

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Windmill Lane, East Grinstead

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126055

Headteacher: Shirley Williams

Reporting inspector: Martin Beale
19385

Dates of inspection: 17 - 19 September 2001

Inspection number: 194862

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Windmill Lane
East Grinstead
West Sussex
Postcode: RH19 2DS

Telephone number: 01342 323858

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Stewart

Date of previous inspection: 16 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9465	Elizabeth Cooke	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
19623	Michael Cahill	Team inspector	Foundation stage Science Design and technology Physical education	
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	English Music	How well is the school led and managed?
20534	Nichola Perry	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language Art Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Primary School is an average-sized voluntary-aided Church of England school for pupils from four to 11 years of age. It is highly regarded by parents in the area and is oversubscribed as a consequence. Most pupils are from economically advantaged families coming from across the town of East Grinstead, and in some cases from further afield. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of the 212 pupils eligible for free school meals is very low, although this figure is affected because a school dinner is not provided in this local authority. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average and none have statements. The overall attainment of the children on entry to the school is above average particularly in their language and social development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good education based on a broad and interesting curriculum. National Curriculum test results are well above average. Teaching is good, enabling most pupils to make good progress, particularly in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, although more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. The school is well led and managed. Staff work closely as a team ensuring that the drive to raise standards continues and the school's high reputation is maintained. In spite of a large budget surplus, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- National Curriculum test results are high and reflect the well above average standards being achieved throughout the school in English and mathematics.
- Much of the teaching in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 is of a high quality.
- A clear direction and good leadership are provided by the headteacher and deputy head, ably supported by strong staff teamwork.
- A broad and varied curriculum is taught, enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and French and German for older pupils.
- A very good start is provided for the children in Reception through interesting, well-planned and well-resourced activities.
- The school successfully promotes good behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and constructive relationships amongst pupils.

What could be improved

- The provision for, and teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) does not enable pupils to achieve required standards.
- Teaching does not consistently and systematically challenge the most able pupils.
- Long-term strategic planning does not clearly identify priorities or indicate the educational basis on which the budget surplus is to be reduced.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection in 1997. National Curriculum test results are higher, having risen at a similar rate to improvements seen nationally. Weaknesses identified by the last report have been tackled successfully. The introduction of systematic procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of education provided and the standards achieved have led to action being taken to improve teaching. This, coupled with the commitment and teamwork of staff, places the school in a position to secure further improvements.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A	B	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	A	A	C	
science	A	A	A	B	

The school is successful in enabling virtually all of its pupils to achieve at least the standards expected in National Curriculum tests by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. A considerable proportion achieves above the expected level. Test results for Year 2 pupils in 2000 were well above the national average and results in similar schools, but fell slightly in 2001. Teacher assessments in science in 2000 were very high putting the school in the top five per cent nationally. Results in 2000 for Year 6 pupils in mathematics and science were also well above the national average, and above average in English. Improvements since 1996 have been at the same rate as nationally. Results improved in English in 2001, remained largely unchanged in mathematics but fell in science. The school narrowly failed to achieve its challenging targets in English and mathematics in 2001.

Children make a good start to their schooling in reception. They achieve well and make good progress in all areas of their learning so that by the time they enter Year 1 most have exceeded standards expected for their age, with some showing skills and knowledge expected of seven-year-olds in aspects of literacy and numeracy. Most pupils build on this good start, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and generally achieve what is expected of them, taking their aptitude and ability into account. This is particularly the case for pupils of average and below average ability, including pupils with special educational needs, who often achieve well and make good progress. However, more able pupils, of which the school has a considerable number, do not always achieve as well as they could, because they are not consistently challenged and their thinking is not extended. In spite of this, many are working above the level expected for their age and in English and mathematics standards overall are well above average. Standards are also above average in science. The one area of weakness is in ICT, where pupils do not receive sufficient direct teaching of skills and as a result attainment is below average throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are generally keen and interested in their work. They listen carefully to their teachers and collaborate well when working in pairs or small groups.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave well, although on occasions teachers have to stop lessons for minor disturbances. Behaviour was good during the predominantly wet break and lunchtimes during the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils take seriously the responsibilities that they are given. They organise their own resources well, many being able to work for sustained periods with little prompting from their teacher. All pupils, whatever their background, work and play well together and care genuinely for each other's well-being.
Attendance	Attendance is consistently good and is above the national average, although absence rates rose slightly last year. Pupils arrive punctually for the start of school.

Most pupils respond well to the school's high expectations for their behaviour. The inspection took place at the start of the school year and some pupils had not become used to their teachers' expectations or the routines that they were to follow.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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.

Teaching is good overall and as a result most pupils learn and consolidate new skills quickly and make good progress. Most pupils work hard, concentrate well on tasks set and collaborate well when working in pairs or small groups. The teaching of the children in reception is particularly effective, enabling them to settle quickly into school routines and become confident learners. English teaching is good at both key stages and mathematics teaching is satisfactory. Literacy is promoted very effectively, not just through teaching in English but also by the planned opportunities for reading and writing in other subjects. The daily mathematics lesson has been introduced satisfactorily, but more could be done to foster the development of number skills systematically in other subjects. Lessons are well planned throughout the school and activities to be undertaken by pupils are provided at different levels of difficulty to meet their various needs. This is particularly effective for the small number of pupils with special educational needs, who are taught well and receive good support from classroom assistants. This enables them to build confidence and to develop their skills at a good pace. In contrast, planning is less effective for the more able pupils, of whom the school has a large number, particularly in Years 3 to 6. They are not consistently challenged and their thinking extended, particularly when undertaking repetitive exercises. As a consequence, their learning is uneven and they do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum enriched by the teaching of both French and German for older pupils and by a wide range of extra-curricular activities including residential and day visits to places of interest.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory arrangements are made for identifying and providing support for the small number of pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall provision is made for the pupils' personal development, through the Christian values promoted and the focus on the pupils' understanding of their future place in society. The promotion of spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The provision for cultural development is good and is fostered well through the school's strong musical tradition, and pupils are prepared satisfactorily for life in a diverse, multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides well for the welfare of its pupils, who benefit considerably from the support and guidance that they receive.

All National Curriculum requirements are met, although insufficient time is devoted to the teaching of ICT skills and pupils are not provided with adequate opportunities to develop their skills in other subjects. The school has forged strong links with schools in several European countries, and holds an International School's Award in recognition of this work. Procedures to measure the pupils' progress are thorough in English and mathematics but need further development in other subjects. A strong and effective link has been forged with parents, several of whom are former pupils of the school. Many parents give generously of their time to support in lessons or in helping to improve the school's facilities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy head give the school a sense of purpose, and are ably supported in the drive to raise standards by committed staff who work well as a team.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors meet their statutory responsibilities and provide very good support for the headteacher and staff. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what it must do to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The systematic monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and deputy head, and the analysis of test data have been used well to bring about improvements in standards.
The strategic use of resources	Financial and development planning is thorough on an annual basis but does not take a strategic long-term view of the school's future. As a result a large, uncommitted budget surplus has accrued in recent years.

The school purchases goods and services at competitive prices, seeks advice when making spending decisions and compares its pattern of spending with other similar schools. There is a suitable number of staff and the accommodation is sufficient for the size of the school. Resources are satisfactory overall but there are insufficient computers, although the school has indicated its intention to purchase more.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel that staff have high expectations of the children, who are encouraged to do their best. • Parents judge teaching to be good, enabling their children to make good progress. • They report that their children like school and that they are well cared for and treated with respect. • They judge that the school is well led and managed and they find staff approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents would like to have more feedback on their children's homework.

