) and, by the time they join Year 1, almost all attain the levels expected for their age group, and many attain at levels that are better than would be expected. Pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stage 1 and achieve well on previously attained levels. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above average. Although pupils' achievements are satisfactory during Key Stage 2, a significant proportion do not achieve as much as they could. This is partly owing to weaknesses in the quality of teaching in some classes, and partly because higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently by the work they are given. This is reflected in declining results in national tests at the end of Year 6 and inspection findings about the attainment of the current Year 6 pupils.

2. In the 2001 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, results were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Test results have consistently been well above average in reading and writing since 1998. After a dip in results in mathematics in 1999, they have improved steadily. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level, Level 3, was well above the national average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics, indicating that the school makes good provision for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1. In comparison with schools in a similar context, Key Stage 1 results were well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. The consistently good results attained in national tests in Key Stage 1, are a strength of the school.

3. In the 2001 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, results were similar to the national average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Results in English have declined over the past two years and the rate of improvement is now lower than the national trend. This is largely because the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level, Level 5, is below the national average. Results in mathematics and science were well above average in 1998, but since then have been above the national average. In the mathematics tests in 2001, the percentage of pupils attaining at Level 5 was above the national average, but below the national average at Level 4. The rate of improvement in results, which was once much higher than the national trend, is now close to the national trend. In science, attainment at both levels was similar, but the trend for improvement has declined, as in mathematics and English. The downward trend can be explained for the last testing year, as the group of pupils taking tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 was made up of around 20 per cent who joined the school at various times other than in the reception class. The majority of these pupils joined in Key Stage 2, some as late as Year 5. Many of these pupils needed specific support for their learning difficulties. One pupil had a Statement of Special Educational Needs. For these reasons, comparisons between the school's test results and the results of schools in a similar context, based on the criteria of free school meals alone, are not useful. Similarly, a direct comparison of test results from Key Stage 1, and the results of pupils who took tests in Key Stage 2, is also insignificant, since 20 per cent of the pupils did not take Key Stage 1 tests at St. Thomas Becket. However, analysis of the results of those pupils who did take tests at the school in Key Stage 1 and 2 indicates that they achieved satisfactorily on their prior attainment levels, whereas in Key Stage 1 their achievements were good.

4. Test results over time do not reveal any significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in either key stage. The school has set appropriate targets for attainment in the 2002 Year 6 tests. However, targets set for the 2001 tests were not agreed as a result of careful analysis of assessment information for the particular group of pupils who took the tests and were, therefore, not met. There is no recorded evidence regarding an analysis of test results of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. While the majority of these pupils speak English fluently, inspection findings are that English test results at Level 5 are affected. These pupils are generally higher attainers but are not always supported in learning the high-level literacy skills that they need.

to achieve above average standards. As result of effective support, pupils who are in the early stages of learning English achieve well.

5. In the current Year 2 classes, overall standards of work are above average in English, mathematics and science, and better than at the last inspection. There is evidence of work that is well above average in reading, writing and in number calculations in mathematics. In all other subjects, pupils attain levels that are expected for their age group. There is evidence of good standards of work in topics within some subjects such as design and technology and history. As at the time of the last inspection, overall standards of work in Year 6 are currently at the expected levels in all subjects, with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT), where standards are now below the expected level. In both key stages, pupils have good reading skills and this enables them to access other aspects of the curriculum successfully. Speaking and listening skills are very good and play an important role in the high quality discussions and question and answer sessions in many lessons. Pupils' mathematical speed and accuracy is well developed and evident in many pupils' ability to recall multiplication facts without hesitation and calculate in their heads. Pupils have enquiring scientific minds and a good knowledge of scientific facts. Throughout the school, the quality of handwriting and the presentation of work are good. In Key Stage 2, while pupils' basic skills in literacy and reading continue to develop well in most classes, opportunities to apply these skills in a variety of contexts, extending understanding and attainment in all subjects, are sometimes limited and this means that pupils make less progress than they should do

6. In ICT, while pupils attain at the expected level by the end of Year 2, attainment by Year 6 is below expectations. Pupils have far too few opportunities to learn the necessary basic ICT skills that enable good progress in the subject itself, and also support higher attainment in other subjects. In physical education, pupils attain broadly in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but they do not have full access to all aspects of the curriculum, so learning through team games and competitive sports is below average. Despite some improvements since the last inspection, parents still express concerns about this aspect of the curriculum, and this is supported by inspection findings. Parents also expressed concerns regarding the amount and quality of provision for music at the school. There was not enough evidence found to support an overall judgement regarding pupils' attainment and progress in music during the inspection.

7. In Key Stage 1, pupils with special educational needs achieve well and reach levels of attainment that are good compared with their starting points. This results from the school's early identification of needs and effective action to address them. For example, there are specific programmes devised for pupils with speech and language difficulties that teachers incorporate into daily lessons. In Key Stage 2, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they reach the levels of attainment expected of them by their teachers.

8. Results in national tests have been at least in line with national averages in the past few years. However, the school has not paid enough attention to analysing the results of particular year groups, considering the rate of improvement in relation to national trends, and asking questions regarding why there are inconsistencies and dips in standards. As a result, developments needed to ensure that standards are maintained and improved upon have not taken place.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and personal development continue to be strengths of the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is very good. Unauthorised absence is in line with the national average for primary schools. This is mainly due to parents taking holidays in term time, in spite of the school dissuading them from doing so.

10. Attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils arrive ready to work and quickly settle to the task. They listen very attentively and are keen to take part in discussions and offer their views. The very high level of respect that pupils have for themselves and others is evident from how they listen with interest to each other. It was commendable that, during the inspection, there were no examples of pupils making fun of someone who had a

different view from their own. Pupils' take a real pride in their work and take a great deal of care to present their work neatly. Pupils take part in activities enthusiastically both in and out of lessons. In the very few lessons where pupils' attitudes were less than good, it was related to the teacher not setting them work with an appropriate degree of challenge. In discussion, pupils show real evidence that they are able to use their initiative to overcome a difficulty, although opportunities for pupils to think for themselves in lessons are too few.

11. Pupils' behaviour in all aspects of school life is very good and often exemplary. They enter the assembly hall in silence and in many cases with their hands clasped in front of them. In lessons, they quickly do what the teachers' request and are always keen to help each other. The playground is a harmonious place with pupils playing happily together. The racial harmony in the school is exemplary. All pupils are fully involved in school life, including girls playing football at playtime with the boys. While there have been a few isolated incidences of playground bullying, about which parents have been very concerned, all the pupils spoken to had no fear of being bullied, in fact they thought that it hardly ever happened. The school did not exclude any pupils in the last year.

12. Pupils have very caring attitudes and empathise well with others. They show great respect while saying prayers and try hard to understand the experiences of people in different situations and eras. For example, pupils in Year 4 had a good understanding of how they might have felt if they were evacuees in World War Two. They then extended this to how their parents might have felt. The most impressive attribute of the pupils is how much they care for one another. In a Year 1 class, a girl was upset because her hair band broke. Another girl immediately moved beside her to comfort her. Pupils' spiritual development is evident across the curriculum, from them being in awe at a science experiment comparing detergents dissolving, to their emotional singing in a mathematics lesson.

13. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils work well together and the discussions they have contribute well to their learning. Pupils like and respect their teachers and this encourages them to work hard because they want to please their teacher. Pupils show a very good understanding of the Catholic ethos of the school and have a highly developed sense of what is right and wrong. They share a sense of responsibility about keeping the school very clean and there was no litter or evidence of graffiti.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The overall quality of teaching is good. In lessons seen during the inspection, just over 60 per cent of teaching was judged to be at least good. The proportion of very good and excellent teaching has improved since the last inspection. This high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching is fundamental in maintaining the good standards attained by many pupils. However, in a number of lessons in Key Stage 2 in particular, a balance of strengths and weaknesses observed led to the judgement that teaching was satisfactory overall. The slower progress made by pupils in these lessons was directly related to the weaker aspects of teaching. As a result of the inconsistent quality of teaching from year to year in Key Stage 2, and sometimes between classes in the same year group, pupils' achievements are satisfactory across the key stage, but not as good as in Key Stage 1. In five per cent of lessons, teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory.

15. The major strengths of teaching throughout the school include teachers' good knowledge and understanding of subjects, the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy and teachers' very good management of pupils. In the reception classes, teaching was always at least good and in almost half of lessons teaching was very good. Teachers very clearly understand how young children learn and have good knowledge of all aspects of the recommended curriculum for the Foundation Stage. This ensures that planning for lessons in all areas of learning is very carefully done and is an improvement since the last inspection. As a result, children know exactly what they are doing, stay on task and make good progress. In a Year 2 English lesson, the teacher chose very clear examples from a shared text to illustrate vowel blends and consonants and different ways to ask questions. Her very good subject knowledge enabled her to teach the lesson confidently and because of this, pupils were not only very interested in their work, but also showed real enjoyment in what they were doing. They quickly

modelled the various ways that the teacher posed questions, making good progress. In a mathematics lesson in Year 6, higher and average attaining pupils worked systematically to find patterns in results that helped them to explain answers when working with decimals. The teacher's very clear explanations were evidence of her very good subject knowledge. She taught pupils to use a variety of methods to reach the same results, and this enabled them to work independently, make very good progress and attain above average standards that were appropriate to their ability. In a parallel mathematics lesson, where the teacher's subject knowledge was not as strong, methods for subtraction calculations were at one point taught inaccurately to lower attaining pupils, with the result that they did not make the same progress as other pupils in the class. In Key Stage 2, teachers' subject knowledge varies from very good to unsatisfactory, and this leads to pupils making inconsistent progress in some subjects, and in some classes. The school has no programme for observing teaching, and co-ordinators have little impact on the development of their subject. For this reason, where there are weaknesses in teaching, subject knowledge does not improve at the rate it should to encourage pupils' good achievement, and insufficient use is made of the teachers' existing expertise to influence the work of the whole school. In general, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for ICT, physical education and music is weaker than in other subjects.

