

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST. AMBROSE RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105520

Headteacher: Mr C Flannery

Reporting inspector: Mr G Alston  
20794

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 June 2002

Inspection number: 195648

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:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Princess Road Chorlton-cum-Hardy Manchester
Postcode:	M21 7QA
Telephone number:	0161 445 3299
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr J P Earley
Date of previous inspection:	26 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20794	Mr G Alston	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language English Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
19740	Mr A Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
28320	Mr B Willey	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology History Music	How well is the school led and managed?
31175	Mr A Allison	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Art and design Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Ambrose R C Primary School is a smaller than average size school with 92 boys and 90 girls ranging from 3 – 11 years in age including 53 children who are under six years of age in the Nursery and Reception classes. There are very few pupils with parents from another ethnic background, and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs due to learning or behavioural difficulties is similar to that found in most schools and four pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school is in an area of social deprivation and has high numbers of pupils leaving and entering the school at times other than usual. Evidence from the school's own assessments shows that for the majority of children their attainment on entering the school is below the expected level in all areas of learning. In the last two years five new staff have been appointed to the school.

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

This is a happy, caring school that has worked hard since its last inspection and has significantly improved in most areas of concern highlighted in the last report. Across the school, the quality of teaching has improved and the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. This improvement is closely linked to new teachers being appointed to the school recently providing a stable learning environment for pupils and as a result, standards are also beginning to rise. There are effective systems in place to ensure there are equal opportunities for all pupils. The school is effectively led and managed by the headteacher with strong support from the senior management team, staff and governors. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The results of national tests for seven-year-olds in reading and mathematics are above average and very high in writing when compared to similar schools.
- Children who are under six in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their education.
- The school ensures there are equal opportunities for all and the needs of all pupils are well met.
- The school enriches the pupils' experiences through a good range of out of school clubs, by inviting many visitors to talk to the pupils, and arranging a variety of educational visits.
- Very good provision is made to help pupils develop spiritually and good provision for social, moral and cultural development. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good, they form very good relationships and try hard with their work.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and support staff are very conscientious, work together harmoniously and successfully provide a happy, caring environment for pupils.
- The headteacher, with the support of the senior managers and staff, has led the school successfully through a difficult period of staffing instability, and in consultation with a supportive governing body ensures that money is used effectively.

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

- How well pupils find and read information in books and the standard of their handwriting and spelling by the age of seven and 11.
- The quality of teaching, in order to reach that found in the best lessons.
- Opportunities for infant and junior pupils to be responsible for their own learning or to show initiative in lessons.
- Assessment and recording of what pupils know, or what they can do, or of the skills they have learnt, in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The effectiveness of the majority of coordinators in evaluating the teaching and learning in their subjects. The school has plans to address this.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has worked hard since its last inspection in June 1997 and has made good progress in its planned programme of improvement. The school has effectively raised standards across the school in design and technology, information and communication technology and art and design and in science and geography in infant classes. However, there are still weaknesses in pupils' achievement in aspects of history by the age of seven and 11 and in aspects of geography by the age of 11. The management of the school has significantly improved. The headteacher, supported by senior managers and a new conscientious staff, has a clear vision for the school and what needs to improve. New initiatives have been introduced aimed at monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This has led to key areas being identified for improvement. As a result, more effective systems have been introduced which have already had a positive impact but have not as yet fully realised their potential. There is an effective school development plan that carefully links financial decisions to the school budget. The quality of teaching has improved, particularly in infant classes. The appointment of five new teachers, a planned programme of development of effective schemes of work in all subjects, better planning and a raising of teachers' expectations through target-setting for pupils has helped improve the quality. Effective assessment takes place in English and mathematics but in other subjects there is limited information recorded of what pupils have achieved. These improvements in turn are beginning to raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. Through its strong commitment to higher achievement the school has a good capacity for further improvement. The school met the targets it was set in national tests in English but not in mathematics but is in line to almost achieve future targets that are sufficiently challenging. All statutory requirements are now met.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	C	D	B
Mathematics	D	C	E	C
Science	D	D	E	C

**Key**

Well above average      A  
 above average            B  
 Average                    C  
 Below average            D  
 Well below average      E

The information shows that results in English are below the national average and well below in mathematics and science in national tests for 11 year olds. When the school's results are compared to schools with pupils from a similar background they are above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Results of 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds show that results are average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. When compared to schools with pupils from a similar background they are well above average in reading and mathematics and very high in writing. Results reflect the proportion of pupils with learning and behavioural problems in the classes that took the test. The movement of pupils in and out of the school also impacts adversely on results. The average turnover of pupils is 20 per cent and in some classes is as high as 33 per cent. This makes it difficult to compare results of national tests of cohorts of pupils in Year 2 and again in Year 6. Results have not risen over the past three years at a similar pace to that found in most schools nationally but results in mathematics have significantly improved this year. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and by the time they reach Year 1 their attainment is likely to reach national expectations in all areas of learning. Throughout the rest of the school all pupils achieve appropriately. Inspection findings indicate that by the age of seven standards are close to the average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the age of 11, pupils' attainment is close to the average in English, mathematics and science. There is no significant difference between the standards that boys achieve in comparison to girls in lessons.



Standards in most aspects of English are high enough by the age of seven and 11. However, pupils' skills in spelling and the standard they achieve with handwriting are not as high as their other writing skills. Pupils' ability to find and read information in books is not as strong as their other literacy skills. In mathematics and science standards are high enough. However, pupils' ability to plan their own investigations is not as good as their scientific knowledge and pupils' competency to answer practical, mathematical problems does not reach the same level as their other numeracy skills.

In information and communication technology, at the age of seven pupils' attainment is above national expectations and in line at the age of 11. Across the school, pupils achieve appropriately in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education and reach the level expected for their age by the age of seven and 11. By the age of seven, pupils achieve sufficiently well in geography, but in history by the age of seven and 11 and geography by the age of 11, the standards that pupils achieve is below the expected level and progress is less than expected. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment and good progress when they receive the effective help from good quality teaching assistants.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. They are eager to learn, settle quickly to their tasks and sustain concentration well. These very positive attributes help pupils to make sound progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. All pupils behave well in all situations. They are courteous and polite to one another and to adults. In the last school year nine pupils have been excluded for unacceptable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are very mature and sensible; when given the chance they organise themselves purposefully and readily show initiative. Relationships are very good and are built successfully on mutual respect.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school, but the level of attendance is well below that that found in most schools.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs or those entering the school at other than the usual time, are appropriately met. In all the lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory or better and in 16 per cent was very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when 25 per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. The teaching for children in the Nursery and the Reception classes is particularly strong. In infant and junior classrooms the amount of good and very good teaching is not consistent between classes.

Most aspects of English are appropriately taught, with a satisfactory emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills. However, the current strategies for teaching handwriting and spelling are not effective in helping pupils' achieve the level they should. Similarly, the skills needed for pupils to research for information are not sufficiently well taught and there is a lack of opportunities for pupils to further develop these skills in other subjects. In most classes the opportunities pupils have to use and develop their writing skills through extended writing in other subjects as well as English are limited. Mathematics is taught well with a strong focus on basic skills. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge in practical, everyday problem-solving activities. In science, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to plan their own investigations. In very good lessons, the teachers provide good resources for pupils to use, set high levels of discipline and pupils feel valued. As a result pupils confidently contribute to the lessons. Pupils are set appropriate targets, to which they respond positively by working hard to produce satisfactory quantities of work that is matched to their ability. The satisfactory teaching is instrumental in helping pupils make sound progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory with effective planning by teachers in numeracy and literacy. The curriculum caters well for pupils' interests and needs; but there is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' geographical and historical skills. A good range of out-of-school clubs, visits and visitors enrich pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Teachers provide well matched activities that are based on clear targets enabling pupils to learn effectively. Pupils who are supported in lessons by teaching assistants make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. However, there are insufficient opportunities in lessons for pupils to show initiative and be responsible for their own learning. The staff provide good role models and have very clear expectations of pupils' behaviour. Mutual respect between everyone in the school ensures pupils develop a mature understanding of their social and moral responsibilities. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual development and good provision for cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are looked after sensitively in a warm, caring environment with a strong focus on race equality and child protection. There is sound assessment in English, mathematics and science but not in other subjects.

Parents support the school well in raising funds and helping pupils at home with their work. The school tries hard and successfully keeps parents informed about the work of the school and of their children's progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides clear leadership and is well supported by the senior managers and coordinators. They have successfully steered the school through a period of considerable instability in staffing. Coordinators conscientiously manage the development of their subjects and a small number have monitored the teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school and carry out their duties purposefully.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has a clear view of what it does well and where it needs to improve. Where areas for improvement have been identified effective action has taken place for example, in mathematics.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school makes good use of its staff, building and material resources. Staff and pupils use their time well.

The school considers carefully how it can get best value in purchasing equipment and services. The level of staffing, the quality of the accommodation and the quantity of resources are sound.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make.</li><li>• The expectation that children work hard and do their best and the good behaviour of pupils.</li><li>• The management and leadership of the school.</li><li>• The school is approachable and the school works closely with parents, providing good information.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of homework pupils receive.</li><li>• A more interesting range of activities out of school.</li></ul>

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' positive views. However, inspectors' judgements do not support the views where parents expressed concern. Homework is consistently set and supports pupils' learning although limited use is made of homework diaries. The school provides a range of activities out of school in excess of that found in most schools and many pupils enjoy these sessions.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The results of the 2001 tests for seven-year-olds show that results are close to the national average in reading and mathematics and above the national average in writing. When results are compared to similar schools they are well above average in reading and mathematics and very high in writing. Trends over time show a significant fall in reading and writing from 1998 to 2000 and a sharp rise in 2001, whereas, in mathematics results fell slightly from 1998 to 2000 and rose in 2001. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' attainment in Year 2 is close to the average in reading, writing and in mathematics. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are beginning to improve due to changes in staffing, which has improved the quality of teaching, and to the good start pupils now get in the Foundation Stage. However, this has not yet fully impacted on test results.
2. In the 2001 national tests for pupils aged 11, results are below the national average in English and well below in mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools, results are close to the average in mathematics and science and above in English. Results reflect the proportion of pupils with learning and behavioural problems in the classes that took the test. The movement of pupils in and out of the school also impacts adversely on results. The average change in pupil population is 20 per cent across the school and in some classes is as high as 33 per cent. This makes it difficult to compare results of national tests of cohorts of pupils in Year 2 and again in Year 6. Standards in the current Year 6 class are close to the average in English, mathematics and science. The school has had a major focus on mathematics this year and this has helped to improve standards in mathematics.
3. There has been a good improvement in the issues raised in the last report. The school has effectively raised standards across the school in design and technology, information and communication technology and art and design and in science and geography in infant classes. However, there are still weaknesses in pupils' achievement in aspects of history across the school and in geography in junior classes. Great strides have been made in information and communication technology and the school has provided effective support and training for teachers and developed an information and communication technology and as a result pupils are making much better progress. The school has worked hard and introduced several new initiatives that are helping to raise standards in aspects of English, mathematics and science. The school almost met the targets it was set by the local authority in 2001 in national tests and has been set challenging targets for 2002 that it is on course to almost meet. The overall feeling of the parents was that they were happy with the standards that pupils achieve.
4. Standards in some aspects of English are not high enough by the age of seven and 11. Pupils' skills in spelling and the standard they achieve with handwriting are below the expected level. Pupils' ability to find and read information in books is not as strong as their other literacy skills. In science, pupils' ability to plan their own investigations is not as good as their level of achievement in other aspects of science for example, scientific knowledge.
5. Standards in mathematics are high enough but pupils' ability to solve problems or explain their strategies is not as well developed as it should be because there are not enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in everyday, practical situations.