The inspection team supports parents' positive views of the school. Insufficient evidence was seen during the inspection to support parental concerns about feedback on homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school achieves consistently good results in National Curriculum tests and all but a very few pupils at least meet, if not exceed, standards expected for their age.
2. National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds have improved since the last inspection, although this upward trend has been somewhat irregular. Results for reading, writing and mathematics in 2000 (the most recent year for which comparative national data is available) were well above both the national average and results in similar schools. Teacher assessments in science were very high, placing the school in the top five per cent. Results fell slightly in 2001, in part because there were more pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Girls have consistently achieved better results than boys in reading and writing but there has been no pattern to any difference in mathematics.
3. The trend in results for eleven-year-olds has also been upward since the last inspection, more or less at the same rate as results have improved nationally. However, there has been a considerable variation between subjects. English results rose slowly to 1999, fell in 2000 but improved in 2001, following action taken to improve writing in particular. Mathematics results improved considerably to 1999. They fell in 2000 and remained unchanged in 2001, whereas following improvement to 2000 science results fell in 2001. Mathematics and science results in 2000 were well above average and English results were above average. The main reason for this difference was that more able pupils did better in mathematics and science than in English. As at the age of seven, girls have achieved better results than boys in English, but there has been no significant pattern to any differences in mathematics and science.
4. Most children have had some form of pre-school experience in local playgroups or nurseries before they start in Reception. The attainment of children on entry to this class is generally above that expected for their age, particularly in their language and social development. Because of this most children settle quickly into the routines of the reception class and rapidly become keen, interested and confident learners. They achieve well, make good progress and most substantially surpass the standards expected in all areas of their learning by the end of the reception year. In some aspects of their mathematical development and language skills they achieve standards expected by seven-year-olds. They make this good start because of the well-organised learning experiences they are presented with, a rich environment full of interesting resources and above all from the high quality of teaching and support they receive from all adults. In spite of having been in the school for only a few days by the time of the inspection, the children had already made progress in many areas. A scrutiny of the books from last year's reception children showed many making very good progress from tentative beginnings and developing a good facility with number and language in particular.
5. This good start is built on well at Key Stage 1 and in Year 1 in particular, where much of the teaching is of a high quality that challenges the pupils and moves them forward at a brisk pace. Most pupils again achieve well and make good progress. Lessons in Years 1 and 2 are well organised and all adults focus on the development of pupils' speaking skills across all subjects. As a result, the pupils are highly articulate, using a wide range of interesting vocabulary and are confident speaking to the whole class. Reading and writing are also promoted well, not just in English lessons, and by the age of seven virtually all pupils achieve at least the standards expected in these areas, with many pupils achieving beyond this. Their number skills also develop well and they learn to apply their skills to the solution of simple problems, choosing the correct operation to use. Standards in mathematics are similar to English and few pupils fail to achieve the standards expected for their age, with many exceeding them. Pupils also make good progress in science where standards overall are above average.
6. The school has a high proportion of quite able pupils, many of whom have a great capacity for learning. This capacity is not always tapped. As a consequence, their progress is uneven, and at times they do not achieve as well as they could. The roots of this are seen to a lesser extent in Key Stage 1, where these pupils are clearly identified and their learning needs are met well. Lessons here can present a challenge, but there are occasions where perceptive statements from pupils indicate a much greater level of understanding than the lesson has catered for and the opportunity to follow this up is not taken. The progress of these pupils is much less consistent at Key Stage 2 where neither the plans for each subject, the organisation of individual lessons or the style of

teaching adopted extends these pupils sufficiently. Much teaching is based around a single objective for the whole class and does not identify the individual needs of these pupils. They still attain high standards by the age of eleven, but in some subjects their progress is not as rapid as it could be. Particular strategies are not utilised that could extend these pupils, such as directing their reading to challenging texts, setting them open-ended mathematical investigations or providing opportunities for pupils to pose their own questions in science.

7. In sharp contrast to this, those pupils of average and below average attainment, including pupils with special education needs, achieve well and make good progress. This is largely because teaching is more focused to their needs. One consequence is that virtually all pupils achieve at least the expected standard in English, mathematics and science by the age of 11. As at Key Stage 1, teachers promote and develop language skills across all subjects and attainment overall in English is well above average. Attainment is also well above average in mathematics, although number skills are not consistently promoted in other subjects to the same extent as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Standards are not as high, but are still above average in science.
8. Standards in all other subjects, with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT), are close to national expectations, although insufficient physical education was observed to judge all aspects and skills covered by the National Curriculum.
9. Pupils are given a good start in reception in the development and application of ICT skills. Many pupils also have access to computers at home and use these not just for playing games but also for learning basic skills and accessing the Internet. The provision for ICT other than in reception does not enable pupils to extend and develop their understanding at a fast enough rate. As a result, standards overall are below those expected by the ages of seven and 11 and pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The reason for this in part is because of the low number of computers available in the school compared with the resource levels achieved now in many primary schools. This is, however, not the only reason. During the inspection, computers were generally switched on in classrooms, but not regularly being used. Pupils also report that they do not consistently and regularly undertake tasks and activities using computers or other ICT resources. The school intends to purchase more machines but this will not solve the problem of low standards unless plans are put in place for their regular utilisation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The good standards previously reported for this aspect of school life have been maintained. Parents report that their children enjoy school. This was noticeable even in the children in reception, who had only been in school for a few days. Pupils generally show good attitudes to their work and the school and are usually keen to learn. These good attitudes have a beneficial effect on learning, as the great majority of pupils respond readily to their teachers' instructions and work well together. For example, pupils in a Year 5 numeracy lesson tackled written problems enthusiastically and worked well in pairs to decide which kind of calculation was required. Two girls were so keen that they tried to do the more difficult problems set for another group in the class. In some less successful lessons, when learning is slower, teachers do not have secure control of pupils and time is lost settling and refocusing their attention. In addition, the learning of some higher ability pupils is insufficient because the tasks they are offered in some lessons are not challenging enough and they become bored and restless.
11. Behaviour throughout the school is good overall. The inspection took place early in the school year and many classroom routines and requirements were still being established. Parents at the meeting and in their responses to the questionnaire say that they are very pleased with standards of behaviour. Many pupils behave very well but a few were seen to disturb lessons from time to time by chatting, ignoring their teachers and fidgeting. In a few lessons, teachers did not have effective strategies to manage these disruptive pupils. Noise levels in classrooms are often high during group work and teachers stop lessons frequently to quieten pupils. Nevertheless, learning in most lessons is enhanced by the good behaviour of pupils. For example in a Year 2 English lesson, pupils concentrated well on grammar tasks and remained attentive despite the uninteresting lesson content. The teacher supported the pupils well by teaching the lesson clearly and rewarding them at the end of the lesson with a play activity.
12. Pupils get on well together at break times, most of which were wet during the inspection, although staff and pupils coped well. They co-operate well, playing games and undertaking other activities. Relationships are very good throughout the school, pupils are kind to each other and adults provide positive role models. The caring, Christian school ethos is apparent throughout the school each day and is highly valued by parents.

13. Pupils develop the ability to work independently, organise themselves and are keen to take responsibility when it is offered. For example, older pupils set out the hall for assemblies and all pupils manage themselves appropriately in lessons by selecting equipment and tidying away carefully. The school offers pupils many opportunities to develop personally through trips and visits, team sports and participating in school and church events.
14. The school is a harmonious community and the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds work and play happily with their peers. There is little bullying and pupils report that any incidents are dealt with effectively. Pupils show respect for each other and school property. The school, resources, displays and books are well kept and tidy.
15. Attendance at the school is good with rates of absence lower than typically seen in primary schools. Punctuality is satisfactory. The school monitors attendance regularly and has good computerised systems in place to keep records accurately. No pupils have been excluded in recent years. The good rates of attendance benefit pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is good overall. It is more effective in Reception and Years 1 and 5 where there is a high proportion of good and very good teaching, leading to pupils learning rapidly and making good progress. In these classes pupils are challenged and extended, and teachers have quickly established a calm atmosphere in which pupils work hard and with confidence. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons and was very good in a fifth. The small proportion of unsatisfactory lessons observed at Key Stage 2 was not reflected in the pupils' work from last year, where all pupils were judged to have made at least satisfactory progress.
17. Teaching of the children in Reception is very good. This was evident not only from the lessons observed but also from looking at the progress made by children in their work from last year. Lessons are made interesting and the children develop an enthusiasm for learning. Teachers captured and directed this enthusiasm well to enable the children to learn new ideas rapidly and develop confidence even though they had only been in school for a few days. Sessions are carefully planned and well organised. Interesting and stimulating resources are used to capture the children's imagination. Teachers and support staff time their interventions well to explain new ideas and to move learning forward at pace. A good example of this was when early reading skills and an interest in books were promoted very effectively in a literacy session. The children were encouraged to recount their experiences of train rides, this providing a good opportunity for them to talk at length.
18. The structure of the literacy hour has been successfully introduced and implemented in all classrooms. This is helping teachers to plan structured lessons that systematically develop and extend pupils' learning. As a result much of the teaching of English is of a high quality and, supported by the promotion of literacy in other subjects, enables high standards to be achieved. The daily mathematics lesson has not been implemented with the same authority and impact in all classes. Many good features are evident, such as brisk and interesting mental arithmetic activities, but some work is repetitive and lacking challenge and review sessions at the end of lessons are not planned with sufficient care. As a consequence, pupils make inconsistent progress and the more able could do better.
19. The relatively small proportion of pupils with special educational needs benefit from well-focused teaching, activities that enable them to consolidate what they have learnt and good support from their teacher or the classroom assistants. As a result, they often make good progress in lessons, building their skills and knowledge at a good pace. They generally concentrate well, although one or two with identified behavioural difficulties were seen to disturb the flow of lessons on occasions.