16. In many lessons, individual teachers plan well. This is a particularly important aspect of the best teaching in the school since, at present, the whole-school curriculum does not support teachers in planning progressively based on what pupils already know and can do. The most consistently successful planning is in the reception classes and Key Stage 1, where teachers plan carefully in relation to the levels that pupils have already attained to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging and encourages good achievement. In an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 2, where pupils were learning methods to add small numbers, the teacher's assessments of pupils' learning in a previous lesson guided amendments to planning for future lessons. She had identified where pupils needed to consolidate their understanding and also those who were ready to be challenged to meet a higher target. The planning was clearly based on extending pupils' understanding to a maximum level and this resulted in excellent progress. Pupils confidently applied the skills they had already learned and independently explained why they had chosen a particular method for calculating. All teachers have one afternoon each week to plan lessons with their year group partner. When this time is used to consider the requirements of the National Curriculum, look at the levels that pupils are already attaining and consider the best ways to teach the subject, pupils achieve well in lessons. In some cases, planning time is not used in this way, so teachers' plans consist of a few lines explaining the content of what will be taught, and do not include what pupils will learn, based on assessment of what they already know. There were examples of excellent teaching in Key Stage 2, where planning was exemplary, such as in a Year 5 mathematics lesson but, in general, this is not a coherent picture in the key stage, which results in pupils making inconsistent rates of progress.

17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall. All pupils on the school's register for special educational needs have individual education plans with targets and methods to help them make progress. In Key Stage 1, teachers' planning for special needs pupils is good, because it is often based on these targets, so pupils make good progress. The school has recently introduced an improved method of writing individual plans to help identify better methods for achieving targets. Most of the work pupils with special educational needs do, however, is the same as the rest of their class, especially in the foundation subjects. They are able to tackle this work because the quality of help provided by their learning support assistants is good throughout the school. Teachers and assistants often discuss and plan work together. There is, however, some inconsistency in the quality of teachers' recording of pupils' progress in both key stages. The teaching of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English is effective and enables them to make the same rates of progress as all other pupils.

18. Almost all teachers manage pupils very well and this results in pupils behaving very well. Because behaviour is very good, lessons run smoothly, pupils can concentrate and their learning is not affected by disruptions or distractions. In some lessons where pupils were more restless, it was the direct result of the slow pace of teaching, content that was not stimulating or challenging enough or simply that the lesson went on for much longer than was necessary to teach the learning objectives, so pupils became bored. The majority of the lessons that were graded as satisfactory were either too long or too slow. While overall learning in the lesson was

satisfactory for most pupils, some pupils could have learned concepts much quicker and moved on to new learning. With the more frequent incidence of such lessons in Key Stage 2, pupils' overall achievement through the key stage is affected. In many of these lessons, the introduction is good. For example, in an English lesson in Year 5, the lesson began with good, stimulating discussion, developing specific vocabulary for persuasive writing, and pupils made good progress in their understanding. When discussion continued for too long, pupils started to fidget and lost concentration. The teacher did not recognise that some pupils were ready to begin their individual work, and continued a whole-class discussion that was not pertinent to all pupils. The lesson lasted for ninety minutes, thirty minutes longer than the recommended time for literacy. Pupils who became bored during the discussion time tried hard to apply themselves to the written task, but the good start to the lesson had been lost. While rates of learning for the majority of pupils were satisfactory in this lesson, some pupils did not make as much progress as they should have done.

19. In lessons that were judged to be unsatisfactory, the key weakness in teaching was the inappropriate level of challenge set for pupils. These lessons were not taught by the regular class teachers, but all teachers who did take the lessons are well known to the school and supply regular cover for these classes. In the unsatisfactory lessons, the challenge for pupils was either too high or insufficient. In both cases, teachers had not assessed how well pupils had understood in previous lessons, and planned to build on this learning. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils made unsatisfactory progress because the work was too difficult for them. Analysis of the Key Stage 1 test results and teacher assessments in Year 3 for these pupils shows that their mathematical understanding is weaker than other aspects of their work, but this information was not used to plan appropriately for their needs. In lessons where pupils were insufficiently challenged, which also occurred in some lessons judged satisfactory overall, they became bored and rates of learning slowed. For example, in a Year 2 music lesson, and despite the fact that some pupils play keyboards, all pupils were required to listen to lengthy instructions, rather than using the higher attaining pupils to demonstrate their skills. Pupils became restless and were therefore not ready to use instruments. Their progress in this session was unsatisfactory. In mathematics throughout the school, there is appropriate challenge for the highest attaining pupils, which enables them to achieve above average standards. Some parents feel that their children have the ability to attain even higher standards with more appropriate challenge.

20. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and treat them with care and respect. All teachers are good role models for pupils in terms of how they should consider, accept and help each other. In many lessons, evidence of spontaneous support for classmates, celebration of each others' achievements and a real respect for each others' views and beliefs were noted. Teachers make good use of learning assistants, who provide very valuable academic and pastoral support. Homework is used appropriately to extend and consolidate pupils' learning. The consistency of when and how much is given to children is a concern to parents and supported by inspection findings. The school has a clear homework policy, but this has not been shared with parents.

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

21. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection in the curriculum for children in the reception classes. It is now good and is based on national guidance for children of this age. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 is also good. It is based clearly on programmes of study from the National Curriculum and is planned in relation to pupils' needs and prior attainment. In Key Stage 2, curriculum planning is satisfactory overall, but, because there is no whole-school approach to developing and evaluating the curriculum, curriculum planning relies totally on teachers' use of national recommendations and their inclusion of statutory elements from the National Curriculum. The results are not always consistent and this has a direct impact on the rates of progress that pupils make throughout the key stage.

22. Although all teachers have regular release time to plan lessons, it is a weakness that there is no whole-school overview of the taught curriculum, because the school cannot ensure that pupils make progress from year to year. As a result, the planned curriculum does not always take into account what pupils have already learned,

or build on their previous experiences. This has a detrimental impact on pupils' learning, most often in Key Stage 2. Statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are fully covered, but the curriculum has not been made fully appropriate to the needs of the pupils at St Thomas Becket School, the majority of whom begin Key Stage 2 with above average levels of attainment. Subject co-ordinators play no role in ensuring that the curriculum is made relevant to the needs of the pupils, and this results in inconsistent rates of progress through Key Stage 2. There are also imbalances in the time devoted to subjects. Some literacy and numeracy lessons are much too long, being made to fit a long morning session when a normal length lesson would leave only a 15 or 20 minute slot in which to teach another subject. Throughout the day, but particularly in the last session of the day, there are short periods of time that are not used efficiently. Consequently not enough time is available for other subjects to be taught in sufficient depth.

23. National recommended schemes for literacy and numeracy have been adopted, and literacy and numeracy skills are developed not only in English and mathematics but also in other subjects across the curriculum. For example, in science, pupils measure accurately and draw graphs to record their results. In history, pupils record their work in different ways. For example, they write diaries and postcards as evacuees in their study of World War II. Some aspects of the curriculum for ICT do not meet statutory requirements. Music and physical education continue to be weaknesses as they were at the time of the last inspection, but the curriculum for art has improved. There are strengths in the curriculum for science, particularly in the experimental and investigational aspect of the subject.

24. The school is committed to including all pupils in its work and to offering equal opportunities. Pupils with English as an additional language are included in all aspects of school life. However, gifted and talented pupils have not been identified, so there are no specific opportunities provided to meet their needs. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall as a result of early identification of their needs, good liaison by the special needs co-ordinator with external agencies, and teachers' incorporation of targets from individual education plans in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to play a full part in lessons and in the life of the school generally. Teachers are careful to include all pupils in discussions and in the opportunities to show and talk about the work they have done. The school provides good programmes of work for pupils with speech and language problems, specific learning difficulties or mild physical needs. Support assistants play a valuable role in carrying out the necessary strategies from the programmes. There is a weakness in the system for translating targets on individual education plans into more specific activities. This is the responsibility of teachers and is evident in their day-to-day planning. However, because there is inconsistency in the quality of this planning, especially in Key Stage 2, some teachers do not sufficiently relate the work in lessons to pupils' identified needs and targets.

25. The school has improved its provision for cultivating pupils' personal development and there is now very good provision that is rooted in the Catholic faith. The strong Catholic ethos within the school, which guides and supports pupils well, is a key feature of this provision, although there are few planned opportunities to teach personal and social skills through the school's taught curriculum. As at the time of the last inspection, the governing body has agreed that sex education is best provided by parents. There is a planned programme for drugs' education, which includes visits from a theatre company and the community police officer. Links with the local community, particularly with the Parish, make a sound contribution to the pupils' learning. The links the school has with the local secondary school ensure that pupils make a smooth transfer to secondary education.

26. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Although teachers do not specifically plan for spirituality, they capitalise on opportunities as they arise. For example, they develop pupils' awareness of beauty when studying the work of different artists, and their understanding of people's emotions during events such as World War II. The Catholic ethos of the school develops in pupils the importance of looking after God's creation.

27. Provision for moral and social development is very good. The school meets very effectively its priority of providing a Catholic, caring community and this is central to the provision in these areas. Teachers specifically teach moral values in religious education lessons and in assemblies, as well as promoting high moral values

throughout the whole curriculum. For example, in science lessons, pupils learn about caring for the environment through conserving energy and resources. In nearly all lessons, teachers promote social development very effectively by arranging for pupils to work in different groupings and encouraging them to work cooperatively. In addition to the formal curriculum, the care and respect staff show towards pupils make a significant contribution to their social and moral development. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within the school community and this limits their social development.

28. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good with a strength in the way pupils are helped to understand the diversity of cultures. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about western culture through history lessons and in the study of European artists such as Monet and Kandinsky. However, music makes an insufficient contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils' experience a range of cultures from African art to Japanese Haiku poetry. Pupils learn about aspects of the main world religions. They also study different countries including some of the countries along the Nile. The school uses visitors to support pupils' understanding of different cultures. For example, a couple from the local community came to talk to the pupils about their experiences of being born and raised in India.

29. Pupils' learning is enriched by provision of a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, which include choir, football and netball, dance, 'Fitness for Fun' and French. Pupils have the opportunity to learn musical instruments with visiting teachers. The curriculum is extended appropriately through the visits pupils make and the contribution visitors bring to the school. Art, history and geography are particularly well supported by visits to museums, places of historic interest and local studies. Year 6 pupils' annual residential visit to an environmental study centre in Dover enriches other areas of the curriculum, such science and physical education, and makes a significant contribution to their personal and social development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school continues to provide satisfactory care and support for pupils. Staff know pupils and their families very well. This, in conjunction with the very good relationships teachers have with their pupils, is central to the good pastoral care they provide. Staff effectively promote very good behaviour throughout the school and the headteacher records incidents of serious misbehaviour. In these cases, the school contacts parents, who are usually supportive of the school's action. Pupils spoken to during the inspection week felt that, if there was any inappropriate behaviour or bullying, the school would deal with it swiftly. They also said they would be happy to talk to a teacher if they had any problems. There are no formal means of recording pupils' personal development throughout the year making it difficult to assess their progress.

31. The headteacher monitors attendance closely and ensures that absences are investigated where no reason is given. Although teachers conscientiously fill in the registers and usually write the reason for an absence, they do not always use the codes to describe the type of absence. This makes it difficult to evaluate quickly any patterns of absence.

32. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in developing procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. Procedures are best in English and mathematics where records of pupils' achievements are kept in most aspects of the subjects. Results of national and optional tests are passed to staff at the beginning of each year. This information is beginning to be used to set targets for what pupils are expected to achieve during the year and to identify groups and individual pupils in need of additional support. The school does not use standardised reading and spelling tests to help monitor progress. The results of the most recent national tests in English for pupils at the end of Year 6 have been analysed to find ways of raising standards in writing. As a consequence of this, the school has introduced a common framework to moderate pupils' achievements in writing.

33. Teachers are responsible for deciding what to assess and how to record pupils' performance in other subjects. They keep thorough and regular records of pupils' achievements. However, there are considerable

variations between classes in what is assessed and the method of recording results because the approach has not been standardised. As a result, teachers' records do not give comparable information on pupils' performance across the full range of National Curriculum expectations in each subject. The lack of standardisation makes it difficult for senior managers and subject co-ordinators to monitor the impact of teaching in parallel classes and the progress that pupils make in each subject as they move through the school. The school makes good assessment arrangements for pupils with special educational needs that ensure they are identified early in their school career. The progress of pupils is closely monitored and the agreed procedures followed to enable pupils to receive the level of support they require. The school has plans to give pupils a say in the reviews of their individual plans and the setting of new targets.

34. The general use made of assessment information is poor, with the greatest weaknesses being in Key Stage 2. Long term planning does not identify assessment opportunities to be used to monitor progress during the year. Teachers generally make good use of opportunities to assess pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in lessons. Even though considerable non-teaching time is spent on weekly planning meetings for year groups, assessment information is not being used to set appropriate work for different groups, and all pupils often do the same task. Such tasks are generally most appropriate for pupils with average attainment, and those with lower attainment are often given additional adult help, so they make sound progress. However, the same tasks do not always challenge pupils with potentially higher attainment, especially when they are based on published worksheets that do not encourage independent work. There are inconsistencies in the extent to which teachers make enough use of the time spent marking to assess pupils' achievements. Where lessons have clear objectives, teachers' comments evaluate pupils' learning and identify weaknesses to correct in following lessons, but this good practice is not implemented consistently throughout the school. There is no clear guidance to help teachers use assessment information to guide planning, even though this was a key issue for action after the last inspection.

35. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and well understood by the headteacher who is the person with responsibility for child protection in the school. Longer serving members of staff are also clear about their responsibilities, but some teachers new to the school are less sure. There has been no recent in-service training for all staff on this issue and the induction of new staff to the school does not adequately prepare them to deal with child protection issues should they arise.

36. The school takes its responsibility for health and safety very seriously. Governors carry out yearly risk assessments. During the inspection week, building works were taking place to extend the hall. The headteacher took great care to ensure that the building work and lorries were separated from the pupils by temporary fencing. In assembly, he took time to explain to pupils why they must be careful and might not be able to use the field at certain times. During the inspection, two health and safety issues were brought to the attention of the headteacher. The school immediately addressed these issues.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The school has maintained a good partnership with parents. Parents generally view the school favourably and they identified a number of strengths. They feel that teachers expect pupils to work hard and achieve their best. They say that staff help pupils become mature and responsible and that behaviour is very good. In addition, nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire say their children enjoy school. Parents identified some areas they would like to see improved. They feel that the provision of homework is inconsistent. Inspection findings are that homework is regularly used, but there are inconsistencies in the type of homework given in certain year groups. Parents would like more information about their children's progress, and a greater range of activities outside lessons. They would like the school to work more closely with parents. A very few parents raised concerns over how the school deals with allegations of bullying. The inspection team found that allegations of bullying are fully investigated and that the pupils spoken to feel safe at school. However, the school does not have well developed ways of communicating its work to parents, so they understand the policies and actions that

the school takes. Homework and extra-curricular activities are similar to those provided by most schools for this age group.

38. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory range of information for parents. In particular, the year group curriculum newsletters provide parents with good information about what their children will be studying. This enables parents to support their children's learning at home. The annual reports are satisfactory and give parents a clear idea of what their children can do in different subjects. However, the targets on reports can sometimes be too vague, such as "develop the content of written work", and there are very few that are linked to specific subjects. Therefore, the reports do not give parents a clear idea of what their children need to do to raise attainment in any given subject. There are termly opportunities for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress formally and, if they have concerns, they are welcome to make an appointment to see the teacher. Newsletters provide good information about the life of the school and give parents adequate notice of events, such as class assemblies. At the parents' meeting, some parents said that they did not know what the behaviour policy, homework policy and complaints' procedures were. Although the prospectus refers to all these, at those times when parents have raised concerns, the school has not issued parents with copies of them in order to resolve problems quickly.

39. Parents are very supportive of their children's education. They are keen for them to do work at home and are prepared to help the school where they can. Parents regularly help in school with reading and other activities. The Parents' Association (PA) works very hard and raises considerable funds. The school has used money raised by the PA to provide a very useful shelter in the Key Stage 1 playground that enables pupils to be outside more often. The headteacher listens to and values parents' views but he acknowledges that he does not always inform parents of the actions taken as a result of their suggestions. This is one reason why some parents feel that the school does not act on their suggestions.

40. The school often involves the parents of pupils with special educational needs in their children's work. This includes specific literacy and numeracy work for parents to help their children with at home. In a few cases, the home/school books accompanying this work show the great value of this partnership and the progress made. Parents of pupils with a Statement play a full part in the reviews of progress and setting of new targets. The special needs co-ordinator and teachers use the planned 'open' evenings to discuss progress and difficulties with parents. When necessary, other meetings are arranged. However, parents are not routinely given copies of individual education plans or informed by letter that their child is on the special needs register.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide caring and positive leadership, and relationships within the school are very good. The school has strong Christian principles which are made apparent through its ethos and which underpin much of its good work. These principles are made explicit in its aims and values as was evident at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have prioritised the welfare of staff and the maintenance of good working relationships as the school has grown in size over the years. However, there are significant weaknesses in some important areas of leadership and management. On a day-to-day basis the school runs smoothly, but the school's plans for improvement do not contain rigorous strategies to ensure the success of the priorities that have been set, as a result of a review of current standards. Since the last inspection, standards in English and mathematics have not increased to bring them into line with similar schools. The school recognises this, and despite much hard work in introducing both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, standards are not improving at the rates they should do. At present there is no clear, whole-school action plan for improvement, using the English and mathematics targets agreed with the local education authority, although there are development plans for some aspects of these subjects. As a result, the school lacks a sharply focussed view of priorities for improvement in the current year and beyond. The pace of change is slow and this is a significant weakness.

42. Although there is very good teaching in some classes and in some subjects, this is not consistent and there are no formal procedures for monitoring and improving standards of teaching. The statutory requirements for performance management for teachers are not yet in place. Teachers do not take part in any appraisal of their work, nor do they have individual targets for pupil progress within their own classes. The headteacher visits classrooms informally, but does not observe lessons formally on a regular basis. This prevents the sharpening of satisfactory teaching and the improvement of a minority of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory.

43. The senior management team does not currently play a part in the monitoring of teaching and standards, and the roles of the deputy headteacher and the two key stage co-ordinators are underdeveloped. There are no structured systems for tracking attainment and progress over time that would lead to clear identification of those pupils who are not making sufficient progress, and those whose progress has slowed in a particular year group. The school does not track the progress of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, and this is a significant omission, since the proportion of pupils in this group is higher than the national average. As a consequence of this lack of monitoring and analysis of data, the school is not effective in addressing a drop in standards when it occurs. The deputy head is mainly concerned with day-to-day pastoral and administrative matters. The two key stage co-ordinators lead curriculum planning in their areas, but their influence upon the strategic direction of the school is minimal. The school is about to invest in a new mathematics co-ordinator and a new deputy head has been appointed to take up post in September. These are key roles for future, more rigorous, development.