6. Assessments of children on entry to the school show that significant numbers of those under the age of six enter school with language, number, and personal and social skills that are below the expected level for their age. They achieve well in all areas of learning in the very good learning environment seen in the Foundation Stage. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all areas of learning, and most will achieve the levels expected in their communication, language and literacy development, mathematics development and knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional development, and physical and creative development by the end of their Reception year.
7. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily and their attainment in English is close to average at the age of seven and 11. At the age of seven and 11, pupils' attainment is close to national expectations in all aspects. By the age of seven, pupils listen carefully and are becoming confident in expressing their ideas; for example, in the Literacy Hour. By the age of 11, pupils contribute appropriately to class discussions. Most pupils are able to explain clearly their views using appropriate vocabulary; for example, in identifying the key features of a quest adventure after reading the 'The Great Pyramid Robbery.' In reading, all pupils show a developing enthusiasm for books. By the age of seven, most of them can successfully attempt to read unknown words. The most fluent, confident readers are beginning to recognise the structure of stories but are not confident in the use of the contents in a non-fiction book. By the age of 11, the best readers are able to discuss with clarity and understanding the texts they read. Pupils understand indices and glossaries, but the skill of summarising the main information points is not well developed due to a lack of opportunities to read for information. By the age of seven, pupils display sound ability in their creative writing, and their vocabulary shows imagination. However, there are too few opportunities for them to write at length or for different purposes in subjects other than English. Pupils' handwriting is mainly printed and they do not have appropriate strategies for seeing spelling mistakes, resulting in incorrect spelling of words with regular patterns. By the age of 11, higher- and average-attaining pupils use appropriate expressive language and grammatical awareness in a variety of well-structured and planned work. Pupils' skills in spelling are not as good as their other language skills and handwriting is not accurate or fluent.
8. Across the school, progress is sound in reading, writing and speaking and listening. In infant classes and junior classes, staff long term absence and changes in teaching staff have impacted on continuity in pupils' learning and hence on their progress. The school now has stable staffing and the quality of teaching has improved which is impacting positively on the progress pupils make. In reading, there are too few opportunities for pupils to read independently or regularly practice their reading and some pupils only read spasmodically at home. In writing, pupils develop bad habits in formation of letters and the current method used to teach handwriting is not effective. Similarly, the progress pupils make in spelling is hampered by their inability to see their own spelling mistakes and over-reliance on spelling phonetically using letter sounds to build up words. There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to extend their reading and writing skills through other subjects such as science, geography and history.
9. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is close to average at the ages of seven and 11. At the age of seven, pupils are confident in their understanding of the value of tens and units and use this knowledge effectively in the addition and subtraction of two-digit numbers. Although they tackle problems in a systematic way, their ability to explain their strategies is not as strong. Pupils' understanding and use of mathematical language are sound. Likewise, they are confident to perform mental calculations quickly or accurately. At the age of 11, pupils have rapid recall of multiplication facts up to the 10 times table. Pupils have a sound understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. Their knowledge of shape, space and measures is sound. However, pupils are not confident in developing their

own strategies for solving problems or ably explaining their reasoning. Their skills in mental calculations are stronger than their computational skills due to good opportunities to discuss their strategies in the mental/oral part at the beginning of the lesson.

10. Overall, in mathematics pupils make sound progress in infant and junior classes. However, progress in using and applying their mathematical knowledge in everyday, practical situations is not as good as in their other numeracy skills, as the opportunities for them to do this are limited.
11. In science, pupils' attainment at the ages of seven and 11 is close to the average. Overall, progress is sound. By the age of seven, pupils make steady progress in their knowledge and understanding and in their investigation skills. A weakness in the teaching impedes progress in aspects of pupils' scientific development. This is in lessons that are over-directed by the teacher, and pupils have very few opportunities to plan and carry out investigations themselves. This restricts their learning about scientific enquiry. When pupils are given the opportunity to plan and carry out an investigation, as in a Year 6 class investigating air resistance, they work with a high level of concentration in small groups and demonstrate that they can devise and carry out investigations successfully. Taking responsibility for their own learning like this fosters their personal development as well as promoting their knowledge and understanding of scientific enquiry. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the natural world, of materials and their properties and the physical world.
12. In information and communication technology, pupils' attainment is above national expectations at the age of seven and close to national expectations by 11. All pupils make sound progress. At the age of seven, pupils are confident in the use of a 'mouse' and can select items on the screen. They can program a moveable toy to go in a variety of directions and distances, and are beginning to appreciate the impact of control technology in everyday life. At the age of 11, pupils have appropriate skills in word processing, and can save their own work, find information on the CD ROM, and use icons and menus. However, limited use is made of pupils' information and communication technology skills in other subjects and computers in classrooms are under-used at times.
13. Across the school, pupils achieve appropriately in all subjects except in history in infant and junior classes and geography in junior classes where pupils' skills in map reading and finding evidence from a variety of sources are weak. These judgements indicate that standards have been maintained in all subjects and improved in design and technology, information and communication technology and art and design across the school and in science and geography in infant classes. Although pupils' knowledge and understanding of geographical and historical facts are sound, improvements in pupils' geography skills have not been made in junior classes since the last inspection when standards in geography were a concern, and standards in history have fallen across the school.
14. The school has made a good effort at introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Careful monitoring in mathematics has enabled the school to modify the Strategy to meet the needs of its pupils. The same careful evaluation has not taken place recently with the Literacy Strategy, resulting in weaknesses in handwriting and spelling. Pupils' literacy skills are not given sufficient emphasis or further developed in other subject areas in both infant and junior classes. Their writing skills are not further developed as and there are not enough opportunities for them to write at length for different purposes; for example, in science, geography and history. There are good opportunities in religious education. Likewise, there are not enough opportunities for reading for information. Pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately to classify, compare and measure in several subjects. Examples were seen in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology and science.

15. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily and make sound and, at times, good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. This is because tasks in the classroom are planned effectively by the teacher to meet their needs and the teaching assistants provide good support. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in the classroom when teaching assistants are present. However, teaching assistants are not always present to support pupils in literacy or numeracy lessons. As a result, teachers do not always have the time they would like to support these pupils and this limits the progress they make.

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

16. Pupils have good attitudes, their behaviour is good and they accept responsibility well when the opportunity is presented to them. At the time of the last inspection these aspects were considered to be good. However, there were too few opportunities for pupils to select resources, to discuss and reflect upon diversity, beliefs and attitudes of different social and cultural traditions. Attendance was below the national average. The school has worked very hard to strengthen and further develop these areas since then. There has been satisfactory improvement in all these aspects, except for attendance. Attendance is very low in comparison with other schools, despite the school's increased efforts to improve it.
17. Pupils have good attitudes to the school. They are very interested in school life and particularly enjoy and respond to good teaching. However, where teaching is unexciting, a minority of pupils become less motivated, lose interest and do less work. The school deals well with this minority, by employing a caring and positive manner. Staff know their pupils well and have the appropriate skills to deal positively with pupils with behavioural difficulties. Pupils are quick to settle to their tasks and act in a responsible and sensible manner. They show good levels of concern for others and for property and this contributes to why the school is clean and the site is free of graffiti. For example, at break times, in the playground, pupils take care of their school by tidying up any litter.
18. Pupils are happy to share and take turns. They listen sensitively to the opinions of others and organise themselves well in working groups when the opportunity arises. In a Year 5/6 physical education lesson, pupils discussed sensibly who would take the lead and they happily accepted joint decisions even though they clearly all wished to be first. Pupils are confident when giving opinions even when these may appear 'less macho' to their peers. For example, in a Year 4/5 physical education lesson, three boys were at ease in both performing and explaining their part in the 'Wedding' portion of the dance routine the class was developing.
19. Overall, behaviour is good and by general consent of parents this has improved much in the last two years. Discussions with pupils clearly demonstrate that they are untroubled by bullying and work in an environment free from oppressive behaviour such as racism and sexism. They feel fully included in all activities and find activities within the school that they wish to participate in. They know what to do if they have concerns and many are happy to approach any member of staff for advice about any subject. Pupils know and accept the school's expectations regarding good behaviour and the greater majority do try hard to achieve them. The consistent application by the school, of a positive approach to control of behaviour, emphasises the regard with which they respect pupils' good values. There have been no permanent exclusions. However, there have been nine of fixed duration during the last two years, these have all been for unacceptable behaviour. This has impacted positively on these pupils' behaviour.
20. The personal development of pupils and growth of relationships are good. There are more opportunities to take responsibility as pupils get older than were identified in the previous report. Pupils are eager to accept any responsibility offered. In the playgrounds they are

responsible for setting out and recovering equipment and are eager participants in the school's 'buddies' scheme and pupils' council. They assist in the preparation for assemblies and in their classrooms they take pride in being selected to take messages throughout the school or other duties. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good range of experiences to help develop their personal and social skills.

21. Attendance is well below the level found in most schools. At the last inspection attendance was below the national average, with a number of pupils regularly arriving late each day. The current situation is that attendance is very low against the national average, despite the school being very active in attempting to make improvements. However, there are a small but significant number of parents who do not respond to the school's efforts.

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

22. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the previous inspection the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in 25 per cent of the lessons seen, mainly in infant classes. Unsatisfactory teaching was linked to low expectations of what pupils could achieve, weak planning, ineffective use of time and a lack of support given to pupils. The quality of teaching has improved and unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated. The amount of very good teaching has increased, although the proportion is still not high enough. A number of factors have contributed to the improvement in the overall quality of teaching:
- a rigorous programme of monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, which has led to discussions with teachers on strengths and areas for development in their teaching;
  - the increase in the number of teaching assistants to help pupils;
  - a raising of teachers' expectations through target-setting;
  - teachers' short-term planning has improved;
  - lessons clearly identify what pupils are to learn;
  - the development of sound assessment procedures, particularly in English and mathematics.
23. A number of other factors have also contributed to the improvement in teaching. There has been staff training in the school that has been beneficial in improving the teaching of mathematics and information and communication technology. A significant factor has been the appointment of five new staff to the school in the past two years.
24. Across the school, the teaching is always at least satisfactory or better, being very good in 16 per cent. Most aspects of English are satisfactorily taught with a clear emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills. However, in English, these skills are not sufficiently well built upon. The teaching of handwriting and spelling is not effective in developing pupils' skills in these aspects to a high enough standard. There are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length or read for information in subjects other than English, such as history or geography. However, good examples were seen in religious education. In mathematics the basic skills are taught well but there is inconsistency in the quality and in the number of opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge in practical, everyday problem-solving activities. In science there are not enough opportunities for pupils to plan their own investigations and experiments. This restricts pupils' development of the ability to show initiative and be responsible for their own learning. In both English and mathematics the provision for mixed-age classes is consistent. Planning is adapted to meet the specific needs of both year groups so that pupils systematically build on prior learning. It was not possible to judge the quality of teaching in geography and history due to no opportunity to observe the teaching in these subjects. However, scrutiny of the work pupils have done and discussions with pupils indicate there is not sufficient focus in the teaching on developing skills for example, map reading and researching information from evidence. In infant and junior classes, the teaching in all the subjects, where there was sufficient evidence to make a secure judgement, was satisfactory.