20. In general, lessons are planned well. This planning is usually translated into well-organised teaching which builds skills systematically. A good example of this was in a Year 1 physical education lesson, where good planning for all aspects of the lesson gave a good balance between direct teaching and activities. An effective warm-up, crisp and clear instructions coupled with simple demonstrations encouraged and motivated the pupils who were actively engaged and enjoyed achieving success. Although lessons have an objective for learning for the class as a whole, there is often not a clear picture of what it is that the more able are to get from the lesson or from each part of it. This results in unchallenging teaching and activities that do not extend their thinking. On some occasions this was seen to lead to boredom and a lack of concentration on their part.
21. In the best lessons teachers use their good knowledge of the subject material to give brisk explanations and provide probing questions that extend all pupils and move their learning forward at pace. Pupils respond enthusiastically in these lessons, working hard and with interest. For example, in a Year 4 lesson looking at the witches' opening scene from Macbeth, skilfully targeted questioning generated some excellent responses from pupils who were confident and supported each other well in group activities. Similarly, confident teaching showing good subject knowledge and the excellent use of questioning in a Year 1 history lesson enabled the pupils to begin to compare schools in the past with those of today. Very good subject knowledge was also evident in a choir session with Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils. The teacher had established a very good rapport with the group, exhorting them to higher standards. Pupils picked up the line of music quickly and were confident by the end of the session in singing new songs in parts. In some lessons, however, the direct teaching does not always probe, challenge and extend the thinking of the more able. This slows the pace at which they learn. On occasions teachers were also not firm enough in settling pupils, allowing low level chatter while they were teaching.
22. The activities provided by teachers to enable pupils to consolidate and extend their learning are usually provided at different levels of difficulty to meet the various needs of pupils and build on from what they already know. This was particularly effective in a Year 5 numeracy lesson that had been planned and prepared particularly well. Activities were varied and challenging. The teacher also set clear targets for what should be accomplished, which motivated the pupils and drove the lesson forward at considerable pace. In many lessons, however, these activities did not extend the more able. They were often repetitive exercises that did not challenge thinking or harder tasks were only reached after the completion of routine activities. This relied heavily on the pupils working hard and being sufficiently motivated to want to reach these tasks.
23. Some very effective sessions were observed at the end of a lesson where teachers reviewed with the pupils what they had learnt, assessed the progress they had made, set the scene for future lessons and took learning a step further. When successful, these activities had been carefully and thoughtfully planned, as in a fast moving session used to confirm the pupils' understanding of a Year 5 literacy lesson. Similarly the quick transition to a review session in a Year 5 science lesson, coupled with good use of questioning where pupils were asked to explain their thinking, promoted understanding further and confirmed what they had learnt. This high quality is not evident in all classrooms, particularly when the purpose of this review session has not been carefully thought through. Teachers give pupils a reasonable picture of how they are getting on in each lesson and what they need to do to improve. Marking has improved with much that is helpful to pupils, but some that remains fairly cursory and offers little to pupils to help them eliminate errors and improve the standard of their work.
24. There are many good features in lessons throughout the school. The challenge now is to achieve greater consistency and to ensure that the more able are extended to reach their full potential at all times.

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

25. The school has maintained a broad and balanced curriculum since the previous inspection. Very good provision is made for pupils in Foundation Stage. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. The curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and provision for pupils to learn about personal, social and health education and is broadened at Key Stage 2 to include the teaching of French and German.

26. The school has successfully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and provides effective teaching in basic skills. Language skills in particular are promoted well in subjects other than English. Staff have made positive use of changes to the National Curriculum and effective links have been established between subjects through careful amalgamation of existing planning and new national guidance. However, there are some remaining weaknesses. The school is aware that the current arrangements for the teaching of ICT are unsatisfactory, and pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunity to apply their skills to support their learning in other subjects. The curriculum for mathematics is generally secure but there is insufficient emphasis on developing the pupils' investigative skills. This slows the progress of some of the more able pupils in particular. There is clear commitment throughout the school to equality of opportunity, although the school does not demonstrate through curriculum planning how the high number of able pupils are to be stretched. There is satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs and the school focuses on their very early identification.
27. The school offers pupils a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which support and extend the curriculum and promote the pupils' social development. Pupils have good opportunities to engage in a range of sporting activities, including swimming and competitive team fixtures. Music is a very strong feature of the wider school curriculum with excellent opportunities for pupils to learn musical instruments, sing in the school choir and perform regularly in musical and dramatic performances. The school frequently enriches the quality of pupils' learning by inviting visitors to share their experiences or expertise, for example in connection with its work in English, drama or music. Nature reserves, castles or ancient buildings are visited as part of the science or history curriculum, and older pupils make a more detailed environmental study during a residential visit. The school makes good use of its contacts with those in other European countries to develop pupils' perspectives of the wider world and has received an international award in recognition of this work. This is a valuable resource, the potential of which is still being developed. Links with the community, partner institutions and the business sector are well developed and visits from clergy, the police and other members of the local community are a regular occurrence throughout the school year.
28. The provision for the pupils' personal development is very good and is a strength of the school. The school fosters the pupils' spiritual development very well. School assemblies are well planned and delivered and have a high status within the school day. There are good opportunities for prayer and reflection and pupils respond very well to this. This contributes well to pupils' understanding of, and respect for, the needs and rights of themselves and others. Teachers also offer pupils time for reflection in lessons, for example when pupils in Year 1 were asked to consider how individuals feel better when we smile and are kind to each other. The promotion of moral development is particularly good. All adults in the school are respectful of pupils' views and feelings, and this is also reflected in the way that pupils relate to each other. Themes such as caring, truth, fairness, friendship and the need for others in our lives also support this area well. The school's behaviour and discipline policy provides a clear framework for pupils and class rules are displayed in all classrooms. The school has appropriate arrangements in place for drugs and sex education. There is very good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils of all age groups are encouraged to mix and support each other, although this is somewhat restricted by different timings for break times. Older pupils have written storybooks for pupils in reception and are encouraged to look after younger pupils. Cultural development is promoted well. The school has participated in the Comenius programme, which promotes links with other schools throughout Europe. Links have been established with schools in France, Italy and Austria, there have been visits in both directions and gifts and other resources have been exchanged, some of which are displayed around the school. Pupils' cultural development is further enhanced through theatre visits and trips to museums and art galleries. Pupils' understanding of, and preparation for, life in a diverse society is promoted satisfactorily particularly where geography and history topics encourage pupils to study other nationalities, their customs, cultures, religions and foods.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. Pupils' learning benefits from the care and guidance that they receive, enabling them to feel secure in school. This enables them to settle down and learn well. The school provides well for the health, safety and welfare of all pupils. Parents recognise the continuing successful provision in this area. The school has effective child protection procedures in place. The headteacher is the named person responsible for this work and attends regular training in these matters. Areas of concern about pupils and good practice are shared routinely in staff meetings. The governing body effectively oversees health and safety matters. Regular checks and assessments ensure that the

school is a safe place. The school has made sensible improvements to the security of the site since the last inspection.

30. The procedures to provide support and guidance for pupils and to monitor their personal development work effectively because this is a small school and staff know the pupils well. Formal planning and recording of personal development does not take place but is triggered if a pupil experiences problems or difficulties. All staff carry logbooks to record incidents, successes and events which are shared with colleagues on a daily basis. The headteacher monitors these books regularly and thus gains an overview of how individual pupils are getting along. Any concerns are discussed with relevant staff, and parents are informed and involved promptly.
31. The positive strategies to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying in the school policies are applied successfully by most staff. In a few lessons, teachers did not control pupils effectively, which affected learning adversely because pupils were off task and inattentive. Parents understand the policies, sign a home/ school agreement and are very pleased with standards of behaviour at the school. Pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them. School rules are displayed in classrooms and certificates and badges are awarded for effort and achievement. Parents recognise that their children are taught right from wrong effectively.
32. High levels of attendance and punctuality are maintained with parental support. Parents and pupils have a clear understanding of the rules about attendance, punctuality and reporting absence. Absence is carefully recorded and monitored so that any patterns can be identified quickly. Most pupils attend regularly and punctually and so miss few lessons.
33. The headteacher and staff have agreed sound new procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in response to the previous inspection report. These are most developed in English and mathematics where pupils are regularly assessed using standardised tests. Assessment is less well developed in most other subjects although teachers identify what level best fits a pupil's attainment in each year group. The use by teachers of the information from assessments to guide their planning remains a weakness, with the exception of English and mathematics. This is particularly the case in those subjects where the school has recently adopted new national guidelines and the process of adapting them to the circumstances of the school and its intake is not well advanced. During the inspection there were few examples, other than in the reception class where practice is very good, of teachers modifying their planning on the basis of assessments of what their pupils already knew. Teachers are not always clear about what levels of skill, knowledge and understanding are to be expected in each year group and built on subsequently. Because of this, assessments are often not sufficiently precise to be useful in further planning.
34. The school is developing its use of ICT to store and analyse assessment data. Through this there is considerable potential for setting targets for individual pupils, taking the action needed to meet them and evaluating the results. At present teachers make predictions at the end of the school year of what levels pupils will achieve at the end of the following year in English, mathematics and science. This is too long a timescale and some teachers recognise the need for shorter-term targets, rather than predictions. More able pupils are still not achieving as well as they should and setting clearer targets for them, based on their prior attainment, is needed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Parents and carers are very satisfied with the work of the school. Parents feel confident that their children are happy, well cared for and are treated with respect. They are satisfied that their youngsters are learning suitable attitudes and values and recognise the school's distinctive Christian character and ethos. Parents say that pupils are encouraged to do their best and that the school is well organised and managed. They feel welcome and comfortable in school. The inspection team broadly agrees with parents on these points. Parents are less pleased with the feedback they receive on homework, the style of annual reports on pupils' progress and some aspects of communication about behaviour. The team has not seen evidence to support parents' opinions on feedback on homework or their concerns about communication on pupils' behaviour but notes their views. Annual reports are of a reasonable standard but are restricted in content because of the "computer statement bank" format and lack personal details such as targets and next steps.
36. The school provides a useful prospectus, termly class letters on work to be covered, newsletters and a noticeboard for parents, all of which contribute to the good level of information on the school's work. The class notes in particular are informative and provide a valuable insight into the work

planned for pupils. The school provides regular formal opportunities for carers to discuss children's work with teachers and staff are always available to meet parents informally at short notice.