44. Most, but not all, subjects have a co-ordinator, but these roles are also underdeveloped. Co-ordinators are hampered by the lack of clearly defined job descriptions. They are neither focused on checking whether pupils are building their skills step-by-step, nor the raising of standards. The practice of less experienced teachers shadowing the work of a co-ordinator is not proving to be effective, largely because the lead co-ordinators' role has not developed since the last inspection. Many of the co-ordinators of the foundation subjects are new and inexperienced and have, as yet, received no management training to assist with their responsibility. Both the senior management team and subject co-ordinators are limited in their roles by a lack of delegation and direction. However, the headteacher and staff demonstrate a good team spirit with a definite commitment to improvement. With more help and training, they have the necessary capacity to succeed. The co-ordinator for special educational needs offers advice and support for the good work that teachers do in class. She ensures that a proper register of pupils is kept and that pupils' progress is closely monitored. The school is well placed to carry out the requirements of the new Code of Practice next term.

45. The governing body meets regularly and is effectively organised into committees. The buildings' and admissions' committees, in particular, make a significant contribution. Some governors are attached to particular year groups and all are supportive of the school. They assist with admissions' appeals, and members of the personnel committee work with the headteacher annually to establish his personal objectives. They receive a report from the headteacher at their termly meetings. Governors recognise the good ethos of the school and show some concern about the recent dip in standards. However, governors spoken to during the inspection did not seem to have a full understanding of their statutory responsibilities and the governing body as a whole fails to fulfil these in some areas, such as in ensuring that performance management procedures are fully implemented in accordance with national policy. Although they look at national test results and discuss the targets set by the local education authority, they are not involved in setting priorities for improvement and do not play a full role in the consideration of standards.

46. Governors play little part in shaping the direction of the school or acting as a critical friend to the headteacher regarding standards. They regularly review the school's spending, discuss the impact of staffing upon the budget and are proactive regarding spending on the building and resources. However, they are not so aware of how funding may be affecting the standards and quality of education offered by the school, or how the school's decisions about spending should relate to priorities for improvement. For instance, governors have not considered whether spending to provide regular release time for teachers to plan lessons has had a positive impact on the rates of progress that pupils make and the standards they achieve. The school is paying insufficient attention to

best value and therefore cannot be sure that all actions taken are cost effective. In several areas the school prospectus does not meet statutory requirements. In particular, it does not contain comparative national test results or the school's targets for results in Key Stage 2. These weaknesses limit the overall effectiveness of the governing body.

47. Additional funds, such as grants for training, have, for the most part, been well used and managed. The way in which the extra funding to boost the progress of particular groups of pupils has been used is under review, because the school recognises that the strategy it employed did not produce the desired results. The school makes good use of new technology for administration, although a program that would enable the school to track pupils' progress is not yet in operation.

48. The number and experience of teaching staff is good and meets the demands of the National Curriculum. Classroom assistants demonstrate good skills and are generally well used, often to support individuals or small groups of pupils who have special educational needs. Many courses attended by teachers are a requirement of the latest national initiatives. The amount of staff training is adequate, but it is not targeted well enough to individual needs because performance management systems are not in place to make these connections. Teachers who have joined the school recently have experienced a helpful induction and a warm and friendly atmosphere, but much of the monitoring of their performance as a newly qualified teacher has been informal.

49. The school has good accommodation to support the curriculum. The new outside area for the reception children is a significant improvement. Learning resources are adequate across the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards, particularly in pupils' achievements during Key Stage 2, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. Improve the quality of leadership and management throughout the school, by:

- ensuring that all staff have clear job descriptions
- clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of managers and subject co-ordinators in identifying priorities for development and planning and monitoring the actions taken to achieve these priorities, in order that their work has an impact on whole school improvement
- determining that governors are fully aware of and are able to carry out their statutory responsibilities of holding the school to account regarding the standards achieved by pupils and of measuring the efficiency of spending by the impact it has on raising standards
- ensuring that all priority developments are directly related to improving the quality of education provide by the school and the standards attained by pupil
- providing necessary training for any member of the school who has direct responsibility for implementing planned action for school improvement
- fully implementing performance management procedures, involving regular observation of teaching, so that all staff are aware of what they do well, but also have clear targets for the areas in which they need to improve, and so that the consistency of teaching and planning for learning improves.

2. Ensure that higher-attaining pupils achieve well during Key Stage 2, by:

- monitoring curriculum planning to determine that it is relevant to the needs of the pupils, having taken into account their prior attainment levels
- ensuring that teachers make use of the assessments they make of what pupils already know and can do, to inform all planning for learning
- providing better challenge for the highest attaining and gifted pupils in English, particularly in writing activities, and in mathematics

- allowing opportunities for these pupils to work independently on a regular basis, using their own initiative and powers in problem solving
- identifying those pupils who are particularly gifted and talented in all subjects and planning

3. Raise pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6, by:

- ensuring that pupils working towards Level 4 in mathematics are taught the skills and knowledge necessary, in the most appropriate teaching groups and by the most suitable teaching methods, to ensure that they attain at least at the expected level for their age group
- implementing the full range of activities from the programmes of study for physical education, particularly those for team games and competitive sports and ensuring that curriculum planning for the subject builds continually on what the pupils have learned and experienced in previous classes
- providing the necessary resources for teaching and learning in ICT

4. Raise the standards that pupils attain in music, by improving the provision for music throughout the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

58

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	11	22	19	3	0	0
Percentage	5	19	38	33	5	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 about two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

409

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	20
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	51
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11
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	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	32	26	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	29	32
	Girls	26	26	26
	Total	57	55	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (95)	95 (95)	100 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	32	32
	Girls	26	25	26

	Total	57	57	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (95)	98 (97)	100 (97)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	30	21	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	22	30
	Girls	18	16	18
	Total	45	38	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (86)	75 (84)	94 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	24	30
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	37	41	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (78)	80 (84)	92 (89)
	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	13
Black – African heritage	12
Black – other	15
Indian	13
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	276
Any other minority ethnic group	36

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)	16.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24:6
Average class size	29.2

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
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)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	910,101
Total expenditure	921,898
Expenditure per pupil	2254
Balance brought forward from previous year	87,173

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	409
Number of questionnaires returned	147

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	31	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	36	5	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	31	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	50	14	7	0
The teaching is good.	56	37	1	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	35	12	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	39	6	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	43	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	41	44	11	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	37	5	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	46	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	32	29	18	5

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

50. There have been improvements in teaching and provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now good for all areas of learning, with particular strengths in fostering children's personal, social and emotional development. In all twelve lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were either graded good or very good the majority being good, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. This initial stage in children's learning has benefited considerably from recent changes made to the curriculum, the provision of an outside area and methods of teaching. The curriculum provided for these young children now follows that recommended nationally and addresses fully all the areas of learning set out for the Foundation Stage. As a result, children's achievements are good in all areas of learning. Changes made to classrooms, internal spaces and resources are a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The new outside area is a strength. It is being well used and planned into the curriculum, and is making a valuable contribution to children's learning.

51. There are good induction procedures. Staff visit pre-school settings, and both children and parents visit the school prior to them joining in September. Assessments show that many of the children are of at least average ability when they join the school, although a few have considerable special needs. Children join the school in the September of the year in which they are five. The youngest children attend for half-days at first, but after the autumn half term, all children are full-time. Each class has thirty pupils and teachers have a full-time early years' assistant to work alongside them. Extra help is sometimes available. Overall, the majority of children make good progress and by the time they are ready to start in Year 1 most are attaining and many are exceeding the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

52. Children make very good progress in this area of learning. Classrooms, teaching and learning are organised in such a way as to provide many rich opportunities for children to make choices and decisions about their work. They are encouraged to be independent and resources are readily accessible. They find what they need easily and are encouraged to tidy away well at the end of an activity. They work and play together constructively, share and take turns, especially when engaged together in their own learning and play. In the home corner 'kitchen' several boys were totally absorbed in making biscuits for the giant from Jack and the Beanstalk. They shared equipment and happily involved the classroom assistant in their play. Most children have good self-help skills and got themselves ready for physical education quickly and without fuss. During 'show and tell' children listen politely to each other and thank each other at the end of the session. This area of learning makes a significant contribution to all other areas.

Communication, language and literacy

53. Children have a wide variety of opportunities to write, read, speak and listen. Most children write and recognise their own name and some are writing words and sentences. Many know and write the letters of the alphabet correctly and know the corresponding sounds. The opportunity to practise sounds and letters very regularly and in a variety of ways helps children to develop both their reading and writing skills. Whilst getting changed for physical education they practised their phonic knowledge with the help of a tape. The children listened well and enjoyed guessing the sounds. Writing is well supported and encouraged in the classrooms. After sharing the text of 'Has Anyone Seen Jack?' with the class, the teacher demonstrated writing sentences with a small group of children by scribing and reinforcing the use of capital letters and full stops as they retold her the story. Following this, she modelled a 'book' made by her, and explained that she was the author. She then asked who would be the authors of their books. By these good strategies she motivated the children to draw and write their own sentence about the story independently. A reading record travels daily between home and school in

which parents can write their comments, and it is well used. Children know by sight a number of simple words because they are put on cards and learned at home. They are encouraged to take home real books as well as reading scheme books. This widens their experience and promotes enjoyment of stories and reading. Listening to some children read during the inspection revealed that they are beginning to acquire very good strategies for tackling unknown words. Some can already use pictures and sounds effectively to help them. Interesting tasks and very good questioning skills in the teaching is ensuring that pupils make good progress in this area of learning.