25. Overall, the teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The teachers' planning is carefully based on the early learning goals for children of this age. Relationships are very good and the teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children in these areas. The nursery nurses and the teachers cooperate and work well together, planning suitable activities to build the children's confidence and skills, including extension work for higher-attaining children, and support when needed for children with learning or emotional difficulties. In a good language lesson, aimed at increasing children's understanding of sequencing the events in a story, the teacher interacted well with the children, inspiring them to greater efforts. Good informal assessment took place, leading to each successive step building effectively on children's past knowledge; a strength was the way the teacher adapted the activities according to how well the children achieved, eventually leading on to discussion about how they could develop their own stories. The lesson was well organised to encourage children's independence and initiative in learning.
26. The teaching in infant classes is satisfactory overall. In all the lessons seen the teaching was at least satisfactory, being good in 20 per cent and very good in seven per cent. Where the quality of teaching is good, careful preparation provides a good range of resources to support pupils' learning, and they are well motivated by praise and encouragement. The teacher has high expectations of pupils and they respond enthusiastically. Lessons are well planned and organised, providing pupils with challenging tasks. An example of good teaching was in a Year 2 mathematics lesson where the pupils put in the correct number to make a mathematical sentence balance for example,  $6 + \quad = 5 + 5$ . They responded enthusiastically to the good resources the teacher had produced and concentrated hard, reaching a good understanding of different ways of balancing numbers in a mathematical sentence. Questioning was used effectively to promote and assess understanding, and the teacher gave immediate extension or reinforcement as the needs arose. When teaching assistants are present they are used purposefully and provide good support for pupils; for example, in a class shared-reading session the assistant carefully observes and intervenes effectively, helping pupils to improve their listening and speaking skills.
27. In junior classes, the teaching is satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen, the teaching was always at least satisfactory, being good in 35 per cent and very good or better in 20 per cent. The best lessons are well planned, cater for the needs of all pupils, have a clear purpose, include challenging activities and proceed at a good pace. In a good Year 4/5 literacy lesson when pupils investigate a range of texts from different cultures focusing on social customs, relationships and ways of living, the teacher used an effective range of teaching strategies and had high expectations of what pupils could achieve and how they should behave. In this lesson, discussion and questions were used well to challenge pupils' thinking, to inspire ideas and to see alternative possibilities. Whole-class teaching was effective, but pupils also had the opportunity to work independently or collaboratively, which they did well. This results in them settling quickly to the task, working at a good pace and producing written accounts of good quality. In a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher used her time well to monitor and support pupils as they worked in groups discussing perimeters and areas of shapes. She listened carefully to the discussions, joined in when necessary, ensuring that opportunities to extend and clarify pupils' ideas were effectively taken. In other good lessons, teachers use questions well to check on past and present learning and develop the lesson successfully from pupils' responses. In a good Year 3/4 literacy lesson, pupils explored onomatopoeia in poetry. Good use was made of open-ended tasks and questions; for example, in discussing 'The Sound Collector' the teacher asked, 'What do you notice about the way the poet has used words in the poem ...?' or, 'What picture do you get in your mind...?' The pupils responded with great enthusiasm and learnt a great deal from each other and developed their own ideas for example, 'The spitting of the bacon' or 'The hissing snake'.

28. Most teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. In a Year 3/4 information and communication technology lesson, the teacher's expertise and ability to demonstrate how to amend and edit text excited the pupils. The teacher carefully balanced the amount of information she gave to pupils against effective questions to check on their knowledge. This resulted in pupils gaining a clear understanding of how to import pictures into a document, resize and relocate. These skills were then used effectively to create a stamp. Teachers' management of pupils is good, ensuring good levels of discipline and creating an industrious working atmosphere. Teachers show great sensitivity towards pupils' needs and as a result pupils feel valued and confidently contribute to the lesson. The vast majority are eager to learn and, when given a task, respond positively by working hard and producing good work that is matched to their ability. Teachers work very hard at controlling a small minority of difficult pupils. The situation is much better when they receive support from good teaching assistants. However, in some of their literacy and numeracy lessons teachers do not have support and as a result of monitoring difficult pupils they are not able to support other pupils as much as they would like. The satisfactory teaching is instrumental in helping pupils make sound progress.
29. Homework is used appropriately to support the work in classrooms. The regular use of homework is effective in promoting the development of reading, spelling and mathematics. Good use is made of the reading diary in some classes, which has great value as an effective link between home and school. For older pupils there are satisfactory opportunities to extend at home the work done in class.
30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound. Individual education plans exist for all pupils who have been identified as having such needs. They are well structured and identify appropriate and realistic goals. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make sound progress towards the targets set for them in their individual plans. All teachers plan tasks based on these plans, and teaching assistants are well briefed to work with small groups; as a result pupils make good progress in these small groups. Particularly notable features of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are the regular assessments of the progress that pupils make towards learning targets and the detailed, informed records kept of their progress. All teachers show patience and understanding and have high expectations of both the academic performance and the behaviour of pupils on the register of special educational needs. In Nursery and Reception classes these pupils are given very good, skilled assistance by well-qualified and experienced nursery nurses and teaching assistants. The combined attention of the teacher and support staff has a positive impact upon the good progress that the pupils make. Progress is not as good when teachers do not have the support of a teaching assistant and it is not always possible to give pupils with special educational needs the support they need.

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

31. A satisfactory curriculum is provided for all pupils from different backgrounds and with different abilities from the Nursery class upwards. The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) and for information and communication technology across the school is good. All subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal and social education are provided, though religious education was not inspected as part of this inspection. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. All subjects have an appropriate time allocation. In infant and junior classes provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound and these pupils make the same sound progress through the school as other pupils. In the Foundation Stage provision for children with special educational needs is good.

32. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes work towards the nationally expected Early Learning Goals. The learning opportunities provided for these classes are stimulating, interesting and of a good quality so that all children are motivated to learn well. Planning ensures that the three children who attend the Nursery part-time have access to all areas of learning. The very detailed planning, including for information and communication technology activities such as listening centres and computers, takes account of regular weekly evaluations of children's learning.
33. Planning for pupils in Years 1 - 6 is good. The most recent national guidance is used as the basis for planning programmes of work that provide continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Planning carefully identifies what pupils are expected to learn, understand and do both over the term and in lessons. This, and the monitoring arrangements, are improvements since the previous inspection. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established and standards are improving. In all subjects pupils are given the opportunity to develop the skills of speaking and listening for example, in a Year 5/6 science lesson pupils discussed what they were going to investigate in their experiment about the effect of air resistance on a parachute. However, there are limited opportunities across the school for reading for information or writing at length in subjects other than English. The exception is in religious education where pupils have the opportunity to write about their feelings or about important festivals in different religions. Numeracy skills are also consolidated and used to foster learning in subjects such as science, history and geography. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to learn independently, for example for older pupils to plan and carry out investigations in mathematics and science. There is insufficient attention given the teaching of skills in history and geography. Information and communication technology is also used insufficiently to support learning in other subjects. Teaching and learning are supported satisfactorily by the provision of appropriate homework.
34. Much is done to broaden pupils' experiences within the parish as well as beyond the community in which they live. Visits to places of interest, including a well planned residential experience for older pupils to the Lake District, and visits from people with specialist knowledge and expertise, such as a puppeteer, a brass rubbing expert and poets, enrich the curriculum. The school has strong links with the parish community. This community makes a good contribution to learning within the school, for example parishioners come in to school on a regular basis to listen to pupils read.
35. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Whilst most clubs are for junior pupils, opportunities are also provided for younger pupils, such as a lunchtime guitar club. In addition to a range of sporting activities there are music opportunities, including the chance to learn an instrument, art and craft and drama. Commendably, the school is able to offer pupils the opportunity to learn French and Spanish, through Beacon School funding, and Latin as part of the extra-curricular enrichment.
36. The school has good links with partner institutions, notably a local special school, secondary schools and colleges of further and higher education that enhance the learning opportunities for all pupils. One secondary school supports the information and communication technology curriculum by arranging for older pupils to have a weekly session for four weeks in the secondary school information and communication technology suite, taught by the secondary school's specialist. This experience helps to raise standards of attainment in information and communication technology.
37. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. It has helped bring about improvements to the way that pupils behave and to their attitudes to learning and one another. Teachers work hard to build pupils' self-esteem and are successful in developing their confidence and relationships with other pupils and with adults. Every class

has time when pupils discuss issues of life that are relevant to their age and maturity and these are followed up in assemblies. Pupils are taught about the misuse of drugs, sex education and how to have a healthy lifestyle in these lessons and in topics in science. Religious education, though not part of this inspection, is a key subject for promoting personal development. Supporting charities such as a local hospice and the Royal National Institute for the Blind fosters pupils' personal and social education. However, more opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and to take responsibility for their own learning, for example by planning and carrying out their own investigations in science, would enhance their personal development.

38. The sound provision for pupils' personal growth makes an effective contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is something the school does well. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Provision is good because the school's policies, implemented consistently by all staff, are linked with the school's general aims and the Roman Catholic ethos that permeates all aspects of the school.
39. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development through assemblies, lessons and in the day-to-day life of the school. In assemblies, pupils are given time to reflect on prayers and readings. For example, in a junior assembly, pupils were challenged to consider the question 'Why do we have two ears and only one mouth?', leading into the story of Samuel listening to God, read by a pupil. Pupils explore their thoughts and feelings in 'circle time', when pupils are encouraged to discuss matters that are important to them. The responses of pupils in Year 2, when asked what made them happy or sad, showed the thought they had given the question.
40. Provision for moral development is good. The school's code of conduct emphasises the care and respect that pupils are expected to show one another. All staff expect good behaviour and pupils have a clear understanding of the rewards and sanctions procedures. As a result behaviour is good. Teachers provide regular opportunities to discuss moral issues during 'circle time'. This special time is handled sensitively by teachers and it provides an opportunity for pupils to talk about their worries and concerns. The expectation that pupils and staff will respect the beliefs of others pervades the school.
41. Pupils' social development is promoted well. Social values are promoted well by adults throughout the school and pupils are encouraged to care and take responsibility for others. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities such as distributing materials in lessons and tidying up at the end of lessons. The School Council provides the elected pupils with opportunities to make a positive contribution to life of the school and, through the suggestion box, for all pupils to raise concerns and put forward ideas for discussion. A number of older pupils are playground 'buddies'. A weekly Praise assembly, to celebrate pupils' achievements, helps raise their self-esteem when the school shows how much it values their efforts. Activities that take place at lunch-times and after school encourage pupils to work and play together. Recently pupils in Years 5 and 6 participated in a residential week-end visit where they learned to get along with one another at the same time as they improved their skills in adventure activities. They also consolidated their knowledge and understanding of geography through the opportunity to study a rural environment that contrasts with their own urban environment. There are many contributions from visitors such as the priest, artists and members of the community who work with pupils. The inclusion of pupils with statements of their special educational need supports the pupils' social development and promotes very positive attitudes to pupils who have special needs. This is reinforced by the close links with a local school for pupils with special educational needs.
42. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to encounter and understand the traditions and values from different cultures in music, art and design, history and geography. This is supported by visits from poets,

storytellers and theatre groups. Pupils learn something of the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society through daily contact with the small number of such pupils within the school. These pupils are valued and respected as friends as shown in the way pupils mix together in class.

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

43. The school provides a caring environment for its pupils and the procedures it has in place are sound. Overall, the previous inspection report judged the quality of care and welfare to be satisfactory. Relationships and behaviour were considered to be good, with child protection being well promoted and health and safety requirements in place. However, assessment, monitoring and recording of attainment and progress was considered to be unsatisfactory. All areas have improved particularly assessment in English and mathematics.
44. The headteacher is the member of staff with overall responsibility for child protection and has undergone suitable training. There are plans in place for refresher training to take place in the autumn term. He ensures that all school staff are suitably aware of the current requirements as well as keeping them updated about specific cases. There is appropriate liaison and meetings with outside agencies, such as social services and education social workers. The school is generally effective in ensuring the health and safety of pupils. The school has a small number of qualified first-aiders in the school. There are plans in place to train additional staff in the autumn term. All school staff are committed to the positive care and support of the pupils under their supervision. They show understanding and are consistent in the warm, sensitive and supportive relationships, which they enter into with pupils.
45. Attendance and punctuality are carefully checked and recorded. The education welfare officer who makes fortnightly visits to the school further checks the data. He is involved in following up on any absence by making contact with families as required. The school has access to the education welfare office by telephone if required at other times. The school has made improvements and current school figures show an increase in attendance. These improvements include the introduction of very early contact with home on the first morning of a pupil's unexplained absence and the awards systems for punctuality and attendance by pupil, class and year. In addition, there are reminders in newsletters, the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents about the impact upon children of absence and late arrival, which causes disruption to the whole class as well as the difficulties it places on the latecomer. The school is correctly considering additional measures to improve attendance, by further impressing upon both pupils and parents the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
46. There are satisfactory systems in operation across the school for promoting good behaviour and dealing with any unsatisfactory behaviour. The school and classroom rules and guidance are known by staff and accepted by pupils. These do promote well the development of self-control, and respect for others and for property by the greater majority of the pupils. The good behaviour in classes is fostered by the positive relationships between staff and pupils. The school's approach to bullying and oppressive behaviour is effective in promoting the equal treatment of all. The school promotes racial equality equally as well.
47. The school uses appropriate procedures for identifying pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers assess pupils' progress and if there is need for intervention from an outside agency, the special needs coordinator is able to contact the appropriate agency for more specialist support. The co-operative approach in meeting pupils' special needs is a

positive feature of the school provision, contributing well to the academic and personal development of these pupils.