37. Parents are very interested in their children's progress and attend open evenings and consultation meetings at the school. Many attend school events and come into school to help in lessons or go on outings. They are very supportive of the school in fundraising and social events. Some parents donate their talents, skills and expertise to support the school's development. The St Mary's School Association is an important part of the school community providing active support for all areas of school life.
38. Pupils receive good support from their families in homework, reading and school projects. Parents are keen to find out how they can help and want clear feedback on how homework tasks are marked. The full involvement of parents in school life has a positive effect on pupils' learning because it encourages their enjoyment and good attitudes. Parents send their children to school each day on time and ready to learn.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. The school is well led and managed, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher gives a clear and positive direction to the work of the school. She is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher who has also developed skills in organising many of the day-to-day aspects of school life. Working closely together as a senior management team, the headteacher and her deputy have built a hard-working staff committed to raising the achievement and furthering the welfare of their pupils.
40. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's central purpose of raising achievement and promoting good behaviour and high standards of care among pupils. She has introduced effective measures to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science, with the result that the already good standards have been further improved since the last inspection. She has correctly identified areas in need of further attention, for example in the quality of pupils' writing, and has successfully taken steps to make improvements in this area of the curriculum. Yet while the school analyses test results and uses the derived information to make the right overall decisions about where whole-school improvements need to be made, it does not always use this data sufficiently critically to analyse the particular learning needs of individual pupils. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has broadened its curriculum since the last inspection, offering a European dimension to pupils' learning and encouraging their closer involvement in community activities. In all of these initiatives, the headteacher is well supported by a hard-working staff who are unstinting in their efforts on behalf of their pupils.
41. The headteacher and governing body identify a considerable number of appropriate areas for improvement through the school's development plan. The plan describes in great detail the school's intentions, but it does not focus sufficiently sharply on those few priorities which it regards to be of prime importance, nor does it take a long-term strategic view as to how these may be achieved. One result of this is that the school currently carries forward about one fifth of its budget as an uncommitted surplus. Although the headteacher and governors have some definite plans about how this should be used, no commitment has yet been made to reserve specific funds for particular projects. This is not a judicious use of funds because they are currently not being used to the benefit of the school's pupils.
42. The governing body offers very good support to the headteacher and staff. Governors meet their statutory duties and, in close consultation with the headteacher, adequately fulfil their role in shaping the direction of the school. They are wholly committed to the development and welfare of pupils and staff. The governors rely predominantly on the headteacher for information concerning developments, but also receive informal information from parents and other contacts so that they form a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers sometimes attend governors' meetings to describe their work. Within the last two years, the governing body has ensured that the annual budget is prepared on the basis of known expenditure. However, it has yet to develop a longer-term strategic view of the developments it envisages in order that it may have a much more sharply focused understanding of its spending intentions beyond the current year. There is a well-established pattern of frequent governors' meetings; each of the governors' principal sub-committees meet regularly and report to the full meeting on a range of issues.

43. The headteacher and her deputy regularly evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in each classroom. They offer written feedback to staff and have a close understanding of the work of staff and pupils. This is enhanced by the strong sense of community and mutual support, fostered by all members of staff, which has a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher delegates curriculum responsibilities effectively, with the result that each co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weakness in the subjects they manage, and are directly involved in their improvement.
44. The school has explicit aims directed towards 'enthusiasm, effort and excellence', emphasising in its development plan that 'all have a full part to play as stakeholders in the wider school community'. This objective is translated into the good relationships among members of staff, and between staff and pupils, that were evident throughout the inspection. It is also manifest in the high expectations that the school in general holds for the achievement of its pupils, although it does not always seek to challenge sufficiently those with particular aptitude and ability in English, mathematics and science.
45. The school has wisely invested in the services of a bursar responsible for administering the day-to-day financial arrangements of the school. Spending under all budget headings is carefully monitored, and financial procedures are carried out thoroughly and efficiently in accordance with auditors' requirements. The headteacher and chairman of the governors' finance committee are fully briefed on the budget, and governors receive the full range of information they require to make spending decisions. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily, making appropriate enquiries to purchase goods at competitive prices, and seeking advice from both the local authority and other agencies. The school office makes good use of ICT to produce the information necessary for the efficient running of the school.
46. The number of teachers and support staff is adequate to meet the full demands of the broad curriculum. Staff work well together, readily sharing their experience and expertise for the benefit of pupils. Support staff co-operate well with teachers; some have developed a close mutual understanding as the result of working together for a number of years. The school has successfully introduced appropriate arrangements for performance management. Although the school currently has no recently qualified staff, those new to the school are well supported by their colleagues and quickly develop a sense of belonging. Staff are offered a good range of opportunities for their professional development; these are provided both by the school and by the local authority. Ancillary staff are well trained and sometimes share the training of teaching staff. This is a good strategy, enabling the school to build up a common understanding among its staff of what needs to be achieved.
47. Sympathetically extended and modernised, the school accommodation is sufficient to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. The size of classrooms and other teaching spaces is generally adequate for the numbers of pupils, though teachers need to exercise care when arranging apparatus or games lessons in the hall for older pupils because space for their activities is barely sufficient. While the open working spaces occupied by pupils in Year 1 and the Reception class lend themselves well to co-operative working, there are occasions when intrusive sounds from one may adversely affect the work patterns of the other. The rooms of the headteacher and bursar are currently located separately from the principal reception and administrative area, adding to the time used for communication between the two. The school building is bright and well cared for, and attractive displays enhance the working environment of both pupils and teachers. The central library is well organised and accessible, and invites independent study. The school is fortunate enough to possess good outdoor playing facilities, recently further improved through the work of the St Mary's School Association. Facilities for children in Reception are very good and well maintained.
48. The school's resources are satisfactory overall, and good in several subjects. Pupils have access to a good stock of fiction and non-fiction books, while those for science, mathematics, music, design and technology and physical education are satisfactory in range and number. While the school has indicated that it intends to purchase rechargeable laptop computers to meet the demands of the curriculum for ICT, there are currently not enough machines to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise their skills. Conversely, the provision of resources for art, history and geography is good. Across the school, resources are frequently checked and maintained in good order. They are well used in all subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. To raise standards further the school should:
- 1) Improve the provision for the teaching of ICT (a priority already identified by the school) by: (paragraphs 20, 48 and 105 - 108)
 - increasing the resources available
 - introducing more efficient teaching of ideas and skills with more immediate opportunity for the pupils to consolidate and develop them further
 - planning for the more extensive use of ICT to support learning in other subjects
 - developing procedures to monitor and evaluate provision and teaching to ensure that effective learning is taking place;
 - 2) Extend more able pupils by: (paragraphs 6, 21, 22, 24, 69, 73, 78, 79 and 83)
 - directing their choice of reading towards more challenging texts
 - setting extended, open-ended investigations in mathematics
 - providing opportunities for pupils to pose their own questions when investigating and experimenting in science
 - developing teachers' skills such as their questioning techniques
 - establishing policy and procedures for the identification of gifted and talented pupils and programmes to support their individual development;
 - 3) Prepare a long-term strategic plan for the future of the school that clearly identifies major priorities, is carefully costed to include forecasts of income and expenditure and demonstrates how the high underspend is to be reduced to a more reasonable level. (paragraph 42)

OTHER ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

50. In addition to the items above, the governors may wish to consider the inclusion of the following points in their action plan.
- Develop more rigorous and effective procedures for assessing the progress made by pupils in the foundation subjects and ensuring the information is then used to guide teachers' planning. (paragraphs 33 and 34)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	16	14	3	0	0
Percentage	0	20	39	34	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	212
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	22

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	14	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	15
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	29	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (97)	97 (91)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	29	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (97)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	17	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	13
	Girls	15	15	16
	Total	26	26	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (89)	84 (89)	94 (93)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	26	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (93)	87 (89)	87 (93)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	184
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	29.42

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	110

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	399800
Total expenditure	361771
Expenditure per pupil	1756
Balance brought forward from previous year	24725
Balance carried forward to next year	62754

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	212
Number of questionnaires returned	97

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	49	36	4	2	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	38	4	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	40	14	0	7
The teaching is good.	71	23	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	42	9	1	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	30	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	19	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	48	36	12	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	76	15	4	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	31	3	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	30	10	1	12

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

51. The Reception class provides children with a very good start to their education. Teaching is very good and is based on deep understanding of how children learn and what they need to learn. Teachers' knowledge of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and their planning to extend children's knowledge, skills and understanding are very good. Teachers work very well with the learning support assistants and provide a peaceful and purposeful working atmosphere. Together they establish and maintain simple routines that give the children confidence and a sense of security. As a result, children become absorbed in their work and play. They play happily and collaboratively and relationships are very good. They learn to take turns, including listening to each other and to adults. There are very good arrangements for checking and recording children's progress. In one session, for example, adults focused on how well children took turns, recognised colours and named numerals. No comparisons are possible with the last inspection report, which did not report on this stage of the school.
52. As a result of these strengths, children achieve well in all areas of their learning. Children enter school at the start of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls. Initially they attend for the mornings only, becoming full-time at the start of the term in which they become five. Almost all of the children have benefited from pre-school experience and their attainment on entry is above that expected for their age. This is particularly the case in respect of their language and social development. By the time that they move into Year 1, most children have comfortably surpassed the early learning goals in all areas of learning. In personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, attainment is well above what is expected for their age.