Mathematical development

54. Teaching in this area is good. Children make good progress and by the end of the reception year most will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals. A range of mathematical activities ensures that children learn to count to ten and well beyond. Many can add or subtract numbers to 10 and are beginning to build up an understanding of the language of number. They develop mathematical vocabulary such as 'less than' and 'more than'. During registration and story times teachers make sure that counting makes a significant contribution. There are many good opportunities taken to reinforce number such as the storybook 'Ten on a Train' which was skilfully used to extend children's mathematical vocabulary. In one registration session, children were engaged in counting those who answered and taking it away from the number usually in the class. Some used a number line to help them. When the number of packed lunches and school dinners were added together and came to the number present they were asked to explain why this was so. Teachers create a rich mathematical environment and make good use of resources including shops. In one instance the teacher was the shopkeeper, wearing a straw hat so as to be in role! In one good lesson teaching coin recognition, the teacher worked with the whole class and then set up a number of tasks for all children whilst specifically targeting a small group herself. The very good organisation and appropriate activities meant that the lesson exhibited a very good pace of learning. Constant praise and reassurance gave the children confidence. They responded by working hard. Children show very good attitudes to mathematical learning and are keen and enthusiastic.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

55. The quality of teaching in this area is good. During the week, a wide range of activities was planned to cover the different aspects of this area of learning. During the inspection, children planted seeds in connection with their work about 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. When questioned they knew that the seeds needed warmth, water and soil. Each child planted their own seed giving them the opportunity to care for it and watch it grow. This makes a significant contribution to their spiritual development. Through the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' some children were helped to design and make baskets to carry food to grandma, whilst another group selected materials to make a picture of Mr Wolf. A third group worked on reinforcing the sound of the week by making a 'busy bee' attached to elastic on the end of a straw. Throughout all these activities, children practised their cutting and sticking skills as well as selecting and managing appropriate materials. In a lesson using a programmable toy, children learned about direction and to make predictions. The teacher used the toy to teach the children how to program it to reach the top of Jack's beanstalk. Skilfully, she helped them to see that in eight moves it would reach half way. Finally she helped them to make guesses as to how many moves it would take to get to the top. Each estimated and then one by one they took turns to program the toy. They progressed to being able to program it to turn around and return to the bottom of the beanstalk. They also practised counting whilst involved in this work. Many opportunities were available for children to use the computers in the classrooms. These were loaded with appropriate programs and during work time children were free to choose to use them. Throughout all these activities children's attitudes were very good. They sustained interest and concentration to a high level.

Physical development

56. A wide range of outdoor equipment and successful teaching of dance and other physical education activities helps children to make good progress in the development of their physical skills. Large equipment helps them to balance and climb showing an awareness of others and the space around them. There are no 'ride on' toys at present through which to further develop their co-ordination skills. During a very good lesson to teach children to move with control and co-ordination, they were challenged effectively and learned many important skills. The teacher asked searching questions during the warm up and children gave good answers demonstrating a simple understanding of what happens to their bodies when they exercise. Following this, children were divided

into groups and asked to do such things as throw bean bags accurately into hoops from a distance, hit cones with small balls from a distance, throw and catch large balls to partners and take part in team games. They were continually praised and encouraged. All of the children took part with great enthusiasm. They co-operated with each other, took turns and tried very hard. Children's manipulative skills are practised through all areas of development. There are good opportunities for them to use construction equipment, and to cut, stick and write. Many children are developing good handwriting skills. Children show confidence and enjoyment in physical activities resulting in good attitudes to learning.

Creative development

57. Children make good progress in this area. Whilst making 'golden eggs' for Jack to steal from the giant, they chose from a variety of appropriate materials. They have learned to apply different types of glue sensibly and can choose and mix appropriate colours whilst painting. They are very well supported by adults in role-play situations and enjoy extended opportunities for speaking and listening. Helped by an assistant, a small group of children experiencing speech and language difficulties ably performed 'Jack and the Beanstalk', imaginatively using the climbing frame as the beanstalk and the giant's castle. Children sing well and many of the songs help them to consolidate their knowledge of number. No percussion instruments were observed in use during the inspection.

58. Assessment on entry, baseline assessment, gives a clear picture of children's skills and knowledge on entry to the school. The school is currently using the local education authority method for assessment and target setting to enable them to record each child's individual progress in English and mathematics and to provide information for Year 1. The reception classes provide a good foundation for progression to Year 1 and the National Curriculum. Teachers and able classroom assistants manage classes calmly and very good relationships exist between adults and children. This provides a relaxed atmosphere in which children are praised and encouraged to do their best. Much has been achieved by the recent changes made to the Foundation Stage and it is well managed.

ENGLISH

59. In the 2001 national assessments at the end of Year 2, results in reading and writing were well above both the national average and the average compared with similar schools. Results have improved at a similar rate to the national trend over the past few years. In 2001, results in reading improved at a better rate than the national trend. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well on their prior learning. There has been an improvement to overall standards in English in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection. Test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 have declined over the last two years, and in 2001 were similar to the national average, but below average in comparison with similar schools. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 has remained high, the proportion gaining the higher Level 5, is lower than in similar schools. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were attaining better standards at the time of the last inspection. This is because the highest attaining pupils in the key stage are often not challenged well enough to reach their full potential. As a result, levels of achievement in Key Stage 2 are satisfactory overall, rather than the good levels of achievement evident in Key Stage 1. In contrast to the national picture, boys do slightly better than girls. However, no significant difference in their work was seen during the inspection. Attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is above average and attainment of pupils in Year 6 is average overall. This is different to findings at the time of the last inspection when pupils in both key stages attained at above average levels.

59. Pupils listen attentively in lessons, both to the teacher and each other. They use an appropriate range of vocabulary to ask thoughtful questions. They are keen to contribute to discussions and respect each other's opinions. Many good opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in speaking and listening activities. For example, Year 1 pupils worked well in pairs to practise asking each other questions. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 5 used role-play to persuade a mother to let a child keep a pet snake. The tape recording of the finished work helped raise the standard expected of pupils' performance. Technical vocabulary is well taught in other subjects. In Year 3, pupils described rocks in a variety of ways and used historical terms accurately when they

described how they find out about things that happened in the past. Overall, attainment in speaking and listening is above national expectations.

59. Pupils enjoy reading and standards in both key stages are well above national expectations. In Key Stage 1, good teaching of strategies to help pupils read unfamiliar words builds confidence. In guided reading sessions, illustrations are used to give pupils a feel for the story and this creates anticipation and makes them want to read. Pupils read well, both together and on their own. Many new books have been bought and each room has an attractive book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction. Teachers' records are generally diagnostic and identify areas where pupils need support to improve their independent reading skills.

60. The school has developed close links with parents to help support children's reading at home and in school. From comments in pupils' reading diaries throughout the school, it is clear that most parents enjoy books with their children, and this has a positive impact on maintaining high standards. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read fluently and with good expression. They discuss favourite authors, justifying their opinions well. Most pupils are familiar with the main features of fiction and non-fiction texts. An appropriate range of non-fiction texts is used well in classrooms to develop pupils' research skills. The library is too small for classes to be taught library skills. It is used for small groups withdrawn from other lessons so cannot be used for pupils to study independently. Although the texts used in literacy sessions introduce pupils to a range of literature, the guided reading choices for some older, potentially higher-attaining pupils are not challenging enough, and they bring in books from home to supplement the range of fiction available in school.

61. The quality of handwriting in the school has improved and is good. By the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils are using joined handwriting and, by Year 6, most have developed a fluent style and present their work very well. Standards in writing in Key Stage 1 are consistently well above national expectations. Pupils' knowledge of phonics, spelling, grammar and the use of punctuation develop well as they follow the National Literacy Strategy. These pupils have written instructions on how to grow seeds, labelled the parts of a plant, re-told favourite fairy stories, made their own non-fiction books about mini-beasts, complete with contents page, and written diary entries as if they had witnessed the Great Fire of London. The work of pupils from all attainment groups in Year 2 is displayed in writing based on dreamtime in the Tiddalik legend.

62. In recent years, this good progress has not been maintained as pupils move on to Key Stage 2. Pupils are successfully using the characteristics of various kinds of writing. For example, Year 3 pupils used imaginative writing to continue the story of 'Trick a Tiger'. Year 4 wrote animal poems with different rhyme schemes. Year 5 used persuasive language effectively to protest about animals in circuses, and Year 6 used imaginative headlines in newspaper reports about Beowulf. Good opportunities are taken to develop pupils' writing skills through other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 write tourist brochures in geography. In science, diagrams are labelled clearly and report writing uses features of factual writing such as headings. Year 3's study of Egypt and Year 5's topic on Ancient Greece produced a wide range of written work of a high standard. A literary environment is created in classrooms that display pupils' writing. However, much of the written work in pupils' books and on display in classrooms is teacher directed and limits opportunities for pupils to write independently and develop their own style. In Years 5 and 6, balanced arguments showing both points of view are based on the same information given to all pupils and this results in formulaic writing. Teachers do not allow the higher-attaining pupils to plan, draft and improve their writing so that they can develop the style and content to a high standard.

63. All the teaching observed was at least satisfactory. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good overall with some that is excellent. In Key Stage 2, it is satisfactory with some that is very good. Pupils are taught grammar and punctuation rules well, and literacy skills are used effectively in all subjects. In the best lessons, where teaching was very good or excellent, skilful questioning and activities planned to meet clearly identified learning objectives ensured good pace to the lessons. Pupils were not only challenged, but also supported and most made very good progress with their own writing in these lessons. For example, Year 2 pupils produced a setting for an episode of 'Mr Gumpy's Outing' and Year 4's descriptive writing showed empathy with evacuees. The literacy strategy is in place in the school but, in Key Stage 2, teachers do not plan work within the recommended

sixty-minute period and, on occasions, pupils spend too long listening to lengthy explanations and start to lose interest. The weaknesses observed in lessons in Key Stage 2, where teaching was graded as satisfactory overall, were by and large due to these overly long sessions. Pace in these lessons was slow, there was no extended challenge for pupils, validating the extra-long sessions, and curriculum time that could have been used for other subjects was used to reconsolidate pupils' already well-developed literacy skills.