48. The procedures for assessing and monitoring the pupils' academic performance are satisfactory overall. However, the sound practice that is seen in the core subjects of English and mathematics, is not developed consistently in all the other subjects and there is little recording of what the pupils can do in other subjects. Assessments in English, mathematics are sound and this has helped to improve the standards in mathematics and but less so in English. Assessments are thorough and on going in most aspects but there is little consistent recording of what skills pupils have or do not have in reading. Pupils are assessed at the end of each half term on the objectives stated in the teacher's planning. Class and group targets are set and teachers have a clear picture of what the pupils know and understand and the skills that are developing. However, not all teachers use this effectively to build on past learning and to plan for the next stage of learning. In such cases the tasks pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging tasks. Teachers know the pupils well. They keep records of individual pupils' progress but the detail recorded and the frequency of such recordings is inconsistent. Pupils' work is marked carefully but there is inconsistency in the comments made about how well pupils have done and what they need to do to improve. Last year results that the pupils achieved in the standard attainment tests at aged seven and 11 were carefully analysed in mathematics and in English. This information is being used well to improve standards in mathematics as weaknesses in pupils' knowledge were identified for example, confidence and ability to answer mental questions and problem-solving.

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

49. The school has good links with parents and parents' views about the school are very positive. The previous inspection report identified partnership with parents and the community as satisfactory. There has been an improvement on this aspect that is now good. The school provides good information about social and news items for example, regular newsletters contain much valuable information about various aspects of school life, and social events. The school produces a detailed half-termly topic information sheet, which is very helpful to parents wishing to assist their children at home. Furthermore, pupils' annual progress reports for parents identify clearly what the pupils can do and are consistent across the school in highlighting future targets for pupils to achieve. There are however currently, no areas for pupils and parents to make their own comments. There are meetings between parents and teachers each term, at which teachers helpfully report on pupils' progress.
50. The school recognises the value of parental involvement. It strives to develop this through the whole school by regular reminders and invitations to parents and carers to come into school and help. There is an open invitation to parents to call in and assist in any way, such as reading with pupils. There is a dedicated core of parents regularly helping in school that is beneficial to all. The school has a strong belief in the value of promoting parents' understanding of teaching and learning in today's primary school. To this end, the school has provided afternoon computer courses to assist parents in developing greater skills. There is a small 'Friends of the School Association', which raises valuable additional funds as well as generating social and community activities for the benefit of school, pupils, parents and the community. The school has home school agreements in place with parents.
51. Although only a relatively small number of parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector, their opinions agreed with the returns from the parents' questionnaires. Analysis of the meeting and the questionnaires shows that there is very strong support for the school. The majority of parents felt that their children like school, they make good progress,

the teaching is good, the school is helping pupils to become more mature and responsible, pupils are expected to work hard, the school provides good information and the leadership and school management are good. The areas a small number of parents would like to see improved are homework and extra-curricular activities. The inspection team supports all the positive opinions that parents hold about the school. However, they do not agree with parents' concerns about activities outside lessons or homework. Homework is generally consistently given and supports pupils' learning. The current levels of extra-curricular activities are better than that found in many schools and are very beneficial in developing pupils' interests and skills.

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

52. The leadership and the management of the school are good and have been instrumental in the improvements made since the last inspection. The previous report stated that the leadership and management of the school were unsatisfactory. The governing body did not acknowledge the extent of the school's weaknesses and neither they nor the headteacher were monitoring the school's policies and schemes of work systematically. Developing effective systems to do this was identified as a key issue. The school's development plan was judged to be a very weak tool for implementing educational development, and improving its quality was also stated to be a key issue. Teaching in the infant department was judged to be unsatisfactory and improving the quality of this was another key issue. There has been a good improvement in all the areas highlighted.
53. The school is well led by a conscientious headteacher, who provides a clear educational direction for the school. He sets a good example to the school's community in upholding the ethos of the school and has the respect of pupils, governors and parents alike. The headteacher has been instrumental in the introduction of target-setting for pupils, monitoring of teaching and has very effectively dealt with the problems arising from the change in pupil population and teaching staff over the past four years. Over time, the numbers of pupils has fallen in some year groups and the school has successfully introduced mixed age classes. Effective systems of planning and assessment in English and mathematics ensure the needs of all pupils are well met. There have been five teaching staff changes and two staff on extended sick leave. During this period, because of good day-to-day management and the recent appointment of good quality staff, the quality of education has improved, which is reflected in the rising standards that the school is beginning to achieve. There is an effective management structure in place that leads to regular involvement of all staff through clear channels of communication. In providing professional support, the headteacher has built a loyal, hard-working team who share his commitment to creating a happy, caring environment for its pupils.
54. The headteacher is seen about the school talking to pupils, parents and visitors. His visits to classrooms inform his strategic overview of the school and his monitoring of the curriculum. By setting challenging targets for the infant department, he has raised the quality of teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the week of the inspection. He has a clear, shared vision for the school and central to this is the provision of high quality teaching to ensure improving standards of pupil attainment. The headteacher is keen to ensure that all pupils receive a wide and rich variety of experiences in order to develop their interests and to encourage positive relationships. Pupils are very well behaved and demonstrate a mature and sensitive attitude towards the needs of others. There is a high degree of mutual tolerance and respect.
55. The headteacher monitors and evaluates the performance of the school closely and systematically using the findings of monitoring and evaluation to identify priorities for school improvement planning. He regards school self-evaluation as important in raising standards and in supporting school improvement as a whole. Assessment data is closely analysed

and pupils' progress is closely monitored. The analysis of data includes a focus on any differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Areas for improvement are identified, action is planned to address issues of underachievement and targets are set for improvement. Information and communication technology is used well in the analysis of data, the setting of targets and to track pupils' progress.

56. The school has developed a culture of inclusiveness, which has promoted team building, stimulated levels of motivation and set a common purpose. Members of teaching and non-teaching staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which are understood by all. All staff feel secure, supported and valued. Key issues from the previous inspection have been well addressed with their support and commitment to improve. Provision in information and communication technology has been greatly improved by the introduction of a computer suite. The school improvement plan has been much worked upon since the last inspection. Its quality has been improved by the addition of costings, the steps needed to implement initiatives and the personnel responsible for their delivery, and provides an effective management tool.
57. The school management team meets regularly both formally and informally. All three members of this team were at the school during the previous inspection and they feel this to be an advantage as it helps them to prioritise effectively. They have an excellent working relationship. Between them they represent all quarters of school life and therefore feel able to address the needs of the whole school. All members have an input into the agenda. Issues from these meeting are discussed with teachers in staff meetings. This reflects the senior staff style of open and inclusive management.
58. All subjects have a coordinator. Policies and schemes of work for all subjects are now in place, assessment procedures are being developed and monitoring of teaching in English and mathematics is effective. Teachers have received feedback on lessons observed and areas for development have been identified. All subjects have action plans that reflect the subject strengths and areas for development. The school analyses pupil data and test results effectively in English and mathematics. This is well used to target pupils for extra support in Year 6. However, this good practice is not yet in place for all subjects, although the school has plans to address this. The role of subject coordinators remains under-developed in that their skills and confidence to effectively monitor teaching and learning in their subject are limited. The three-year plan for improving this, currently coming to the end of year one, needs rigorous implementation and careful monitoring.
59. The chair of governors is the parish priest and he is in regular contact with the school and is aware of daily life there. He fulfils the duties of chair of governors adequately. There is a full complement of governors and all key issues relating to the governing body have now been addressed. To monitor the school's curriculum, one governor has been allocated to each subject area. They meet with the subject coordinators and inform other governors of the results of the annual subject audits. Governors are fully involved in the discussions prior to setting the budget and the drawing up of the school's improvement plan. Eleven committees have been formed to cover all aspects of school life, including those, such as special needs, which have statutory requirements. The governing body is now fulfilling its statutory duties satisfactorily. Governors are very supportive of the school and, taking guidance from the headteacher, play a satisfactory role in shaping the school. Through detailed reports from the headteacher they have a clear understanding its main strengths and weaknesses. Their role in gaining first hand experience of the school is developing and a number of governors are beginning to regularly visit the school to gain this view.
60. The chair of the finance committee is very well qualified for this role and is very supportive of the school and the head teacher. It was recognised at the time of the last inspection that this committee had good expertise and monitoring of the school's finances was done



rigorously. This is still the case. Although the school tries hard to gain extra funding, apart from extra money coming into the school to support pupils with special educational needs, the school has attracted no grants. The school has a high carry over of funds which it has accumulated so that it can re-establish another class so that there will be no mixed aged classes. The head teacher and governors continually look for the best value in purchases and monitor spending against the budget. They are well supported by a very efficient school secretary. The day-to-day administration of financial matters by the school secretary is good and this allows the head teacher to concentrate on other priorities.

61. The school is very successful in meeting its aims of providing educational opportunities so that individuals can fully develop their potential. Teachers, teaching assistants, non-teaching staff and governors work as a team and are collectively committed to continuous school improvement. Relationships throughout the school are very good with a strong focus on race equality.
62. The special needs coordinator is experienced and liaises with the class teachers and learning support staff to give pupils the extra assistance required for them to make progress and be fully integrated into the life of the school. Pupils who have statements of special needs receive their entitlement to extra support. The coordinator has worked effectively to make sure that all pupils who have a special need are identified early, and in working alongside other teachers so that all staff are effective in delivering appropriate programmes of work. The administrative work is up to date and monitored regularly by the coordinator. The management of special educational needs is good. The administration of work is up to date, individual educational programmes are well maintained and reviews conducted in line with the Code of Practice.
63. The school has a good level of teaching staff whose qualifications and experience match the demands and range of National Curriculum requirements. They are effective in both teaching and in developing management roles. Teaching assistants work alongside teachers and provide good support. The governors' target of an assistant for each class has not yet been achieved and, therefore, the school needs to deploy current assistants more effectively. They are currently not always used where the need is greatest for example, in some classes with a high number of pupils with special educational needs there is very little support. The school is aware of this limitation and it is to be addressed for the new school year. The school secretary carries out the duties specified on the job description efficiently. Caretaking, cleaning and mid-day assistants perform their duties well and are valued members of the school community.
64. Arrangements for the professional development are very good. The headteacher acts as mentor to new staff and the entire staff is very supportive. The entitlement expected by newly qualified staff is fully met. The system for appraisal and performance management is good and is in place for all teachers, including the headteacher.
65. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. There are good facilities such as the new, well-appointed Nursery that includes a safe outdoor area, a music room, a computer suite, a large hall and good play areas. However, Reception children have a cramped classroom for the number of pupils, the library is inadequately accommodated in the corridor and is not conducive to the development of pupils' research skills, and the first floor hall generates noise to the classes below particularly during physical education lessons. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. Resources are good for mathematics and information and communication technology but there are insufficient books in the library to fully support the curriculum. New technology is satisfactorily used across the school.

66. Parents have a very high regard for the leadership and management afforded by head teacher and key staff. Inspection findings also indicate that leadership and management is good.

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

67. In order for the school to further improve the quality of education its provides and build upon the good progress it has made since the last inspection, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Continue to raise pupil achievement in English by:
  - improving pupils' handwriting and spelling skills;
  - ensure there is a greater focus given to developing pupils' skills in reading for information;
  - raising the profile of reading and providing pupils with more regular periods of practice;
  - assessing and recording what pupils can and cannot do in reading.