Personal, social and emotional development

53. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given high priority in the Reception class and teaching is very good. The adults provide very good role models for the children in the courteous and pleasant way that they treat each other and the children. Easily understood and common sense routines provide a reassuring framework within which children increasingly work independently. For example, children confidently choose an activity when their parents bring them to school in the morning. Improvement in the way that children cleared away what they had been using was evident even over the three days of the inspection. Children make the most of the many opportunities provided for sharing equipment and taking turns, for example during role-play in the travel agency or in the boat.
54. The teachers have organised teaching and learning so that there is a good balance of direct teaching, learning supported by an adult and independent learning. Most children listen well when their teacher reads to them and they concentrate for a worthwhile length of time when fishing with magnets or using shells to make patterns in modelling material. The adults working in Reception have high expectations of the children's standards of work and behaviour. These are made clear to the children who quickly display a high level of mature behaviour and are well on course to substantially exceed what is expected of five-year-olds.

Communication, language and literacy

55. The teaching in this area of learning is particularly strong and most children confidently surpass the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. All of the adults encourage children to talk and to listen when others are speaking. As a result many children talk in extended sentences; others benefit from the patient way that adults and many of the other children listen. This gives them time to think out what they want to say without pressure. The children clearly enjoy joining in nursery rhymes and simple songs and are being helped to develop a good feel for the rhythms of speech.
56. Books and other reading material are displayed prominently in the classroom and are very accessible to the children. Children are encouraged to look at books and confidently tell a visitor the story while turning over the pages, using the picture cues well and pointing to some words. Children enjoy the regular short sessions with their teacher when they look at *The Train Ride* together. These sessions are sharply focused, for example on recognising that text is read from left

to right, joining in a repeated refrain and learning the terms *author* and *illustrator*. Children quickly start to recognise *I see* on the pages as their teacher reads to them. This well-planned repetition and other short sessions focusing on letter sounds lead to children making good strides in the development of their early reading skills. Many children are keen to show that they can write their name and dictate accounts and stories for adults to write. Adults use, and children learn, a joined-up style of handwriting from the beginning. Children carefully made the letter 'a' by joining up dots or by writing freehand on the whiteboard. By the end of the year, most children express their thoughts confidently on paper. Adults encourage this and write corrections where necessary. Most children make very good progress in developing their skills of communication, language and literacy.

Mathematical development

57. This area of learning is also particularly well taught and by the time that they enter Year 1 most children's attainment is well above what is expected for their age. In the first few days in the reception class, children learn to count to and from five and attach the correct number name to a collection of objects. For example, they count the five little ducks together and subsequently one child counts the seven children (including himself) in the boat, pointing to each individual as he counts. Some children already recognise some numerals and write them correctly. Examination of work from last year shows that children become confident in estimating and counting a number of bricks, correctly writing 12, 13 and so on. They correctly circle the larger of two numbers, record the results of taking smaller numbers from 20 and use the '=' sign properly.
58. Adults promote the correct use of mathematical language through good example. Children understand *next to*, *opposite*, *taller than* and *shorter than*. They make towers of 10 using pairs of different coloured sticks and record their results by drawing and with numerals. They are given good practical experience of shapes and correctly use *rectangle*, record that *the cube was purple* and ask *how many cotton reels cover my shoe?* Adults make the most of the opportunities for developing number skills in the many practical activities that children engage in, for example counting shells or describing shapes and observing patterns in construction work. Working with shells also allows children to sort according to different criteria, for example *size*, *colour*, *feeling* and *shape*, and to count a set of up to 10 shells.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. Children enter the reception class with a good general knowledge of the world about them. Teaching is very good and the curriculum is planned well to give them many good opportunities to build on this. For example, the *Holidays* topic leads to discussion of different ways to travel and using construction materials to make models of a car, bus or boat. Once at the seaside, children learn about how magnets work in their fishing game as well as recognising some of the numerals on the fish. Children work collaboratively to decide what to take on holiday and pack a case. These interesting activities promote good learning.
60. At other times of the year children learn about materials, making bricks by moulding clay and noticing that the bricks changed as they dried. Their recording shows good development of writing skills. Practical work on napkins made of different materials provides good early experience of scientific investigation as does diluting fruit juice with water to find 'just the right taste'.
61. The reception class is well organised to provide children with good opportunities and adult support for developing skills in ICT. For example, children develop hand-eye co-ordination in controlling a computer mouse. They quickly learn to dress Teddy by clicking and dragging. Some children access a picture dictionary and find pictures of objects beginning with 'a' after their session on 'a' as in 'apple'. They are fascinated by the picture of the armadillo and enjoy saying the word. During the course of the reception year, children learn to use a basic tape recorder and to access a CD-ROM based talking dictionary. They learn to use a simple word processor and to print a Diwali card to decorate and send to each other. The provision for developing skills, knowledge and understanding in this aspect of the curriculum is very good and children achieve well above what is expected for their age.

Physical development

62. Physical development is promoted well through regular well-planned lessons in the hall and through the use of the well-equipped outside area. Children develop control and co-ordination in their movements and become aware of the effect of exercise on their hearts and breathing. They learn to play simple games and develop the small ball skills of bouncing and trying to throw to their partner's hands and catching. Because of the weather and other constraints no sessions in this area of learning were observed during the inspection. However, it was clear from observation of pupils in their first two weeks in Year 1 that most of them were performing at a level well above what is expected for their age.

Creative development

63. Good teaching in this area leads to children becoming more skilful in role-play, art and music than is usual for their age group. Adults plan many interesting creative activities both to develop creative skills and to provide opportunities for language and social development. For example, their experience of modelling shell impressions is used to develop some of the language of art such as *colour* and *texture*. Children decide how they will place their impressions on the piece of material that they have rolled out and flattened. The previous week children had created a wax resist picture of fish under the sea, using an ink wash over their crayoned pictures and noticing the effect.
64. Children enter enthusiastically into role-play, greatly helped by the involvement of adults. The *Holiday* topic lent itself well to this and children acted as travel agents, customers, train drivers and passengers. Adults use shopping situations, for example for shoes, spectacles, fabrics and toys, very well to promote learning across several areas of experience.
65. Music, including singing, plays an important role in the work of the reception class. Singing is used well, for example, to promote learning in mathematics through number rhymes and songs. In addition, adults lead a weekly music session involving familiar and new songs, including action songs. Children learn to clap along to the tunes and to use instruments to tap along to the rhythm.

ENGLISH

66. Standards in English are well above the national average by both the ages of seven and 11. Across the school, standards are higher than those seen at the time of the last inspection and broadly confirm the school's results for the end of both key stages in the 2000 and 2001 national tests.
67. In both reading and writing, standards are well above the national average, and have improved overall since the last inspection because procedures for practising skills are systematic and well established. In reading, for example, there is an expectation that pupils read regularly at home, reinforcing the skills methodically taught in school. As a result, many pupils by the age of 11 read fluently and have developed an enthusiasm for books. However, standards of reading among those who have particular aptitude and ability could be higher still if they were encouraged to read from a wider range of more challenging texts. In writing, standards have recently improved markedly, particularly among average and lower attaining pupils, because the school has rightly identified the need to increase the range and challenge of writing tasks that pupils were expected to complete. However, those offered to the older, most able pupils in Key Stage 2 still do not always challenge these pupils sufficiently in their depth or complexity. Standards in handwriting and spelling across the school are generally very good because pupils practise the necessary skills regularly.
68. Standards in speaking are well above average, and pupils make good progress in developing oral skills as they move through the school. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to ask questions in the course of lessons, and to discuss their work in pairs or small groups. In one good lesson at Key Stage 1, for example, the teacher constantly engaged the pupils in dialogue by offering her views on a shared story and inviting pupils to contribute their own, and by challenging individual pupils by name to express their own opinions. By the age of seven, many pupils are already able to speak confidently and openly to adults. Pupils across the school are given regular opportunities for drama and public performance, with the result that many become confident, articulate speakers by the time they leave the school. Skills in listening are generally good across the school, although small numbers of pupils in a minority of classes sometimes do not concentrate sufficiently. Pupils are generally attentive and concentrate hard because teachers create a busy working atmosphere and monitor well the progress of individual pupils, with the result that they remain focused on the tasks

set. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their speaking and listening and are well supported in their work by both teachers and classroom assistants.