64. Assessment strategies are generally used well in lessons. However, where teachers' planning makes insufficient use of them to set appropriate tasks, pupils' productivity and pace of working is inconsistent. For example, while worksheets are generally well used to support pupils with lower levels of attainment, in some classes their overuse limits opportunities for other pupils, especially the most able, to write freely or in more depth. This is most evident in Years 3 and 4 where parallel classes have different levels of attainment, due to the inconsistencies in teaching. Teachers' marking is supportive with the focus on spelling. Some teachers' comments make clear to pupils what they have achieved and what needs to be done next to improve. However, this good practice is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs receive targeted support in lessons that enables them to make similar progress to their peers. Learning support assistants work effectively with pupils, especially when their role has been included in teachers' planning. The few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English receive good specialist support and make successful gains in their learning. The school has additional literacy support in Year 3 and a booster class in Year 6 to improve the attainment of pupils whose test scores are just below the national average. Observations during the inspection indicate that the school has not used assessment methods accurately to identify pupils for this support.

65. The school has correctly identified writing at Key Stage 2 as an area that needs to be improved to raise standards. However, management of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory, because the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to identify the most important action that needs to be taken. This is because the school has not analysed pupils' past results carefully enough, by specific groups of pupils, to highlight where improvements are needed. As yet, this is not an expected responsibility of the co-ordinator, but the senior management team does not carry out such work either. The co-ordinator has introduced systems to enable teachers to assess the standard of pupils' writing more accurately. The role of the subject co-ordinator has not been developed to include classroom monitoring, or regular monitoring of teachers' planning. As a result, examples of good practice are not shared throughout the school, planning does not always start from the point of what pupils have already learned, and they are not always motivated to do their best.

MATHEMATICS

66. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. They dipped in 1999 but have since risen at a faster rate than the national trend. In 2001 they were well above the national average and above those of similar schools.

67. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have fallen since the last inspection, although they remain above the national average. In 2001 they were above the national average, but below average when compared with similar schools. Although the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was below average, the proportion gaining the higher Level 5 was above the national average and in line with similar schools.

68. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have good basic mathematical skills and, as a result, are confident in their approach to all mathematical tasks. Although the attainment of pupils with special educational needs is below national expectations, their achievement is satisfactory because they are well supported in lessons. Standards in Key Stage 1 are above what is expected for pupils' ages and they make good progress from the time they come into the school. They are taught to explain their methods of working from the outset. This helps them to develop their mathematical thinking and have a clear understanding of the concepts they learn. Standards in Years 3 and 4 are in line with expectations. Much of the work is recorded on worksheets and pupils do not have the opportunity to organise their own work. More able pupils are not given suitably challenging work. In Years 5 and 6, standards are higher. Pupils show good understanding of the work covered and use a variety of methods when

solving problems. More able pupils respond well to challenge and apply their skills to investigating number sequences and patterns. Pupils are achieving well in most lessons because they concentrate and work hard. In Year 6, classes are set and the less able pupils receive extra support and are taught in a small group. This not only gives them the help they need but also enables the other groups to do more challenging work. Average attaining pupils do not always receive the level of support they need nor the type of teaching necessary to ensure they attain the expected level, Level 4, by the end of Year 6. Overall, as a result of the inconsistent pattern of learning through Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement on prior attainment is satisfactory.

69. In general, the teaching observed was good, with teaching in a third of the lessons being very good or excellent. Introductions to mathematics lessons were well organised. In the lessons where teaching was very good, pupils were well motivated and the activities were fast and fun. Teachers' planning took into account pupils' different abilities and work was set for different groups. However, in some lessons, the match of tasks to pupils' different abilities was not good enough, and this resulted in pupils in a particular ability group making inconsistent progress. In lessons in Year 1, this group was the average attaining pupils. In some lessons in Year 2, this group was the higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs often benefited from the additional adult help they received both in the classroom and when they were withdrawn. Overall, pupils respond very well to working in groups or pairs, and co-operate when working together. Many teachers have a good knowledge of the pupils' abilities and ask appropriate questions in whole-class sessions, so that all pupils are involved. Teachers give clear explanations and emphasise mathematical language. This encourages pupils to use the correct terms when talking about their work.

70. In the best lessons, the pace and challenge was very good and teachers used different activities and time targets to ensure that the majority of the class stayed focused and worked quickly. However, of the ten lessons observed in Key Stage 2, five of them were too long. Pupils' good behaviour and concentration led to the good progress they made even in these lessons. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and, as a result, pupils are confident when asking or answering questions. Learning support assistants share the teachers' planning and are fully involved in supporting pupils who need their help at all stages of the lesson. Teachers vary activities in order to repeat facts and still maintain interest. In very good lessons teachers build on what the pupils already know and understand to introduce more challenging work. For example, Year 2 pupils worked from practising different strategies of adding three single digit numbers to adding three or more two-digit numbers in their heads.

71. Pupils take a pride in their work and all recording is well organised and neat. However, some worksheets and exercises from textbooks do not fully reinforce what is taught in the lessons. In two lessons, this confused the pupils, as the work in the book did not match the previous learning. Although they had understood the lesson, the teacher had to explain again how to complete the activity. Marking is good and pupils respond well to the high standards of presentation that is expected of them. In exercise books, comments to the pupils are both positive and encouraging. The most effective marking shows pupils how they can improve and develop their work. In several lessons pupils' individual whiteboards were used very effectively and ensured that all pupils were involved in recording their working as the lesson progressed. Pupils are given homework, which reinforces the work they have been doing in class, but this is inconsistent. Numeracy is promoted well in other subjects, such as geography, science and art. Information and communication technology is used to support learning, but this is limited and it is not yet having an effect on raising standards in mathematics.

72. The organisation of mathematics across the school is satisfactory. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has provided a sound structure for both teaching and learning. Additional support has been organised for both Year 5 and Year 6. Regular assessments are carried out but the information is not used well enough to set targets for achievement for all pupils. The co-ordinator attends half-termly update meetings, runs workshops for the staff and supports her colleagues. However, she has not monitored learning in lessons or analysed test results, which track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Informal monitoring is limited to looking at pupils' books and year group plans. Closer links with parents has been an area identified as needing to be developed.

SCIENCE

73. The results of the 2001 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 were very high in comparison to the national average. All pupils attained at least at the expected level and over 50 per cent of the pupils attained the higher level, Level 3. This percentage was well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' results were very high at Level 2 and above average at Level 3. The high proportion of pupils attaining above average and well above average results in science assessments indicates good achievement on attainment levels at the start of Key Stage 1.

74. In the 2001 tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' results were above the national average both at the expected level, Level 4, and at the higher level, Level 5. The school's results have been similar over the past three years, although the rate of improvement in results has slowed in the past two years. The improvement trend is now similar to the national trend, whereas it had previously been better. In particular cohorts there are sometimes differences between the attainment of boys and girls, but over a three-year period their results show no difference. The school's results were close to the average for schools in a similar context.

75. In work seen in lessons and in pupils' books, standards in Year 2 are in line with end of key stage assessments and are above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were found to be generally average. Pupils are particularly adept at explaining their reasoning when making scientific observations and conclusions. For example, when considering forces, they explained very carefully and in good detail why push forces are often stronger than pull forces, and demonstrated how an object could be moved more easily when it was pushed rather than pulled. They talked about muscles that are used to make the push easier and how body weight affected the push force. They described ways in which a pull force could be made easier. Pupils present their work very well. They have a clear understanding of how experiments and findings should be recorded, and make use of graphs and tables appropriately. Pupils achieve well on their previous attainment and make at least good progress in lessons.

76. In the current Year 6, standards are average overall, although pupils' knowledge of scientific facts is good. This is consistent with findings from last inspection. Standards attained are hampered by the lack of opportunity for pupils to investigate independently. This is the case generally, but even more so for the higher attaining pupils who, in discussion, make general hypotheses, have very good ideas of how to test a theory or organise an experiment and predict outcomes with justification for their ideas. Pupils' work is well organised and extremely well presented, and good use is made of the most suitable methods of recording findings, depending on the context of the work. In lessons seen in Year 6, attainment was secure within Level 4, the expected level, for the great majority of pupils. Pupils receiving additional support for their specific learning needs were also attaining at this level. During the inspection, the challenge for the highest attaining pupils was sometimes insufficient to raise their attainment levels beyond Level 4.

77. Teaching in the lessons seen was good overall. In Key Stage 1, teaching in all lessons was very good and encouraged pupils to make very good progress. Teachers plan very well together and ensure consistency between year groups. Planning is closely related to the National Curriculum and other national recommendations but, most importantly, lessons are planned to build on the current levels at which pupils are attaining. Teachers in Key Stage 1 have a clear understanding of these levels and plan to consolidate and extend pupils' attainment. In a Year 2 lesson, the learning objectives were very precise and each activity throughout the lesson was used to exemplify and teach the intended objective. The teacher chose a very good range of tasks and activities to teach the principle that sometimes forces can change the shape of an object. She made very good use of questioning, at various levels appropriate to the ability of each group of pupils, to help pupils understand and reinforce their learning. In a Year 1 lesson, the teachers' good subject knowledge enabled her to plan very well for the development of pupils' specific scientific vocabulary, alongside the development of scientific facts related to materials and their groups. She made constant reference to pupils' previous learning and attainment, and pupils themselves had a very clear understanding of the progress they were making. In both of these lessons, pupils'

attitudes and behaviour were exemplary, because they were extremely interested by the work and very much enjoyed learning.