(Paragraphs 4,7,8,77,79,80,81,84)

2. Further improve the overall quality of teaching to that seen in the best lessons by:
  - using assessment information to plan challenging, interesting tasks for pupils of all abilities;
  - developing and implementing a marking policy that includes a clear focus on how pupils can improve their work;
  - continuing the strong focus the school has on professional development and support for teachers through the monitoring of teaching by senior staff.

(Paragraphs 5,9,10,54,64,90,91,104,115)

3. Further improving the learning experiences that pupils receive by increasing the opportunities for pupils' personal development for example, being responsible for their own learning or showing initiative, by providing more opportunities for pupils to:
  - use and apply their mathematical knowledge in everyday, practical problem-solving situations;
  - plan their own investigations in science;
  - use and develop their reading and writing skills in subjects other than English.

(Paragraphs 24,33,37,87,89,97)

4. Improve assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics to enable teachers to gain a clear picture of pupils' achievements.

(Paragraph 48)

5. Further develop management by continuing to implement the three year planned programme the school has in place aimed at improving the effectiveness of coordinators through:
- training coordinators in the skills needed for them to effectively monitor the teaching and learning in the subject for which they are responsible;
  - establishing a planned programme to provide coordinators with the time to fulfil this role.

(Paragraphs 58,98)

#### **Other issues which should be considered by the school**

- Improve the provision of books and facility offered in the Library. (Paragraphs 65,84 )
- Revise the allocation of support teachers receive from non teaching classroom assistants. (Paragraphs 15,30,63)
- Improve pupils' skills in history and geography. (Paragraphs 110,116)
- Continue the good effort being made to improve attendance. (Paragraphs 21,45)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	15	20	0	0	0
Percentage	2	14	36	48	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	28	150
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	94

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	41

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	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
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
	2001	7	11	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	9	9	10
	Total	15	14	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (67)	78 (46)	94 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	15	16	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (75)	89 (79)	83 (75)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	9	17	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	16	8	16
	Total	23	13	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (87)	50 (83)	92 (87)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	16	14	16
	Total	23	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (87)	81 (87)	92 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. As there were less than 10 boys in Years 2 and 6 their results are not included in the table.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	7
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	155
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	25

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	14

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	2	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	487,695
Total expenditure	483,456
Expenditure per pupil	2,686
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,475
Balance carried forward to next year	50,714

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate 44%

Number of questionnaires sent out	175
Number of questionnaires returned	77

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71.5	27.2	1.3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	47	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	60	2.5	2.5	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	43	14	3	8
The teaching is good.	58.5	40.2	1.3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	44	4	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	32.5	1.25	1.25	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	43	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	47	45	2.5	2.5	3
The school is well led and managed.	57	38	1	3	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	44	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	40	13	1	4

## **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**

68. Children enter the Nursery when they are three years old and transfer into Reception in the September of the year of their fifth birthday. In the Nursery class there are 30 children and in the Reception class there are 23 children. The teamwork – teachers and teaching assistants – is a key factor of the leadership and management that helps to make the Foundation Stage a strength of the school. The learning opportunities provided for these children are stimulating, interesting and of a good quality so that all children are motivated to learn well. All children, including those with special educational needs, have a rich experience in every aspect of development that provides a very solid basis for their learning. This applies to those children who attend part-time initially as well as to those who attend full-time. Assessment on entry to the Nursery shows a range of prior attainment but the overall level of attainment is below average. Children in the Nursery and Reception class work towards the nationally expected Early Learning Goals.
69. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. The quality of teaching ranges from good to very good, with almost 30 per cent of teaching being very good. The consistently high quality of the teaching is a feature of every area of learning. Teaching in the Nursery class capitalises on the purpose-built new facilities, whilst in the Reception class the teacher makes very good use of the more cramped accommodation. The teachers have a good understanding of the role of play and child-initiated learning in the development of young children. Together with the nursery nurses they interact very well with children, for example by careful questioning and by developing vocabulary to enable all pupils to make good progress. The work is planned in great detail and takes account of regular weekly evaluations of children's learning. The very good quality of these evaluations and other very detailed assessments plays a key part in ensuring activities are matched well to children's prior attainment. Literacy and numeracy sessions have a very good balance of teacher-directed learning and opportunities for children to experiment, imagine and initiate their own learning. For example, one of the role-play experiences is a doctor's surgery. This area includes a telephone for children to make imaginary phone calls to hold a conversation with a patient wishing to make an appointment. The learning experiences capture the interest and imagination of all children. They utilise a range of good quality resources, including the new secure outdoor provision for the nursery children to which the children in the Reception class have planned access and promote the good progress of all children.

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

70. This aspect of learning is fostered well through good teaching. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and be independent by dressing themselves. They are encouraged to be aware of their own personal hygiene. All interact very well with adults and share and work with others. This is because of the opportunities provided and the high expectations of the teachers and the teaching assistants. The importance of being friends with everyone and having very good relationships is exemplified in the way the children in the Reception class begin the day by singing 'Good morning Jesus' and then greet each other with words and a hug. They know and understand ongoing routines and share and take turns well for their age. All children are very secure and confident. Children have many opportunities to explore, experiment, imagine and initiate their own learning to enable them to make good progress. Nursery and Reception children are included in the weekly whole school 'Praise Assembly' and being nominated for a sticker or certificate for their work, efforts or attendance raises their self-esteem. They achieve the Early Learning Goals for this aspect.



## **Communication, language and literacy**

71. The teaching in this area of learning is good in the Nursery and Reception classes. Fostering these skills permeates all that takes place. The whole of the Foundation Stage area is rich in language stimuli. Staff interact very well with children, asking questions, widening vocabulary and encouraging talk at all times. Children listen well to class stories such as 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. They also enjoy listening to stories such as 'Red Riding Hood' using headphones attached to a listening centre that they operate themselves. They use the book area independently to 'read' books and are gaining a good interest in books and stories. Higher and average attaining children draw on a list of words they recognise by sight when reading, use picture clues and some are beginning to use their knowledge of letter sounds when they come across a word they do not recognise. Most children in the Reception class know that 'initial phoneme', 'middle phoneme' and 'final phoneme' mean the first, last and middle sounds of a word. Some children can write simple words and phrases at an appropriate level for their age. Outside the literacy lessons teachers provide many well-chosen experiences for children to enhance their skills, particularly in listening and speaking. Children take books home to read or share with adults at home. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and overall attainment is about that expected of children at the end of the Foundation Stage.

## **Mathematical development**

72. Mathematical development is supported well by good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers use strategies to consolidate learning such as asking the children to count the number present during registration. They work out how many are present if two are absent. Children in the Nursery count accurately to and back from 10 and the higher attaining children count to and from 20. They know which simple shapes have straight or curved sides. In the Reception class children identify similar properties such as children with brown eyes, and count on and back in twos – the higher attaining children to 40. The good progress made by all children is because teachers ensure that children know what it is they will learn during the lesson and use the concluding part of the lesson to review this learning. Also, teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations, manage the children well and challenge their thinking with questions and activities that match their prior attainment. This motivates the children and they work with a high level of concentration. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and overall attainment is about that expected of children at the end of the Foundation Stage.

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

73. Good teaching enables children to learn about the world around them in a variety of ways. The water tray contains a range of objects that stimulates their curiosity about sinking and floating. Children talk about these to each other and when prompted by adults. They experiment in the wet and dry sand trays to find what happens when, for example, they lift up a sieve they have filled with sand. The current topic in the Reception class, 'Journeys' helps them to develop a sense of place and an awareness of other cultures and beliefs. The 'Travel Agency' role-play area supports their learning in this topic as well as enabling them to practise their speaking, listening and writing skills. They develop their ability to control a cursor confidently on a screen by using a 'mouse' to draw patterns using simple graphics. All children benefit from direct teaching and from the good opportunities to explore and initiate their own learning. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and overall attainment is about that expected of children at the end of the Foundation Stage.

## **Physical Development**

74. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes benefit from good teaching, a very secure outdoor play area and the use of the hall. Children in the Reception class also use the main playground for outdoor physical education lessons. In a good outdoor session the Reception children were able to extend their skills of catching, throwing, bouncing a ball on racquet and skipping. This was because the teacher not only provided a good range of resources and utilised the help of two adults well, but challenged the children improve on, for example, the number of times they could catch a ball consecutively. In this lesson, too, the teacher made very good provision for a physically handicapped child to ensure that she could participate fully, for example by ensuring that she was paired with someone else for the skipping activity. The teachers constantly stress the importance of being aware of space and other children to avoid accidents. Outside the Nursery there is provision for climbing and swinging, sand and water play and for imaginative play with large toys such as a car transporter, tricycles and push-chairs. The children benefit from this provision by being taken out regularly to use this area under adult supervision. In the classrooms many opportunities are provided to develop their co-ordination skills when manipulating small items such as paste and paint brushes, making items with 'play-doh', completing jig-saws, manipulating a mouse to control a cursor on the screen, to construct models, and 'writing' in the writing area. Most of the children are in line to achieve most of the Early Learning Goals in this aspect of development by the end of the Reception year.

## **Creative development**

75. Teaching is good and teachers provide many opportunities for creative development. There is evident enjoyment in the way children respond to these opportunities. They use their imagination in the 'Bob the builder' area in the Nursery and the 'Travel Agency' in the Reception class, talking to staff about what they are doing and responding to comments and questions about activities. The opportunities foster speaking and listening skills. Musical opportunities are provided through singing and exploring sounds made by musical instruments, enabling them to sing from memory with a percussion instrument accompaniment. They do this as they tap claves, shake and strike a tambourine, strike a tambour and shake maracas with good control. Children explore colour, texture and shape when playing in the sand tray, when painting or marbling and when making patterns using the computer. They mix paints to make other colours. The opportunities observed, together with evidence from displays shows that the range of good opportunities planned and provided in the Nursery and Reception classes enables all children to make good progress in this aspect of their development. They are in line to meet the Early Learning Goals expected of children at the end of the Foundation Stage.

## **ENGLISH**

76. On the evidence of the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment is close to the national average at the ages of seven and 11. These findings are reflected in the school's realistic targets. Pupils enter the school at three years old with levels of attainment that are below average. Overall, their level of achievement is sound. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in relation to their prior learning in whole class lessons and good progress when supported by teaching assistants. The previous inspection report found that standards of attainment were in line with the national expectation at both the end of the infant and junior stage. There is evidence that standards fell at the age of seven after the last inspection due to instability in teaching staff. However, with the appointment of new staff recently standards have risen significantly and been maintained. At the end of the junior stage results have fluctuated and reflect the proportion of pupils who have learning or behavioural difficulties. Results are also adversely effected between Year 2 and Year 6 due to changes in pupil population. For example, in the current Year 6 class, seven pupils left

and seven pupils joined this class since they took the test in Year 2. Evidence indicates that most of these pupils had learning or behavioural problems. The results of the 2001 tests for seven-year-olds show that results are close to the national average in reading and above the national average in writing. When results are compared to similar schools they are well above average in reading and very high in writing. For pupils aged 11, results are below the national average but above average when compared to similar schools.