69. Pupils make good progress in their reading as they move through the school. Building on the very good start they receive in Reception, pupils in Year 1 consolidate their understanding of the fact that letters written singly or in combination represent particular spoken sounds. By the end of the Year 1, many possess a good sight vocabulary and begin to develop sound strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2, many pupils are already reading at above the expected level, reading simple storybooks and increasing the range of literature they attempt. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils acquire increasing fluency and begin to derive meaning from text without reading each individual word, so that by Year 6 many read fluently and expressively, gaining real enjoyment from texts as the result of the good reading habits they have acquired. Standards across the school are well above average because younger pupils are systematically and thoroughly taught the necessary skills to read well, and because these are reinforced among pupils of all ages with regular practise at home and school. The reading habits of younger pupils are carefully monitored. At Key Stage 1, for example, a valuable dialogue between parent and school often develops on the child's progress through the medium of the pupil's reading record. However, the progress and reading habits of older pupils at Key Stage 2 are monitored with less frequency, with the result that those of higher ability and aptitude in particular are not guided to read challenging texts from a sufficiently wide range. As a result, they may habitually choose reading material which does not extend their vocabulary or understanding. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their reading across the school and are well supported in their efforts, particularly in the early stages of reading.
70. Pupils across the school make good progress in their writing, and standards by the ages of seven and eleven are well above national averages. This is not only because writing skills are taught systematically but also because literacy lessons are used imaginatively to ensure that pupils write in different forms as they move through the school. By the end of Year 1, for example, many pupils are already able to write a simple story consisting of linked statements. By the end of Year 2, many are able to sequence and narrate a number of real or imagined events, adding personal comment to engage the reader, and demarcating their sentences accurately with full stops and capital letters.
71. Pupils build well on this good start as they move through Key Stage 2, becoming increasingly aware of the audience for whom they are writing, and developing the skills to express themselves in different forms and styles. The school has sought to improve the quality of writing across the school during the past year, especially among boys, with the result that standards have perceptibly improved, particularly at Key Stage 2. This has been achieved because teachers have focused on expecting pupils to complete a wide range of written tasks; for example, those in Year 4 write conversationally to imaginary distant friends asking them to comment on their lifestyle, while those in Year 6 seek to persuade others to share their interest in a particular sport or pastime. Writing is also very well used to support learning other subjects, for example in geography, history and science. With all this good work, however, there is still scope for improvement in the quality of writing among those older pupils who display the greatest aptitude and ability by offering them more complex and challenging tasks that more closely match their learning needs. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in developing their writing skills, and are well supported in their efforts.
72. Standards in spelling are well above average across the school. Pupils regularly practise spelling at home from Year 2, and the acquisition of good learning habits means that, by Year 6, pupils' fluency in writing is not constrained by their inability to spell the words they need. Dictionary exercises are used well in some literacy lessons to extend and reinforce pupils' understanding of vocabulary. The youngest pupils begin to learn to write in a joined hand so that, by Year 6, many write fluently and neatly.
73. The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages is good, with standards in teaching a little higher than those seen at the last inspection. Teaching is consistently good at Key Stage 1, and some very good lessons were observed at Key Stage 2. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subject, and are sufficiently confident to use literacy lessons or those in other subjects imaginatively to raise standards in reading and writing. For example, pupils in Year 2 record their observations of sunflower growth, while those in Year 6 learn to analyse the motives of characters in classical stories. Lessons are generally well structured and proceed at a good pace; teachers constantly check the progress of each group to ensure that pupils remain on task and are well supported when they encounter difficulties. Teachers generally have high expectations for their pupils, setting open-ended tasks which do not limit their achievement. As at the time of the last inspection, however, older pupils of higher aptitude are not always sufficiently challenged by the

writing tasks they are set. While the school has correctly identified ways by which standards overall may be raised, it has not examined sufficiently critically the learning needs of individual pupils. Across the school, teachers offer clear explanations in group reading lessons and when they are setting work. They develop good working relationships with their pupils, who therefore enjoy their lessons and are well motivated to learn. Ancillary staff work closely with teachers; the support they offer makes a very positive contribution to the quality of pupils' learning, especially in reading and speaking.

74. The English curriculum is regularly enriched by visits from authors, theatre groups and poets, and pupils are offered frequent opportunities to practise drama and to perform or recite in public. This aspect of pupils' work is well supported through close links with the music curriculum. On the other hand, ICT is not sufficiently used in support of English work. The subject is used well to support learning in other subjects and the National Literacy Strategy has been interpreted imaginatively to ensure that pupils have a broad range of experiences in the subject, especially in writing. Management is good; the school has analysed test results to identify areas where general improvements in learning may be made, for example in boys' writing, and has taken the right steps to address shortcomings. However, more could be done to analyse the learning needs of pupils demonstrating particular aptitude and ability in the subject. Senior staff regularly monitor teaching, offering feedback and suggesting areas for further improvement. There are good stocks of fiction and non-fiction books to support learning, and the library is accessible and regularly used for independent study.

MATHEMATICS

75. National Curriculum test results in mathematics for both seven and 11-year-olds have improved since the last inspection and are well above the national average. These high standards are reflected in the quality of work seen in lessons and in the pupils' books. Pupils are highly numerate for their age when they begin Year 1. The teaching observed was satisfactory overall, with many good features seen in several lessons, but there are some areas that require improvement. An analysis of pupils' work from the previous year indicates that most pupils made at least satisfactory progress and achieved standards expected when taking their ability into account. The exception to this is that the more able are not always being challenged sufficiently, often undertaking routine and repetitive exercises that do not extend their mathematical thinking. Teachers do not plan with sufficient care for the learning needs of these pupils, rarely adapting their teaching methods or questioning techniques to challenge and extend. By contrast, pupils with special educational needs and less able pupils often make good progress in lessons as a result of the quality of the support they receive from classroom assistants.
76. The structure of the daily mathematics lesson has generally been introduced satisfactorily, although the quality of each aspect of the lesson varies considerably between classes. Pupils learn a variety of methods of numerical calculation and are taught formal methods for setting out their work as they move through Key Stage 2. Mental arithmetic skills are promoted effectively; these skills being relatively stronger for younger pupils who have experienced this focus for a greater proportion of their time in school. Pupils learn to present data obtained from simple surveys in the form of charts and graphs, sometimes using ICT to enhance their work. As they become older they learn to interpret information and present their findings. Most develop a good understanding of the characteristics of shapes, including their symmetries and angle properties. They also learn how to use the metric system of measures and to calculate areas and volumes.
77. A good range of tasks has been adopted for mental arithmetic and other oral activities at the start of lessons. These enable pupils to consolidate skills, develop confidence when handling numbers and to improve the speed at which they recall number facts, such as their multiplication tables. In the best sessions, teachers carefully target questions so that the more able are challenged, while the less able can gain in confidence, often with the help, encouragement and support of classroom assistants. Year 2 pupils were observed practising adding on and subtracting 10 from different starting points. All joined in chanting accurately with some higher attaining pupils showing a developing understanding of negative numbers. These mental arithmetic skills develop further at Key Stage 2, with Year 6 pupils having a good recall of their multiplication tables. Some of these pupils, however, did not use readily the strategies that they had learnt when tackling mathematical problems, preferring to use formal, but slower, written methods.
78. The teaching of the main theme for each lesson is usually clear, with learning intentions that are shared and reviewed with pupils in the best lessons. These sessions often build immediately from

mental arithmetic activities, giving a smooth flow to the lesson. There are times, however, when this direct teaching is too short and teachers do not ensure that pupils have fully understood what they are expected to do. One general weakness that detracts from otherwise good teaching is that the more able are not extended sufficiently in these sessions. Teachers tend to pitch their explanations at those of average ability and do not plan, for example, how they might use questioning to challenge the thinking of the more able. This slows the pace at which they learn and can lead to some boredom and lack of concentration.

79. The activities that pupils undertake to develop the skills that they have been taught are usually provided at three different levels. The activities chosen for the less able and pupils with special educational needs, coupled with the support from classroom assistants, enables them to consolidate their learning well. In many lessons pupils tackle simple problems and as a result are able to identify the correct operations to use and apply their number skills well. Most pupils work hard on these tasks, often working in pairs, sharing ideas and discussing the questions set. However, few examples of pupils working on an activity in groups were observed. One area that needs greater attention is the setting of investigational tasks that enable pupils to apply their mathematical skills and extend their learning. This is particularly the case for the large number of able pupils who need to have their mathematical thinking challenged, stimulated and developed more systematically.
80. The subject is well organised and well managed. The monitoring of teachers' work and the standards achieved by pupils has had a beneficial effect, but now needs to focus on the specific areas highlighted earlier that detract from otherwise well-taught lessons. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards are higher. Improvements have taken place in planning, assessment procedures and the marking of pupils' work, although the latter still lacks consistency.

SCIENCE

81. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards that are above those expected for their ages in all areas of the science curriculum, including scientific investigation. In 2000 teachers identified standards of seven-year-olds as well above the national average in those areas that were assessed. Standards in the national tests for eleven-year-olds improved consistently from 1996 to 2000; in 2000 they were well above the national average and better than those of similar schools. Provisional results for 2001 are not as good with respect to the proportion of more able pupils achieving the higher Level 5. However, all pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 4. Standards throughout the school are higher than at the time of the last inspection.
82. Examination of the work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 shows that pupils build well on the knowledge and understanding gained in the Reception class. They develop good knowledge of the uses of electricity in the home, correctly classified in terms of heat, light, sound and movement. They sort materials according to whether they are *stiff* or *not stiff*, *waterproof* or *not waterproof* and then on the two criteria together. Teachers skilfully promote greater understanding of the scientific method, alongside the development of scientific knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 2 make a forecast 'I think that the ... ball will bounce higher, because...'. They develop their understanding of what will make a test fair. A further good feature of work in Years 1 and 2 is the encouragement to pupils of all abilities to write accounts of their investigations in their own words. For example, pupils' writing shows good understanding relating to cars moving on different surfaces and down ramps of different heights.
83. Progress in the junior years is uneven, particularly in respect of developing pupils' experimental and investigational skills. More able pupils have not been given enough opportunity to pose their own questions, 'What would happen if...?', and to design their own experiments in an attempt to answer them. During the inspection, however, pupils in Year 3 engaged animatedly in investigating the properties of magnets. The lesson led to good learning and progress because it was planned to take the pupils' initial knowledge and understanding forward. The teacher had previously found out what they knew and set appropriate tasks for groups. She also made sure that pupils understood and could use the relevant scientific vocabulary of *predict*, *fair test*, *experiment* and introduced words like *attract* and *repel* as they were needed. Pupils worked hard and were rightly praised for this at the end of the lesson. The teacher helped the class to know what they had done and learned and prepared them for the next science lesson.
84. Pupils in Year 5 benefited from a very good lesson in which they improved their skills at planning experiments in the context of investigating which materials are good electrical conductors and

which are not. Very good features of this lesson included the brisk pace and well-focused interventions by the teacher. These helped pairs of pupils who were planning together to refine their knowledge and understanding. Pupils responded well to the high expectations that the teacher made clear to them and to being told exactly what they had to do and how long they had to do it. As a result pupils achieved well and the learning intentions of the lesson were achieved.