78. In Key Stage 2, while teaching in most lessons was good, it ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. The inconsistency of teaching in Key Stage 2 slows down the overall rates of progress from year group to year group, with the overall impact that pupils make satisfactory rather than good achievements on their prior attainment levels. In lessons where teaching was very good, such as in a Year 5 lesson where washing powder tablets were compared, pupils made significant gains in their learning, principally because the teacher had planned the lesson at the right starting level for the ability of the pupils, rather than planning directly from the programmes of study for the subject. Her subject knowledge was clearly strong, enabling the lesson to be taught confidently and learning objectives to be reinforced successfully through the activities on which the pupils worked. Her expectations were very high about how pupils would apply themselves to each task and time limits were set to ensure continued good pace throughout the lesson. Pupils responded very well to this and were ready to present their findings to the whole class because they had concentrated well, wasted no time and recorded their findings accurately. Pupils' enjoyment of the lesson also encouraged their spiritual development as they wondered at the results of the dissolving experiment. In an unsatisfactory lesson in Year 4, pace was very slow and pupils were not challenged highly enough. The learning objective for the lesson was too easy for the majority of pupils, who already had a good understanding of the structure of the skeleton. Although pupils continued to behave well, they were not enthusiastic about the work and lost interest. Their recorded work was not carefully done and most pupils ended the lesson by colouring the skeleton, an activity that bore no relevance to the intended learning.

79. The planned curriculum for science is generally good. Most teachers make good use of national guidance, but there are currently no systems for ensuring that the work planned for lessons is appropriate to the needs of specific pupils at the school. Where planning is very appropriate, it is because of individual teachers' attention to what pupils have already learned and understood. This works better in Key Stage 1, because pupils have had less experience of the science curriculum. The co-ordinator has good understanding of the primary curriculum for science, but she does not monitor planning, observe lessons, or moderate standards attained by pupils. As such, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. She has looked at information from test results, compiled by the previous co-ordinator, but no priority actions for developments in the subject have been devised as result of this analysis. For example, there is no planned action to develop the investigative and experimental opportunities and skills of higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1, even though they attained lower results in this area than in others. The co-ordinator has the necessary skills to carry out the full responsibilities of the role, but at present there is no expectation of her to do so. The role of the co-ordinator has not developed enough since the last inspection. Limited use is made of the assessments that teachers make of pupils' work, and there is therefore limited impact on the way they plan for future learning. Resources for the subject are suitable, and, where teaching is good, they are well used.

ART AND DESIGN

80. Evidence from three lesson observations, displays and samples of work indicates that standards in art across both key stages are in line with those expected for pupils' ages. This represents a fall in standards to those at the time of the last inspection, when standards at Key Stage 2 were found to be above average. However, in classes where planning is thorough and pupils' understanding and skills are developed systematically, standards are higher. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory levels of achievement on their prior attainments. There are good links with other subjects, especially design and technology and history. Displays of pupils' multicultural work enhance the school.

81. Pupils experience a wide range of work and materials throughout their primary years. Opportunities for close observational work and three-dimensional work are good, and consequently pupils are familiar with a good selection of paint, papers, textural materials and clay. During Key Stage 1, they make direct observations of each other and the world around them, and practise mixing paint and brush skills when carefully painting portraits and blossom. They compile class books of their closely observed pastel drawings of objects around the school. Very

good links are established between art and design and design and technology through themed work. An example of this is the careful models of Treasure Island made while studying 'Journeys' in Year 1. Pupils continue to build on these skills throughout Key Stage 2. Year 3 investigate pattern, and use pastels and paint for their Egyptian paintings and work portraying family relationships. In Year 4, pupils experience art from another culture through learning about hot wax resist techniques in India. They carefully replicate the idea by using wax and a colour wash. History topics are used to create good links with art in Years 5 and 6. Pupils make effective masks as a part of their study of the Greeks and successfully practise the art of quilling as a part of their work about the Victorians. Throughout the school pupils learn from an appreciation of the work of famous artists such as Monet, Picasso and Matisse. They practise the techniques and create their own very special art. A very good example of this is collage based on the work of the African artist Valente Malangatana.

82. The quality of teaching in two lessons seen was good. In the third lesson, teaching was satisfactory. Where teaching was good, lessons were characterised by appropriate and well-used resources, good use of technical language and good subject knowledge. Teachers prepared carefully and introduced ideas clearly. As a result, pupils were confident and willing to try challenging tasks. The use of computer graphics made a significant contribution to all three lessons and this was a strength of the teaching. In a good lesson looking at the work of Picasso, Matisse, Kandinsky and Miro, pupils were supported in their observational work by the use of viewfinders and encouraged to apply colour straight away. The teacher emphasised looking closely and choosing the medium carefully. The use of pupils' work to demonstrate and emphasise particular points helped

pupils to talk about and evaluate their own work. In all the lessons, pupils' attitudes were good. Teachers managed pupils well and as a result pupils worked hard and sustained interest and concentration.

83. The current quality of leadership and management in art is unsatisfactory although the co-ordinator has only very recently taken over the subject. The policy and guidelines for art were prepared prior to the most recent national requirements and are in need of review. There are currently no procedures for monitoring standards in art across the school. This is unsatisfactory. Currently, the school uses recommended national guidance for the art curriculum but detailed planning, linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum, is not in place. This hampers both the continuing development of knowledge, skills and understanding for pupils, as well as lesson planning for teachers. There has been no improvement in this since the last inspection. Sketchbooks, although well used in some instances, are not in consistent use in all classes. Basic assessment procedures are now in place, and this is an improvement, but there are no pupil portfolios of work to support judgements made. The subject is well resourced and makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Evidence from pupils' work, displays and the one lesson seen, indicates that standards are above that which is expected at the end of Key Stage 1, and in line with what is expected by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils continue to make good progress in designing, making and evaluating in Key Stage 1, and satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2. There are very good links with other subjects.

85. A topic on 'Journeys' in Year 1 provided pupils with the opportunity to design and make their own Treasure Island and included good links with art. Pupils in Year 2 designed a puppet for retelling traditional tales such as Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Little Pigs. This project is an excellent example of the design process, and the outcome was very good. Paper mock-ups provided pupils with the opportunity to evaluate and change their designs before making the puppet in felt. This project provided good opportunities to enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills as they retold the stories. Important design, making and evaluation skills continue to be built upon in Key Stage 2, as pupils design and make sandwiches and skilful three-dimensional cards for Mother's Day. Good curriculum links are also maintained in Years 5 and 6 in the making of Greek and African masks.

These projects contribute significantly to pupils' historical and artistic skills, as well as to their cultural development. In all the work seen, pupils are supported by the use of a framework that encourages them to think carefully at each stage. They record their design carefully, explain how it will be made, list resources, and evaluate it at the end of the process. Tasks are suitably challenging and pupils learn a range of necessary skills. The framework provides a good opportunity for pupils to practise their writing skills.

86. In the one lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory. As the first in a sequence of lessons, pupils were investigating vehicles. During the introduction they exhibited a good knowledge of different forms of transport. The teacher used technical language that extended pupils' vocabulary and successfully used a large-scale diagram as a model for pupils to draw and label their own. Pupils were keen to contribute to discussions, enjoyed the activities and tried hard with challenging tasks.

87. Although pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory, there is currently no co-ordinator to lead development and monitor standards, and this is unsatisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection the subject was well managed and had a scheme of work. However, this has not been updated and, although teachers are using national advice, this has not been referenced to recent changes in the National Curriculum. This adversely affects the development of the subject and pupils' overall achievement on prior attainment levels. The subject is well resourced. There are basic assessment procedures in place and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

88. The standard of work attained at the end of Year 2 is close to national expectations, as found during the last inspection. Pupils have made some extensive studies of 'homes' and are knowledgeable about different types of houses, especially those seen in this country. Pupils are able to use the computer to construct their own road scenes incorporating some different houses. They have also considered the nature of traffic in their own locality and compared it to that on a small island. Pupils in Year 2 showed their understanding of the physical and aesthetic properties of the island by producing some persuasive brochures hoping to entice visitors there. Pupils achieve satisfactorily on their prior attainment levels.

89. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainments are also close to national expectations and pupils' levels of achievement are satisfactory. Standards have been maintained at the same level since the last inspection. Pupils have a secure understanding of maps and atlases and use both confidently. This includes using six-figure grid references to locate and identify symbols on Ordnance Survey maps. Pupils also have an appropriate knowledge of physical features such as rivers and mountains, as well as different climates. Although they can describe how places change over time, there is little depth to their understanding of the consequences of growth. For example, although they recognise traffic congestion as a problem, they know little about the demands on waste disposal, sewerage, pollution and effects on the environment. When discussing 'conservation', pupils had an idea of what it meant but their ideas were little developed.

90. An insufficient number of lessons was observed to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. However, in the few lessons seen, the standard of teaching and learning was satisfactory. In these lessons pupils' knowledge of maps was used well as an introduction to an extended programme of work on the theme of 'water'. Teachers made good checks on pupils' understanding before moving on to more demanding tasks. Their questioning was good and, when brainstorming ideas on possible areas for research, helped pupils to apply knowledge from science lessons. Materials were well chosen and kept pupils interested throughout. For example, large-scale maps of different parts of London were used and pupils identified areas they were familiar with as well as searching for the features asked of them.

91. The school follows national guidance as its scheme of work. Although this provides a good framework for ensuring the programmes of study are covered, the school has not adapted the programmes of study to its own requirements and the particular needs of the pupils. This means that, although coverage of the content is indicated, there is no clear identification of how skills and knowledge are to be built on. Teachers in their year groups plan independently and there is no overall monitoring of the impact of this. At the moment there are insufficient checks on the quality of teaching and learning, planning and the work being produced. As such, the quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory.

HISTORY

92. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and, by Year 6, their attainment is close to that expected for their age. At both key stages, pupils' chronological understanding and knowledge of people and events in the past are good. Compared with the previous inspection there is less evidence of challenge for pupils in Key Stage 2. This is because the school has done little to develop the draft scheme of work that was being used at that time. As a result, there are differences in the way teachers within year groups develop pupils' experience of how history is interpreted.