77. Across the school the quality of presentation of pupils' work and their handwriting and spelling skills are not as high as their other language skills. Standards in reading and writing are not as good as they should be because teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to read for information and write at length in subjects other than English. The impact of new staff has helped to raise standards. There were several weaknesses highlighted in the last report, mainly concerned with the teaching in infant classes through the overuse of worksheets, work not matched to pupils' abilities, unsatisfactory behaviour and weak teacher planning. Teachers' planning is now sound but the weaknesses identified in the teaching of handwriting and spelling continue to be the same and have not significantly improved. However, the quality of teaching has improved and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen as compared to half the lessons in infant classes being unsatisfactory.
78. By the age of seven and 11, pupils achieve expectations in speaking and listening. Most pupils at seven are articulate and use well-formed sentences and an appropriate range of vocabulary. Their responses are considered and appropriate, reflecting the quality of their listening skills, especially during the literacy hour. Higher attaining pupils speak clearly, and during the class reading of 'Fly by Night' they confidently explain which are the key words to use in finding the answer to a question. The lower attaining pupils answer questions related to the text but lack some fluency of speech. By the age of 11, pupils are skilled at discussing and interpreting the vocabulary in the 'The Great Pyramid Robbery'. For example, pupils in the shared reading, examine closely the meaning of words such as 'Ka' and 'glyph' used by the author to create a setting for the story. In the discussion at the end of the lesson pupils are able to confidently explain what they have learn and share their own efforts with other pupils. During literacy lessons pupils express their ideas and feelings fully and confidently. They also engage in good levels of conversation with adults and respond confidently when given more formal opportunities for speaking and listening to a wider audience in class assemblies and drama productions. The skills of lower attaining pupils are more limited but with the encouragement they receive, especially in the whole class tasks, they are beginning to show confidence in sharing their ideas together.
79. Pupils achieve expectations in reading at the age of seven and 11. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils are independent, fluent and confident readers of both fiction and non-fiction. They have a good understanding of the text and are beginning to recognise the structure of stories and use the correct vocabulary to evaluate the book. Most pupils use a wide range of strategies to read new words and to self correct more difficult ones. The new reading scheme to support the literacy hour has improved the level of enjoyment shown by the pupils in their reading and is increasing their ability to read with expression. However, average and lower attaining pupils do not show a good understanding of alphabetical order in using the index of reference books to find information. They are not as confident when reading non-fiction books as they are when reading fiction books. By the age of 11, the best readers are able to discuss the text they read with clarity and understanding. They are fluent and articulate in their reading, with appropriate expression. Pupils read a wide range of texts from fiction books but a limited range of non-fiction books. Average and lower attaining pupils are not as confident at reading information books and do not find it easy to pick out the important points from what they have read. Many have favourite authors and discuss their preferences and the different styles of writing clearly explaining why. Lower attaining pupils are more hesitant in reading a new text but most have a sound knowledge of strategies to use and are gaining confidence and independence in their reading. The

library is not used effectively to develop study skills and for pupils to make use of the catalogued library. Higher attaining pupils' higher order reading and research skills are sound but are not sufficiently further developed or used purposefully in other areas of the curriculum. The library has too few books for pupils to read and seek information in subjects across the curriculum which impedes their progress in their ability to seek and read for information.

80. Pupils' attainment in writing by the age of seven and 11 is at the expected level. However, at seven, handwriting is not always clear or well formed and very few pupils confidently use a 'joined-up' style. In their extended writing, higher attaining pupils demonstrate a very good awareness of the structure and sequencing of events in a story. Their ideas are imaginative, varied and clear. For the majority of pupils, spellings are not accurate but the use of punctuation is sound. There are frequent opportunities during the literacy hour to practise phonics (letter sounds) rules to improve spellings, and pupils are confident in using these skills independently in their written work. However, average and lower attaining pupils spell common words incorrectly such as 'wheres' for 'wears' or 'wight' for 'white' and do not easily see their mistakes. There are very many examples of different forms of writing such as, letters, diaries, poems or retelling favourite stories. Opportunities for pupils to write at length are satisfactory but there are few examples of where written work is linked well to other areas of the curriculum. By the age of 11, pupils use good expressive language and grammatical awareness in a variety of well structured and planned work that includes letter writing, book reviews, poetry, descriptive and narrative stories, newspaper articles and character analysis. There are many examples of extended writing through the literacy hour. In information and communication technology pupils do not often illustrate and edit their work on the computer. Written work is generally not well presented and although the use of grammar is of a satisfactory standard, handwriting is not fluent or joined in the majority of the work. Handwriting skills are not well developed. As in infant classes, average and lower attaining pupils spelling skills are not as good as their other language skills and pupils' spell phonetically but do not see when common words are spelt incorrectly such as 'wud' for 'would' and 'invetashon' for 'invitation'.
81. Progress in speaking and listening at both in infant and junior stages is good for most pupils, including those with special educational needs. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas at length and listen to others points of view. Overall, in infant classes progress in reading and writing is sound but progress in handwriting is unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to the fact that teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for regular handwriting practice, and opportunities for extended writing in subjects other than English are very limited. In junior classes, pupils make sound progress in reading and writing. Progress in writing is limited by a lack of opportunities for pupils to write at length and for different purposes in subjects other than English with the exception of religious education. The literacy hour is well established and effective teaching and management strategies are being used in many lessons to teach pupils the basic skills. The discussion session at the end of the lesson is used well in most cases to extend and reinforce ideas from the lesson and provide valuable feedback. In reading, in infant classes pupils move progressively through the reading scheme and but staff do not place a high priority on hearing pupils read through guided reading sessions or individually. In junior classes, not enough focus is given to teaching library skills including research skills, and these skills are not progressively taught. Similarly, due to a lack of books both in classrooms and in the library, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use and further develop these skills by reading to find information. In infant classes, progress in writing skills develops consistently with the emphasis on sentence construction, spelling and punctuation. Pupils in junior classes occasionally edit their work to improve the structure, grammar and punctuation and make sound progress in writing for different purposes. Progress in handwriting skills is unsatisfactory, especially in the transition to 'joined-up' writing. Pupils with special needs make sound progress and good progress with effective

help from teaching assistants or when taught in small groups outside the classroom. Parents provide valuable support for their children with homework that aids the progress made at school.

82. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and work hard with enthusiasm and interest to complete their work successfully. Year 3 and 4 pupils, when sharing a text, were fascinated by the way Roger McGough had used the words to create a visual image in his poem 'The Sound Collector'. Relationships are good and pupils support each other well, giving help and encouragement to anyone who has a problem. Behaviour is good, especially in the literacy hour, where pupils have the control to work independently. Pupils concentrate well and produce an appropriate amount of work matched to their ability.
83. Overall, the quality of teaching is sound. In all the lessons seen the teaching was at least satisfactory, and good in 40 per cent of lessons. Staff have worked hard to improve strategies for the teaching of the literacy hour. The discussion at the end of the lesson is focused sufficiently well on re-emphasising points from the lesson or giving constructive feedback. A particularly good example was in a shared reading activity when Year 4/5 pupils compared social customs and relationships in the story of 'Almaz and the Lion'. Questioning was used effectively to promote and assess understanding. The teacher had high expectations of pupils and valued their contributions to the discussion. In the literacy hour teachers have established good classroom routines for pupils and there is an industrious working atmosphere. In the good lessons, planning is clearly focused on practicing and improving key skills for pupils of all abilities. In a Year 2 lesson focused on comparing different authors writing about similar themes, the teacher provided pupils with an effective framework that enabled them to successfully record the similarities and differences they had found from the text. Teachers have established good classroom practices and manage their time well, creating an effective learning environment. Resources are of a satisfactory quality and are used well. In less effective lessons, the teacher finds it difficult to manage the group work effectively. This is usually linked to a lack of other adult support in the class and as a result the teacher has difficulty intervening with some groups, and on these occasions progress is limited.
84. The coordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. He has identified key areas for improvement and there has been an improvement in teachers' planning and assessment. He has successfully re-organised and improved levels of reading resources, but the number of non-fiction books needs to be increased. The literacy hour has been appropriately introduced. There are still areas of improvement to resolve; raising the quality of pupils' handwriting, raising the levels of attainment of pupils' spelling skills and increasing opportunities for reading and writing in all subjects. There are no up to date examples of pupils' work indicating the level attained for teachers to judge the attainment of pupils and monitor the progress they are making. The library is under-resourced and restricts the further development of pupils' skills in reading for information. A strength of the provision is in the language support sessions when pupils are taught in small groups out of the classroom, and the support given in lessons from teaching assistants.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Attainment at the time of the last report was said to be broadly in line with the national average at both seven and 11. Whilst this is still the case for pupils in the infant department, a higher proportion of lower attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 affect the overall performance in these year groups, where attainment is close to the national average. Similarly the trend for results of younger pupils matches that nationally whilst the trend for those of junior age is below the national pattern; in years 1999 to 2001 it was well below the trend nationally. The results of the 2001 tests for seven-year-olds show that results are close to the national average and when results are compared to similar schools they are

well above average. For pupils aged 11, results are well below the national average and when compared to similar schools, results are close to the average.

86. Pupil attainment on entry to the school is below average as many pupils have limited mathematical vocabulary and skills. The school has, therefore, focused on introducing the National Numeracy Strategy and has done so successfully. This is well reflected in teaching where lessons are carefully planned in line with the National Numeracy Strategy and well structured to develop pupils' mental strategies and subject vocabulary. Mathematics has been given a high priority during the last 12 months and this has been given a moderate amount of support by the Local Education Authority. The headteacher is a mathematics specialist and has played a very active role in raising standards. He gives good support to the coordinator and has also worked with the higher attaining pupils in Year 6 during booster classes. Unfortunately, as a result of the high rate of mobility in the area, only 60 per cent of Year 2 pupils progressed to Year 6 between 1997 and 2001. This means that the school's efforts to improve pupil performance have had less affect on standards than they would have done in a more stable environment.
87. Given their prior attainment, all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make at least sound progress from term to term and year to year. They produce a good volume of work for three aspects of the mathematics curriculum but need more opportunities to use and apply their knowledge in everyday, practical problem-solving activities. There are no significant differences in the progress they make as a result of gender, race or ability.
88. By age seven, pupils are developing a secure grasp of number and their ability to manipulate numbers mentally is developing well. They can recognise odd and even numbers, know the two, five and ten multiplication tables, and can share by two. They are developing a good understanding of the mathematical principles of multiplication and division as, respectively, repeated addition and subtraction. They can partition numbers and are developing an understanding of place value and simple fractions such as halves and quarters. They can identify many two and some three-dimensional shapes and explain some of their properties. Pupils understand some basic measures. Mathematical vocabulary is developing well; pupils understand and use words such as '*digit*' correctly and can suggest many synonyms for '*equals*'. Lower attaining pupils order numbers to 100 and have a basic understanding of hundreds, tens and units. They add coins to a value of 10 pence and understand the concept of halves. Although they tackle problems in a systematic way, their ability to explain their strategies is not as strong as their other numeracy skills.
89. By age 11, pupils have developed sound strategies for manipulating numbers mentally. They have a secure understanding of the four mathematical operations and the relationship between them. A minority know multiplication tables to 10 and higher attaining pupils can multiply four-digit by two-digit numbers, add and subtract decimals up to two decimal places and understand the processes of long division and multiplication. Pupils' knowledge of shape and space is sound. Many have a basic understanding of lines of symmetry, rotational and reflective symmetry, area, volume, ratio and proportion. They have a sound knowledge of metric units of measurement. Lower achieving pupils round to one decimal place, use co-ordinates appropriately and multiply three-digit numbers by two-digit numbers. Lower achieving pupils are very often well supported by the class teacher or well-briefed teaching assistants. Many of these pupils, however, have an insecure knowledge of computational skills and this slows the progress they make in all areas of the subject. Progress for a small number of pupils is additionally impeded by their inability to read and interpret questions or instructions independently. This is particularly apparent in the work of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. Pupils are not confident in developing their own strategies for solving problems or ably explaining their reasoning.