85. On the whole, the quality of science teaching is good throughout the school. It is based on teachers' good subject knowledge and follows national guidelines well. When lessons are less successful this is due to a lack of precision about what the pupils are to learn and a consequent lack of focus and pace. The resources offered by ICT to support and extend learning in science are not used enough. The newly appointed co-ordinator is aware of this and of the need to provide greater challenge for more able pupils. She rightly sees attention to these two aspects as the key to raising standards in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

86. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, therefore judgements are based on a range of other evidence. Overall attainment in art is in line with expectations at both key stages, with some good work in Key Stage 1 where pupils are developing their skills at a faster pace than at Key Stage 2. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection when they were in line with expectations at both key stages.
87. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is at the level expected, particularly in drawing and painting. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils use a range of techniques appropriate to their age, including weaving and clay work. They are able to use a variety of media and are given good opportunities to make choices. Pupils are encouraged to experiment with paint and colour, explore pattern, work from observation and imagination and to respond to examples of art in the world around them, for example the use of a Breugel painting in Year 1 supporting their topic about games. Observational skills are well developed and pupils' use of paint is particularly good. The use of sketchbooks helps pupils understand the importance of planning and experimentation, although all teachers do not use these consistently. Work is colourful and bright and shows enthusiasm for the subject.
88. Overall, pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress and have opportunities to work on a range of themes using different media. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' work demonstrates competence in colour mixing and matching in a range of media. Pupils use drawing and other artwork confidently to illustrate work in other areas of the curriculum, for example drawings and paintings during the Year 6 trip to the Isle of Wight and illustrations of river poems in Year 5. Pupils continue to use the work of artists from the world around them, such as the study in Year 4 of how Kandinsky, Klimt and Aboriginal artists used images and symbols in their work to depict a journey. The use of sketchbooks in Key Stage 2 is sporadic, but some pupils use them fully to experiment and develop their ideas. Marking and dating of work in sketchbooks is poorly developed and opportunities for teachers to use sketchbooks as a tool for assessing pupils' progress over time are lost.
89. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and some of it is good, particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils' work indicates that most teachers have a reasonable understanding of the subject, although this appears variable and some teachers lack confidence in certain areas of learning. There is a need for more training and support in how to teach art skills. Teachers in Key Stage 1 make particularly good use of art to enhance pupils' learning experiences in other areas of the curriculum, specifically in history, geography and English.

90. The co-ordination of art is satisfactory, although the co-ordinator does not have time to carry out monitoring of teaching and learning adequately. There is no regular, consistent or rigorous assessment and recording of attainment to enable the school to evaluate pupils' progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This is the same situation as at the time of the last inspection. At that time, the point was made that pupils had too few opportunities to practise specific skills and processes independently of working on a specific project. This remains a weakness. Pupils make much better progress in developing the more literary skills of planning on paper and writing evaluations than they do in developing the making skills, for example of cutting accurately and making moveable or fixed joints. The co-ordinator recognises the need to arrange further training to raise the level of teachers' own skills in order to improve this aspect of the subject.
92. All teachers include units of work based on national guidance in the planning of their termly topics. For example, pupils in Year 1 explore basic joining techniques and how to make structures more stable in the context of their *House and Homes* summer term topic. The theme of structures, joining, strength and stability appears in Year 3 planning in relation to photograph frames in the Communication project and in Year 6 in relation to shelters in the Victorian topic. What is lacking in the planning, however, is a clear statement of what making skills pupils are intended to learn and practise in each unit and how these are to be developed further in subsequent years. Because of this, pupils do not make the good or very good progress of which many are capable as they move through the school.
93. There were no specific design and technology lessons in infant classes during the inspection. On the evidence of a small number of finished pieces of work and photographs, pupils have developed a satisfactory level of understanding of the design process. They have also built to a satisfactory extent on the skills of cutting, sticking and joining that they learned in the reception class.
94. Teaching is satisfactory overall in the junior classes. The focus of the lessons observed was on food in Years 4 and 5 and on structures and load bearing in Year 6. All three lessons, because the inspection was near the start of the term, were introductory and research-based rather than practical. The lesson in Year 4 was appropriately planned and resourced to enable pupils to evaluate and record the characteristics of breads from a variety of cultures. However, the teacher had not established good behaviour and listening routines and insufficient work was done and learning was unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 5 worked successfully in pairs to evaluate the characteristics of biscuits, commenting, for example, on appearance and flavour, and making a judgement on value for money. The teacher had already established good routines and so the pupils were attentive, followed instructions and got on with their work. At best they used a good range of adjectives when reporting their evaluations and the teacher made a point of underlining interesting uses of vocabulary for the rest of the class. The lesson promoted good learning and positive attitudes to the subject.
95. The lesson with pupils in Year 6 was a practically based investigation into how great a load a piece of A3 paper can bear. The teacher struck a good balance between providing sufficient guidance on the one hand and not restricting the scope of pupils' investigations on the other. As a result, pupils were clear about what they had to do and engaged with the task wholeheartedly and imaginatively. The resulting quality of learning was good as pupils saw the advantage of making more than one cylinder from their paper and of providing internal strengthening. The teacher drew the attention of the whole class to significant advances made by individual pupils and made valuable teaching points while supervising the loading of weights on to the structures, spreading the load for example. The lesson was well planned and presented with enthusiasm for the investigation. Pupils responded well to this approach and were clearly very impressed that the teacher's weight had been supported, on a previous occasion, by three very tightly wound cylinders made from a single piece of A3 paper!

GEOGRAPHY

96. At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, standards in the work seen are in line with expectations, as at the last inspection. The majority of pupils have satisfactory geographical skills, knowledge and understanding with a few pupils attaining higher levels. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing an understanding of their locality, shops and facilities and can demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of

local features. Pupils are able to draw simple maps and recognise the role of labels. The good emphasis provided by teachers on contrasting places is being applied well to a study of how aspects of life in New Zealand are different from their own, so that pupils know about different populations, life styles, clothing and foods.

97. At Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate their basic understanding of human and physical ideas and by Year 6 pupils show good general geographical knowledge of the United Kingdom, Europe and the wider world. They can identify countries, capitals and major rivers, are able to follow directions, read maps and plans and comment on specific features. Pupils show a good appreciation and understanding of environmental issues, particularly through the Year 5 project on 'Waste'. There is a good emphasis placed on comparing and contrasting places where pupils are beginning to understand the effects of climate and conditions on lifestyles. The school uses its excellent involvement with other European countries to broaden and enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of customs and conditions in other countries. Pupils' geographical knowledge is used well to support their learning in other subjects such as history and science.
98. Satisfactory progress is made in lessons at both key stages and the quality of learning is also satisfactory. Teachers generally provide interesting and worthwhile tasks but high achieving pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by them. By contrast, there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress throughout the school. As they progress through the school, pupils become increasingly aware of geographical and environmental issues, for example the effects of human activity on the local or wider environment, including their own school grounds. They are able to record their research evidence and use appropriate vocabulary. There is clear evidence from a scrutiny of work that pupils develop appropriate basic skills and knowledge over time.
99. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in both key stages and pupils are given appropriate experiences in line with national guidance. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They answer questions, share their ideas and contribute to discussions enthusiastically and confidently, using a wide range of vocabulary and often quite complex sentences. Most pupils can sustain their concentration, make full use of planned opportunities to work collaboratively and are able to talk sensibly and knowledgeably about their work. In two lessons the pace was not suitably brisk and expectations were insufficiently sharp for all pupils to make good progress.
100. The subject is well led and managed. The policy and schemes of work have been updated, amalgamating national documentation with existing schemes of work. The roles of monitoring and development still require further development.