93. By Year 2, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past. Their learning is well supported by museum displays in classrooms. In Year 1, pupils observed kitchen utensils from the times in the past. They developed good understanding of differences between 'now' and 'then' as they describe what each might have been used for. A visit from the Freshwater Theatre Group involved pupils in Year 2 in role-play to imagine how people lived in London at the time of the Great Fire.

94. In Year 3, pupils made good progress in historical enquiry when they found out about life in Ancient Egypt and studied portraits of members of the Tudor royal family. Year 4 pupils explored reasons for the Roman invasion and what life was like for children in the Second World War. Year 5 pupils learnt about Ancient Greece and, in Year 6, pupils found out about child labour in Victorian times. Stimulating displays of work in some classes, especially in Year 5, show the many links made between history and English, geography and mathematics. For example, Year 6 compiled pie charts to compare a working day in 1869 with the present. However, work in some classes is based on re-writing factual accounts from worksheets and colouring in pictures of aspects of everyday life in the period studied. The work of the oldest pupils is focused on knowledge, rather than understanding why things happened or how information is preserved.

95. The overall quality of teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. When teaching motivates pupils they apply themselves well and show interest in their work. Year 3 pupils in one class enjoyed applying skills as young historians, finding out about the past in a new topic. They used correct terms to discuss what they could deduce from portraits of the Tudor royal family, evaluated the different sources of evidence, and explained why Prince Edward's portrait was placed before those of his older sisters in the family tree. In contrast, pupils in the other class spent too long trying to establish where they were on a time line on a worksheet that travelled back in time to the Tudors. Effective teaching in Year 5 focused pupils on carefully analysing and comparing well-chosen documentary and Internet sources to build a picture of life in Ancient Greece. Display work includes playscripts, drama masks, and an imaginative presentation of collaborative reports.

96. A strength of the school's provision for history is the extent to which learning is integrated through a range of subjects across the curriculum. Resources are well used, and pupils' understanding of people and events is broadened through drama workshops and visits. A weakness is that teachers are planning from schemes of work that list topic areas, but lack sufficient detail to help staff understand the objectives for their teaching. Teachers know the topics and themes they want to teach, but do not have a clear enough picture of what they want pupils to learn, or how this builds on what they already know. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2. Overall, leadership and management of the subject are currently unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator for history has been absent through ill health and, therefore, teachers work independently to plan for lessons with no monitoring or quality assurance. The assessment of pupils' work varies, and no record is kept of pupils' developing knowledge,

skills and understanding. Historical interpretation and enquiry are not part of an integrated programme of work. As at the time of the last inspection, this remains an area for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

97. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 is close to national expectations, as at the time of the last inspection. Their basic keyboard and mouse skills enable them to be confident users of computers. For example, they assembled the different parts of a flower on the computer and labeled them using the mouse and a software program. Pupils in Year 1 also made their own street scenes as part of their project on homes and houses. This involved using computer pictures to assemble the scene, deciding if they liked it, and then possibly changing their ideas. Pupils' achievements on their prior attainment levels are satisfactory in this key stage.

98. By Year 6, attainment is below national expectations and pupils make unsatisfactory levels of achievement on their previous learning. This differs from the findings of the last inspection and reflects the changing requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT that the school has yet to incorporate fully into its scheme of work. Pupils have also had too few opportunities to develop their skills and understanding because there are too few computers, software and associated technology. Older pupils are familiar with some of the more advanced desktop publishing features and can, for example, import pictures and text. In Year 6, pupils produced some well-presented front covers for their own newspapers with headlines, illustrations and text in columns. As yet, pupils have had no opportunities to use multimedia packages or to make use of the school's digital cameras. Pupils are aware of some of the applications of technology in the world but not in any great depth. They are not confident when discussing the pros and cons of using computers compared with other alternatives. Pupils are able to program floor turtles and have some experience of programming on the screen. They have not used sensing equipment when carrying out scientific investigations, for example to detect heat changes. However, pupils are confident users of the Internet and e-mail facility, many having access to these facilities at home. In Year 6, pupils have made extensive use of the Internet to download and adapt information as part of their individual research projects on Victorians.

99. Too few lessons were observed to make an overall judgement about the standard of teaching. In the lessons seen and in lessons where computers were used to support learning, the teaching was satisfactory. Teachers gave clear instructions and demonstrations on how to use a new program. For example, in Year 5, pupils made good use of a program in which they could use the component parts of 'Matisse's Mouse' to create their own pictures. In this lesson, pupils were encouraged, once they had their turn, to teach others how to move the shapes around the screen. The number and quality of computers available restricts teachers in their work. In some classes, the machines are old, slow and unreliable which leads to frustration. For example, pupils in Year 2 found it difficult to draw and label a truck because the software proved difficult to operate. In a Year 1 class, only one computer could be used when thirty pupils needed to practise a skill demonstrated by their class teacher. Teachers' planning is inconsistent, but also suffers from an inadequate scheme of work within which to operate. The school follows the national guidance as a basic scheme, but has yet to implement all of its strands or adapt it to provide a clear way of ensuring pupils' skills are built on appropriately. Teachers plan work for their year group, but there is no monitoring of this planning to ensure skills are not repeated at the same level or are being missed out. Teachers record what pupils have covered, rather than a detailed assessment of what they can do. For example, in Year 5, teachers have made good plans to ensure their pupils are able to complete spreadsheets, but they do not know if the pupils are all capable of doing this. This may well mean pupils repeating work they have previously done. Pupils enjoy using computers and co-operate well when sharing machines. In Year 1, pupils sat in absorbed silence as they watched their classmates operate a new program, quick to applaud success and just as keen to point out errors.

100. The school has made gains since the last inspection, especially in the training of staff and in the provision of more equipment. Every class now has an Internet connection, and the number of computers in school has increased. However, some equipment is underused, such as sensing equipment and digital cameras, and some computers are old, and of limited use. Leadership and management in the subject are unsatisfactory, because the

roles of the co-ordinators are not developed well enough, especially in the monitoring of teaching and learning and leading staff development. The lack of adequate schemes of work and assessment is hindering the school's efforts at raising standards.

MUSIC

101. Provision for music is unsatisfactory. Too little evidence was available to make secure judgements about pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning. Standards of attainment are below expectations overall. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both in Key Stage 1. In both cases, the teacher observed was taking the lesson while the class teacher attended planning meetings. In the shorter lesson, pupils listened to music, clapped to different rhythms and sang enthusiastically. The other lesson was too long, and the planning was insufficiently detailed to ensure that the pupils made adequate progress in the time. A number of pupils learn guitar or flute, taught by visiting specialists. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to join the choir. The teacher's enthusiasm in choir sessions is conveyed to pupils and they enjoy singing.

102. Management of the subject is poor. There is no co-ordinator to guide the staff, who lack expertise, and there is no action plan to secure improvement. The school uses the nationally recommended scheme of work, but this is not tailored to the needs of the school. No formal assessment procedure is in place to monitor pupils' progress so that it can be improved. Not enough use is made of school assemblies to extend pupils' experiences of singing, playing instruments and listening to music. There were weaknesses reported at the last inspection in the implementation of the scheme and the number of tuned instruments. No improvement has been made in either of these areas. The piano was not used and most singing was to recorded music. Instruments are not stored carefully and there are few displays around the school promoting an appreciation or understanding of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. By the end of Year 2, standards in physical education are secure at the expected level for this age group. By Year 6, the standards pupils attain are close to the expected levels, but the range of experiences available to them is fairly limited. As a result, pupils' achievements during Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory. Teachers fail to build on the good skills and techniques acquired by younger pupils. In Year 2, pupils are able to practise different ways of sending and receiving balls. Many pupils throw and catch accurately. Progressive development of these skills in lessons leads to greater accuracy. Pupils in all attainment groups are well supported and, as a result, enjoy their work, co-operate with each other well and reach their full attainment.

104. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not progress well because they are not consistently given increasingly demanding tasks that help them develop skills quickly. Their achievements are seldom extended into game situations, either in lessons, or extra-curricular activities. While teaching overall was satisfactory in the few lessons seen, teachers' planning did not take into consideration the prior attainment of different groups of pupils within the class. The same range of striking and fielding skills was taught in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers' planning showed wide variations in the detail for these lessons. Where teachers plan lessons to include coaching points and demonstrations that increase challenge, pupils work to the limit of their capabilities. In one such lesson, some pupils set their own challenge to see who could bounce the ball on the racket most times. Common weaknesses in lessons seen during the inspection were that pupils have too few opportunities to apply skills and improve the quality of their work, by observing and evaluating the performance of others. Teaching was more concerned with pupils carrying out the tasks, rather than the quality of what they were doing.

105. Swimming activities are planned in Year 3, but the school makes no additional provision for pupils who are unable to swim 25 metres at this age. Pupils in Year 6 take part in outdoor activity challenges during their residential study week. Dance activities are taught in most years, and pupils in Year 6 perform some complex sequences of movements in line dancing. Facilities for gymnastics will improve with the completion of building work to extend the hall. Resources for small games have been improved, but there is still a need for larger apparatus, such as short tennis equipment. The school enters very few competitive sporting events, but has had

some success in five-a-side football tournaments. With the support of a parent, the netball club is to enter a team in a league this year. Unsatisfactory improvements have been made to planning since the last inspection, and the school's approach does no more than ensure statutory requirements are met. Leadership and management of the subject are currently unsatisfactory, although the recently appointed co-ordinator is knowledgeable about the subject, and has run the netball club for some years. Her initial independent monitoring of the subject indicates weaknesses in the way teachers plan to ensure pupils build their skills steadily. However, she is a part time member of staff and does not teach physical education to any class.