90. The quality of teaching is good. In the five lessons observed the quality of teaching was good in 60 per cent and very good in 40 per cent. This represents an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy is well taught and teachers adapt work to suit the different ability groups within class. Lesson planning is consistently good. Lessons are delivered at a good pace and maximize pupil participation. Teachers are effective in drawing all pupils into oral work by asking a range of open-ended questions often directed at specific pupils. These are frequently sufficiently well focused to ensure a correct response and thus enhance the pupils' self esteem. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use the discussion session at the end of the lesson well to reinforce or extend learning. Teachers throughout the school promote good thinking by constantly asking pupils to explain their methods. Quick-fire questions ensure that other pupils are listening and understand the strategy being explained. The teacher in Year 3/4 asked, 'Is that right? How do you know?' In Year 4/5 the teacher asked, 'Can three be one of the factors for 26? Why not?' Teachers teach enthusiastically and make learning interesting. They promote pupils' confidence well. As a result all pupils have good attitudes to the subject and participate fully in lessons. They answer questions without fear of being wrong or ridiculed by others for giving wrong answers. Teachers make very good use of resources. In particular, teaching assistants make an effective contribution to teaching and learning when they are deployed in mathematics lessons. Teachers brief them well and check on the effectiveness of their input during lessons. Marking, however, is variable. Comments, usually encouraging, often relate to the quality of presentation not to promoting pupils' thinking or mathematical improvement. Regular homework across the school supports work done in class. There are insufficient practical tasks and investigation opportunities to promote pupils' use and application of mathematics. This is a weakness. Currently, the small amount of work set in this area is in the context of 'pencil and paper' problem solving tasks and does not pose genuine investigations.
91. There is limited use of computers to support learning in mathematics but there are opportunities to further develop pupils' numeracy skills within other subjects. However, some opportunities are missed. Work in geography is not effectively linked to pupils' understanding of co-ordinates, and limited work in science is related to mathematics. Data handling, which was a training focus for teachers earlier this year, has had little impact upon pupils' work beyond information and communication technology lessons. However, good graph work in Years 1 and 2 was seen. Assessment is not always used effectively to inform future planning. Resources are good and frequently used equipment is classroom based, whereas less regularly used resources are accessible but stored centrally.
92. The coordinator manages the subject well and has worked hard in the last 12 months. This has brought about a good improvement since the last inspection. There is an up-to-date subject policy in place that was last reviewed in November 2001. The coordinator monitors planning and scrutinises pupils' work on a half-yearly basis. She plans to scrutinise pupils' work more closely and have greater opportunities for lesson observations. She is to carry out a mathematics audit before the end of this academic year in order to set realistic targets for next year. As yet there is no school portfolio of work although individual pupil records are in place. Testing of pupils on entry to the school is now secure and she uses this and her evaluation of the results of both optional and statutory national tests to set targets for individual year groups. This year, for example, she identified a need to focus upon mental strategies throughout the school and this is proving effective. Several staff attended day courses on mathematics during the past year. All staff are working very hard to promote improvements in pupils' mathematical attainment throughout the school. Little use is made of the library to find information about aspects of the subject.

## SCIENCE

93. Inspection findings indicate that standards of attainment of pupils by the ages of seven and 11 closely matches the standards attained by pupils of similar ages nationally. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards by the age of seven were judged to be below average. Although the percentage of pupils attaining the nationally expected standards at the age of seven and 11 is rising, this rise is below the national trend. This is because the number of pupils who attain the higher levels is lower than expected and, in the junior department, because of the number of pupils with special educational needs and the significant percentage of pupils who leave or join the school during these years. The results of the 2001 teacher assessments for seven-year-olds show that results are close to the national average and when results are compared to similar schools they are above average. For pupils aged 11, results are well below the national average and when compared to similar schools, results are close to the average.
94. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs also make sound progress because of the good support they are given by the teachers and by the teaching assistants. For example, in a challenging Year 5/6 class the support provided during the practical activity enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make sound progress in their ability to plan and carry out an investigation.
95. By the age of seven, pupils make steady progress in their knowledge and understanding and in their investigation skills. They observe carefully the different sizes and types of batteries that provide the power for domestic items. They are beginning to use appropriate scientific vocabulary such as 'negative' and 'positive'. After investigating how to make a bulb light up they draw and label a simple circuit. Through their study of healthy foods they know which foods are important for the body and what constitutes a healthy diet. They sort materials according to the they are made of and know that some materials change when heated, for example when bread is toasted.
96. By the age of 11, pupils know more about the human body and how to keep healthy. They know that microorganisms can be useful or harmful. When they revisit a topic they extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, from healthy foods to healthy living by learning about the use and misuse of drugs. The use of graphs to illustrate their findings about the effect of exercise on pulse rates consolidates learning in mathematics. Recording using labeled drawings and recording investigations supports literacy. There is very little evidence of pupils using information and communication technology to support learning in science. This is a weakness in the teaching that is recognised by the school.
97. Teaching is sound throughout the school. In the lessons seen all the teaching was at least satisfactory and forty per cent was good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when a significant percentage of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. All teaching is based on the secure knowledge and understanding of the teachers and derives from a well-structured scheme of work, based on the latest national guidance that ensures continuity and progression and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in each of the four areas of study. This leads to good planning that clearly identifies what it is that pupils will know or be able to do by the end of the lesson. For example, a Year 3/4 lesson investigating light included 'To understand that shadows are formed when objects block the passage of light.' In all lessons teachers make clear to pupils the aims of the lessons. They use time towards the end of the lesson to assess learning and to ensure that pupils know what they have learned. Teaching methods, including effective questioning that draws on pupils' previous learning and extends their thinking, ensure that learning is at least sound and sometimes good. Teachers also motivate pupils in the best lessons by capturing their immediate attention. In a Year 2 class the good range of small, battery-



powered electrical items exemplified this. A weakness in the teaching is that the teacher frequently over-directs lessons and pupils have very few opportunities to plan and carry out investigations themselves. This restricts their learning about scientific enquiry. When pupils are given the opportunity to plan and carry out an investigation, as in a Year 6 class investigating air resistance, they work with a high level of concentration in small groups and demonstrate that they can devise and carry out investigations successfully. Taking responsibility for their own learning like this fosters their personal development as well as promoting their knowledge and understanding of scientific enquiry. This is an area for development. The behaviour of pupils is good and the relationships between pupils and pupils and all staff are also good. These contribute significantly to the progress made by pupils in lessons.

98. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily by the coordinator, who has a clear view of the aims and priorities for science in the school. Test results and teachers' own assessments of attainment are carefully analysed to identify any weaknesses in pupils' learning and subsequent planning takes account of this. However, this information is not yet used to track carefully the progress of individual pupils nor to set targets for individual pupils or small groups. Nevertheless the school is more aware of the progress of pupils than it was at the time of the previous report. All work is marked, often with encouraging comments. However, these comments usually refer to presentation and do not refer to learning in science or set targets for subsequent learning that will help to raise attainment. There are also too many examples of uncorrected spelling of technical vocabulary. The subject leader monitors planning and samples of work, but has not yet carried out lesson observations. This is recognised by the school as the next stage in the developing role of the coordinator in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Learning is reinforced by displays of work, by educational visits and through the 'Science Club. These encourage pupils to have a positive attitude towards science. Little use is made of the library to find further information about aspects of the subject.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

99. Standards are in line with what is expected of pupils at the age of seven and 11. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be below average at seven and 11. Standards have risen because the teaching has improved and the school follows the latest national guidelines that ensure that the curriculum meets the National Curriculum requirements.
100. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 use pencils to make observational drawings, chalks to produce 'Light and Dark' effects on black sugar paper, and collages using paper and materials. Year 1 pupils explore shape and pattern in buildings from observation and rubbings, then recreate these using a variety of printing and painting techniques. In a Year 2 class a collage entitled 'I am the way' linked well with learning in religious education. In the same class, pupils are challenged to look closely at the lines, shapes and colours of natural objects before and after mounting leaves and grasses on textured paper. This display was enhanced by a sample of the work of William Morris and books on plants, trees and butterflies.
101. Older pupils use a range of techniques to develop their skills, including charcoal, pastels, paint and collages, often previously sketched in their sketchbooks. They produce good quality brass rubbings after working with a visiting artist. Three-dimensional work in Year 4/5 includes designing and making a chair. The teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject and use of key subject vocabulary such as 'texture', 'structure', 'design' and 'purpose' enables all pupils to produce designs that they will use to construct a chair in a subsequent lesson. The pupils' interest is encouraged by a display of paintings of chairs

by Van Gogh and Gauguin. In a Year 5/6 class pupils design in their sketchbooks and then make masks that are inspired by stories using a variety of well-chosen materials.

102. Teaching is satisfactory. This is because teachers plan well using the latest national guidance, clearly state what pupils are to learn and make the pupils are made aware of this at the beginning of each lesson. Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to use a wide range of media and techniques. All teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs have equal opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding by providing appropriate support for learning within the lessons. In a Year 1 class, the teacher ensured that the teaching assistants provided support and encouragement to enable lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs to complete their tasks. Because of the nature of the subject these pupils generally do as well as all others. Teachers review learning effectively at the end of each lesson. Weaknesses in the teaching are that teachers sometimes spend too long on explaining the task and do not always expect pupils to work at a good pace. This restricts the progress made in the lesson. Some of the work supports their learning about other cultures, for example when using wax resist techniques to illustrate some of their work on Ancient Greece and when designing Islamic carpet patterns. When older pupils research the artists such as Monet and Klimt they consolidate skills learned in the literacy hour. The interest in the subject generated by the teachers is confirmed by the numbers of pupils who wish to participate in the lunchtime art club where they work with a high level of concentration.
103. Pupils use information and communication technology satisfactorily to support learning in art and design. Pupils in Year 2 use a program well to enable them to produce pictures in the style of Mondrian that reinforces knowledge and understanding of shapes. Year 4 pupils use a tiling tool in a software program for repeated pattern work and also experiment with dots in a pointillist style. Cameras are used by pupils to photograph a view of part of the school building or grounds. They then recreate the picture with good detail using a selected medium.
104. The leadership and management are satisfactory. Planning is monitored and the displays provide evidence of standards attained by the pupils. Teaching is not monitored by lesson observation. The marking of work in sketchbooks is inconsistent and only very rarely are there comments that will enable pupils to improve their work. Assessment procedures are inconsistent and do not provide sufficient information on pupils' attainment. However, improvements in the assessment procedures and observation of teaching are planned and are intended to put the school in a position to raise standards further. Some use is made of the library to find information about different artists.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. Pupils attain the expected level for their age at the end of both the infant and junior stages. Throughout the school pupils' understanding and implementation of the design process is firmly established and pupils' skills at making are at the expected level. Since the last inspection, the most important weaknesses have been tackled successfully. The planning guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has been adopted and ensures that pupils' learning is based securely on what has already been taught. Plans are in place to ensure that the coordinator has the opportunity to check how well the subject is being taught across the school.
106. Design is now a strong element in pupils' work in both the infant and junior years and satisfactory teaching and learning throughout the school help this. In the infant classes pupils look carefully at a number of designs for existing products before deciding what theirs will be like. Pupils in Year 2 successfully make a fabric puppet. They had already produced a plan for how they would do this, in which they accurately labelled the

components they would use. Scrutiny of their earlier work shows that they consider how well they have designed and made things. After evaluating a hand puppet, one pupil wrote, 'I like it because it's cuddly'. Displayed work, and that in the books of Year 6 pupils, shows that they do a good deal of research before designing packaging for biscuits. The teacher ensures that interesting examples are included. Good links are made with science when Year 4 and 5 pupils test to find the most effective alarm to use for different purposes or when they design and make a sandwich linked to 'healthy eating'. Pupils produce a series of good quality design drawings that show how the different parts will be joined for their alarm.