HISTORY

101. Standards in history meet national expectations by the end of both key stages, which maintains the position at the last inspection. Evidence from lesson observations at both key stages is limited but judgements are supported by scrutiny of a wide range of work and discussions with pupils. Most pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing an appropriate understanding of chronology and are increasingly able to demonstrate their understanding that developments happen over time. This is evident, for example, from pupils sharing their research findings about schools today and those of a century ago.
102. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed appropriate enquiry skills, and observe details of photographic evidence as well as ancient and more modern artefacts. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound basic knowledge of developments during the twentieth century. They are able to use resources and interpret evidence from primary sources to help them understand life, work and conditions of people in the past. They can make appropriate comparisons and judgements, for example, relating to experiences of life, work and leisure for children in Victorian times. Skilful questioning by teachers enables pupils to share their understanding of the differences between materials and processes used in making objects 100 years ago and those made today. This was demonstrated by pupils in Year 3 when observing flat irons, an old suitcase, a bottle and a range of books. Pupils understand the importance of sources to support historical enquiry and the need for evidence. They appreciate the quality of artefacts available to them and handle them with care and respect.
103. Teaching is judged to be at least satisfactory at both key stages, with some very good teaching at Key Stage 1. Teaching ensures a generally good focus on developing pupils' basic historical skills, with an emphasis on the need for sources of evidence. Purposeful teaching and appropriate choice

of tasks provide pupils with a good quality of learning. Tasks set provide suitable challenge for most pupils and are generally matched to their prior learning, however, there is not yet sufficient rigour and challenge in tasks provided for pupils with a greater understanding and more ability. Pupils who require more help are well supported and able to make appropriate progress. Pupils develop an increasing historical awareness and have the skills to gather and record evidence from their research. Pupils' language skills and historical vocabulary become increasingly sophisticated and well developed. The study of history is making a significant contribution to extending pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences and understanding, for example through research and sharing of outcomes of differing lifestyles, customs and clothing.

104. History is well led and managed. Good links have been established with other subjects such as English, geography and science. Colleagues are well supported in their planning on an informal basis, although monitoring has not been a main priority for the school. There are plans to provide non-contact time for more formal monitoring and there will be a need to ensure through this that the assessment system currently in place becomes more formalised and incorporated into whole-school assessment procedures.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

105. There are weaknesses in the current provision for ICT, many of which the school is aware. Standards are lower than those reported at the last inspection and insufficient progress has been made. Resource levels are inadequate. To remedy this the school intends to purchase sufficient laptop computers to enable whole classes to be taught ICT skills. Many pupils have access to computers at home. Although the extent of their use in several cases is for playing games, a considerable number of pupils have developed quite sophisticated ICT skills. Current teaching arrangements do not develop or utilise these skills; consequently many pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
106. At present each classroom is equipped with one, and in some cases two computers. Other resources for teaching ICT, such as programmable toys, are available and used. The computers in the classrooms were only seen in limited use during the inspection, often for pupils to play various educational games, some of which supported learning. Only two lessons took place where the focus was the teaching of ICT skills. Both of these were by way of demonstrations led by the teacher, in one case with the computer attached to a projector. This technique was not particularly effective, as pupils did not have the immediate opportunity to learn and practise the skills being taught. The impact of the technology was lost as the concentration of the pupils wavered, although in both lessons the teacher was sensitive to this and brought the session to an end. Overall, therefore, the teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory as carefully planned opportunities are not regularly provided and pupils spend insufficient time developing and applying their skills.
107. Discussions with pupils and looking at samples of their work confirms this. However, along with an analysis of teachers' planning it is evident that all areas of the National Curriculum for ICT are covered but not to a sufficient depth. Consequently pupils throughout the school do not build on the good start that they make in reception and do not achieve standards expected by the ages of seven and 11. Pupils learn simple word-processing skills at Key Stage 1, which are developed at Key Stage 2, enabling Year 6 pupils to produce a regular school newsletter using desktop publishing techniques. In many cases, however, keyboard skills are relatively weak and pupils do not have the confidence to be autonomous users of computers. While pupils at Key Stage 1 input data from surveys to produce charts and graphs, these skills have developed only slowly at Key Stage 2 and pupils have little understanding of the properties of spreadsheets and databases. The school has Internet access, but pupils report that they are more likely to use this facility at home than regularly in school.
108. The school has fallen considerably behind the provision and standards being seen now in many similar schools. The intended purchase of further computers may be too late for older pupils, unless a means is found for them to receive intensive tuition. Training for teachers is still being undertaken and staff are supported well by the co-ordinator. As a matter of urgency, staff need to identify more clearly where and when in other subjects pupils are to develop and utilise their skills systematically, which is not happening in the current ad hoc arrangements. National guidelines have been adopted to support teachers in their planning. The skills assessment sheets recently introduced now need to be used to guide teachers in the tasks and activities set. Once the new computers become available rigorous monitoring of planning, teaching and the standards being achieved will need to be introduced to support the considerable financial outlay.

MUSIC

109. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards in music are in line with national expectations overall, but in instrumental music and singing they are above those expected nationally. Indeed, some of the choral and performance music at Key Stage 2 is of very good standard; this has improved since the time of the last inspection.
110. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of how to vary the pitch of their voice in response to direction from the teacher. They practise singing notes of different length and use vowel sounds of different dynamics and quality to achieve a particular effect. They begin to appreciate that different moods or mental pictures may be evoked by the music of different composers, and begin to recognise some orchestral instruments from the sounds they make. By Year 3, pupils begin to sing more confidently, identifying repeated rhythms and patterns in tunes and noting changes in pitch or mood. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 experiment in the creation of rhythms and pulses using tuned and untuned instruments. They work well co-operatively, sharing ideas and comparing critically the sounds made by different instruments.
111. Pupils at both key stages enjoy singing. In assemblies, most pupils sing confidently and with clarity, phrasing the words appropriately and listening well to each other as they sing in tune. At Key Stage 2, the well-supported choir achieves very good standards in singing. Pupils maintain two-part melodies without difficulty and sing equally competently with and without accompaniment. They sustain long notes without loss of pitch and display a strong sense of rhythm in their choral work. Across the school, pupils develop satisfactory skills in appreciating and listening to music, both in assemblies and in the classroom. At Key Stage 2, they now make satisfactory progress in creating and elaborating their own musical ideas; this was an area for development identified at the time of the last inspection. A significant number of pupils receive instrumental tuition, from both school staff and from visiting teachers. Many of these make good progress because they rehearse regularly together in the school orchestra and are afforded frequent opportunities to perform or practise, sometimes with pupils from other schools.
112. The teaching of music is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1, but the limited teaching observed at Key Stage 2 was of good or very good standard. Across the school, lessons are thoughtfully prepared and well structured so that pupils build incrementally on previously learned skills as the lesson progresses. Teachers without particular expertise in music nevertheless display sufficient knowledge of the subject to enable their pupils to make the expected progress. This is because they follow closely the guidance offered by the adopted scheme of work and seek advice from the co-ordinator where appropriate. Most lessons in the subject proceed at a good pace and are taught with an enthusiasm to which pupils respond well. In one very good lesson, the teacher developed a very good rapport with the pupils, anticipating the passages in the music where they were likely to encounter difficulty and rehearsing these thoroughly before attempting the whole piece. Across the school, lessons are well managed so that all pupils are included in opportunities to perform and show what they can do. Teachers cultivate positive attitudes towards music; this is reflected in the numbers taking part in extra-curricular lessons.
113. All aspects of the music curriculum are regularly taught: an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to compose their own music. The school offers a stronger curriculum in singing and instrumental work than in other aspects of music, and this is evident in the standards achieved. Leadership in the subject is good. Sufficient expertise and advice are available for staff requiring support, and a standard scheme of work has been well adapted to include themes taught in other curricular areas, such as geography and history. The curriculum is enhanced by visiting instrumentalists and there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to view the performances of others.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. Standards in physical education are typical for the age-group in the infant classes. No lessons were observed in the junior classes during the inspection and so no judgement is made on standards of schoolwork. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take part in a wide range of team and individual sports. These include rounders, football, cricket, rugby, netball, cross country running and stoolball as well as orienteering and athletics. The co-ordinator actively encourages pupils to join sports

clubs outside school. The provision and the encouragement result in a high level of participation by the pupils, who have positive attitudes towards physical education. Evidence of the school's success in competitions indicates that pupils achieve standards at 11 that are at least in line with expectations for their age. In swimming, in particular, all pupils achieve the national standard and many exceed it. The overall picture for physical education is similar to that reported at the last inspection.

115. Pupils in Key Stage 1 made good progress in the well-taught lessons observed during the inspection. In Year 1, for example, pupils developed their skills of running, chasing, dodging, throwing and receiving. They learned to use space effectively and to work together as a basis for playing simple team games. Teaching was based on very good subject knowledge and enabled the pupils to achieve success in the tasks set. Pupils in Year 2 achieved well in improving their skills of throwing and catching a ball. In a well-paced lesson, the pupils also developed their understanding of the importance of game strategies and of co-operation in team games. In another good lesson with pupils from Year 2, the teacher again ensured that pupils had plenty of exercise and developed their skills of balance, running, jumping and landing in sequence. Good teaching in the key stage promotes good learning and attitudes to physical education.
116. Teachers in the junior department timetable regular lessons in physical education. Planning shows that teachers build progressively on the skills developed in earlier years, for example in improving skills of passing and control in hockey. However, the school does not always make adequate alternative arrangements when outdoor lessons have to be cancelled because of the weather. As a result, pupils miss planned lessons and ad hoc arrangements have to be made. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 go to a local sports centre in the spring term for coaching in a variety of sports.
117. Examination of teachers' planning shows that the appropriate areas of the physical education curriculum are all covered. Work in dance is increasingly based on music from other parts of the world, although there is more to do in enabling this to contribute substantially to increasing pupils' understanding of other cultures. The provision of well-planned and resourced opportunities to learn orienteering is a very good feature and is linked well with work in geography.