107. Pupils' making skills are at the expected level. Pupils work eagerly and earnestly, displaying very good attitudes. Those in the infant classes join in discussion readily and ask questions to make sure that they understand. The teachers observed give good quality instructions to promote pupils' skills, for example, of how to make a sliding device, and expectations about the quality of cutting and fixing are made clear. As a result, the products seen on display in both the infant and junior parts of the school are at the expected levels. The cutting of the parts shows accuracy and precision. The range of methods that pupils use to join the components together is wide and includes sewing, using sticky tape and glue.
108. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In good lessons effective use of questions by the teacher, a purposeful task and a good range of resources to support the lesson helped pupils achieve well. This was the case in a Year 3/4 lesson as pupils used a 'net' to make a cuboid. They evaluate their models and think of ways to improve them. They co-operate with each other in the making process and in the sharing of tools. In the lessons seen pupils have good attitudes to work and show great interest in their topics, they take great care in drawing their plans and take a pride in their finished product. Lesson planning is sound, and teachers are supported with an appropriate policy and guidelines for skill development. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. Lessons are structured to provide opportunities for pupils to share ideas, work individually or collaboratively and to evaluate their progress. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were presented with a good opportunity to pool their ideas and discuss what they had to do to make a soft toy for different ages.
109. Teachers ensure that all pupils are included properly, and boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, do equally well. The pupils' good behaviour contributes very well to the purposeful ethos in lessons. Sometimes teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to discuss how things can be taken forward. They tell pupils what they must do and how they can do it, rather than increasing the independence of pupils by getting them to make suggestions. The new coordinator is appropriately qualified in this subject, and has already begun to have a positive impact on standards. He has produced a form which shows how teachers can use design and technology in other subjects and a good analysis of resources available for each topic. However, his effectiveness is limited by a lack of opportunity to monitor the teaching of the subject. The school has plans to provide training and time to fulfil this role in the near future. The contribution the subject makes to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is limited; for example, in writing up their evaluations and careful measuring. Resources are adequate, and are well maintained and stored. Little use is made of the library to find information about aspects of the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. Inspection evidence – an analysis of work, displays, policy documents and discussion with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 - indicates that standards of attainment are at the expected level at the age of seven, but are below the level expected for pupils at the age of 11. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be below

average at both seven and 11. Standards are below average at the age of 11 because the teaching has not focused sufficiently on the key skills that pertain to the subject, particularly map reading.

111. By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of place and early map skills. They mark their route to school on a street map. They identify physical and human features of the locality and recognise that there are different types of housing. Through a study of an island home they compare Manchester with a different locality. They extend their knowledge and understanding of the world by identifying places on a map of the British Isles and on a map of the world.
112. By the age of 11, pupils compare and contrast Manchester with other localities including the island of St. Lucia. They distinguish between human and physical features of the environment and know how people can affect the environment. They research information about mountains of the world. They know the main features of rivers using terms such as source, tributary, meander and estuary. They draw maps using a few of the Ordnance Survey symbols to represent for example, churches and railway lines, but are not sufficiently knowledgeable about grid references, contour lines, keys and scale. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use secondary sources such as aerial photographs, maps drawn to different scales and through information and communication technology. By the age of seven all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress. However the juniors make unsatisfactory progress. Given that attainment on entry to the school is below average achievement is sound.
113. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support learning. Videos and CD-ROMs are available for a number of topics, for example 'Rivers'. Older pupils research St. Lucia by using a search engine, but there are insufficient opportunities for activities like this.
114. The school's arrangements for the delivery of the curriculum meant that no teaching was seen. There was, therefore, insufficient evidence to make any judgements about the quality of teaching and how well this enabled pupils to learn during the lessons. Discussion with Year 6 pupils indicates that they enjoy the subject and have a positive attitude to learning, particularly when this is based on an educational visit. These visits enrich the provision for the pupils.
115. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The coordinator for this subject has been in post for a year. During this time she has monitored planning, scrutinised samples of pupils' work and added to the resource provision. Resources to facilitate the teaching of the selected topics are now satisfactory. The school follows the latest national guidance to enable all pupils to have access to the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment procedures are inconsistent and do not provide enough information about what pupils know, understand or of the skills they have. Marking is inconsistent and does not include comments that will take pupils' knowledge and understanding forward. Planning does not include opportunities to link work with other subjects to ensure that all aspects of the subject are fully taught in order to raise standards of attainment for example, the use of coordinates in mathematics. Little use is made of the library to find information about aspects of the subject.

## **HISTORY**

116. At the time of the last inspection the attainment of pupils at the age of seven was judged to be below national expectations, whereas at the age of 11 it was judged to be in line with them. Although no teaching could be seen during this inspection, as history is taught in blocks that alternate with geography and design and technology, the scrutiny of pupils'

work and discussions with the coordinator and pupils showed that this is no longer the case. Attainment at both seven and 11 is now below the level expected for pupils of this age mainly because insufficient emphasis is given to the development of key skills in the subject, particularly the use of historical evidence. Although National Curriculum requirements are covered, they are not taught in sufficient depth. The volume of work overall is insufficient compared with that in most schools. Progress in history is unsatisfactory throughout the school and the subject action plan places little emphasis on identifying current standards in order to improve them.

117. There are two history topics for each year group. Pupils in Year 1 look at the differences between old and new toys, especially the materials from which they are made. In Year 2 they study the Great Fire of London, and in discussion could remember that it started in a baker's shop and spread quickly because houses were built from wood. They could not, however, identify any source for this information. They also focus upon special days and the symbols associated with them, so they had looked at Remembrance Day and the poppy and St David's Day and the daffodil.
118. In Year 3, pupils study the Vikings and the Tudors. Although they build a timeline, it is confined to the Viking period and does not place this into a broader chronological sequence. The work on the Tudors focuses on the monarchs and a comparison of the lives of the rich and poor. The latter is also one of the themes for the work on the Victorians done by pupils in Years 4 and 5, who also produce a Victorian timeline which again is confined to the period itself with no broader chronological context. In Year 6 pupils look at the Ancient Greeks and John Lennon and Beatlemania, which is a narrow interpretation of post-war Britain.
119. Throughout the school, pupils are set common tasks. There is little evidence of work to challenge higher attaining pupils nor of work being adapted for those with special educational needs. This is a weakness. The balance between worksheets and free writing is inconsistent as some year groups rely too heavily on the former. Unlike at the time of the last inspection, there is little evidence to show that pupils systematically develop historical skills and language as they progress through the school. The presentation of pupils' work in all year groups is satisfactory at best. Handwriting and spelling are often below the level expected.
120. No teaching judgements can be made as none was seen. Although marking was carried out consistently, there were few comments by teachers to suggest how work might be improved, and spelling errors were often not identified.
121. The coordinator has been in post since September 2001. The policy statement was written in 2000 and follows the latest national guidance and is due to be reviewed in 2003. The coordinator monitors planning and sees a selection of pupils' books but she has no opportunity to monitor teaching. There are no effective assessment procedures in place and there is no portfolio of pupils' work. Resources are adequate although the budget is limited. Generally, history has a low profile and does not feature in the school improvement plan for 2001 - 2004. Little use is made of the library or information and communication technology to find information about aspects of the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

122. At the time of the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology were judged to be a key issue to be addressed by the school as they were seen to be below national expectations. Pupils did not cover the breadth of the National Curriculum, and the requirements of the programme of study were not being met. As a result of this, two years ago, the school acquired a suite with eight computers linked to the internet.

Overall, all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make sound progress and pupils' attainment by the age of seven now exceeds national expectations because of the systematic skill development gained through use of this facility and the emphasis given to the development of the staff's skills in this area. All staff, including teaching assistants, have attended training sessions and teachers are expected to identify an information and communication technology target as one of their Performance Management targets. Attainment of pupils aged 11 is now in line with national expectations. They display some gaps in their knowledge as a result of less effective teaching prior to the suite being established.

123. By the age of seven, pupils access programs with ease and confidence and use the mouse competently. They are beginning to develop typing skills - identifying letters and capitalising; they can use the space bar and delete and insert material. They change colours and font size and know how to access the printer. They use a variety of fonts, and generate pictures, which they can then print out.
124. By the age of 11, pupils are able to load and save material, insert clipart and organise information in different forms. They talk with understanding using terms such as 'format', 'edit', 'website' and 'download' with confidence. They sustain concentration well and demonstrate good skills in engaging search engines. They enjoy modifying their work. Pupils in Year 6 can create multi-media presentations using text, illustrations and sound. However, information and communication technology is not used to great effect to enhance displays around the school.
125. Overall the teaching is satisfactory. Three lessons in school were observed during the inspection. A further session for Years 5 and 6 pupils at the local High School, taught by its staff, was also observed. One of the lessons seen in school was very good and the other two were satisfactory. All teachers demonstrate sound knowledge. As a result, pupils' attitudes to computers are good. They listen attentively to instructions and act upon them enthusiastically. This was especially true of the sessions at the High School, where pupils each had access to a computer. They greatly value the time spent on computers and work very hard. Pupils throughout the school are very well behaved whilst on task and show great interest in their work, sustaining concentration well. They help each other very well and those with special educational needs benefit from the support of their peers as well as that from the teacher or helper. Pupils treat equipment with respect. Lessons are well planned, the teacher shares with pupils what they are going to learn and these are achieved by the majority of them. Teachers focus well on key vocabulary and procedures are well explained. Pupils work hard and remain on task well. In the very good lesson, higher attaining pupils were given the opportunity to extend the original class work by creating a stamp for repeat patterning.
126. The suite is timetabled to enable each class to have a block of time there. It is available at other times and could be used by classes or groups on an informal basis, but few teachers make use of these non-timetabled slots and this is weakness. The room is, instead, used for a variety of purposes including the teaching of reading with small groups and booster classes. Each class has at least one freestanding computer. These are currently under used and on several occasions when computers were checked by inspectors in each classroom, few were in use. Links with other subjects are beginning to develop especially as access to the Internet enables pupils to gather information and pupils use email to communicate to others. The school subscribes to two commercial programs aimed at supporting the use of the web in all subjects. Control technology is also developing well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a programmable floor robot with confidence and pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit the local secondary school to develop work with sensors and techi-lego.

127. The coordinator, who has been in post since September 2001, manages the subject well. The latest national guidance has been adopted, resources are good and information and communication technology has a high profile in the school development plan. There is a detailed three-year plan in place that includes the purchase of four more computers for the suite. A clear checklist for skill development is also in place but is not consistently used. A programme of training for all staff, financed through the New Opportunities Fund, was completed earlier this year. The coordinator gives a strong lead to development of the subject and the school has made significant improvement in this area since the time of the last inspection. Her overview of the subject is weakened by a lack of opportunity to monitor the teaching and learning. There are plans in place for this to happen. Little use is made of the library to find information about aspects of the subject, for example 'Finding Things Out'.

## **MUSIC**

128. At the last inspection standards in music matched national expectations at both seven and 11. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, were seen to be making sound progress. Subject provision has been maintained since this time and pupils attain standards expected for their age at seven and 11.
129. There is a well-equipped music room that houses a good collection of both tuned and untuned percussion instruments including instruments from other cultures as well as a growing collection of CDs. Pupils listen carefully, both to commercial recordings and to each other, and handle instruments with respect. By the age of seven, pupils can clap simple rhythms, model simple notation and perform for other pupils in the class. Lessons are a good balance of listening and performing and develop both skills effectively. By the age of 11, pupils can apply this knowledge to their own compositions.
130. During the week of the inspection, only two music lessons were seen. Both were taken in the specialist music room: both were well planned and one was good overall and the other satisfactory. In the good lesson, which was delivered at a brisk pace, all pupils remained focused for the whole time as they distinguished between pulse and rhythm. In the other, more ambitious, lesson the final performance came together well as each group contributed effective compositions that reflected the mood of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.
131. The deputy headteacher, who co-ordinates the subject and did so at the time of the last inspection, updated the music policy in January 2001 and reviewed its implementation a year later. The scheme of work is based on Manchester Music Service's 'Music in the classroom' and Year 6 has been trialling materials for the development of this programme during the course of the current year. The coordinator gives good support to those teachers who feel uncertain about teaching music. There has been some in-house training for all staff during the year and three members of staff have attended external training sessions.
132. A talented peripatetic specialist music teacher visits each Wednesday and makes an excellent contribution to music provision in the school. She teaches violin and cello to small groups of pupils as well as recorder to a Year 3/4 class. She teaches the class that is trialling the materials for the Manchester Music Service, supported by the class teacher, as they are soon to demonstrate these at the Local Authority's Music Conference. She also trains the school's orchestra that achieves a very high standard of performance. Other, non-specialist class teachers also teach small groups of pupils guitar and recorder during lunch hours. Pupils enjoy these opportunities for extra-curricular music and they enhance the musical provision of the school.

133. Music is a priority area in the school improvement plan for 2002/2003. The coordinator monitors planning but not teaching. Only one lesson has been observed this year and that was not seen by the coordinator but by the headteacher. As yet there are no formal assessment procedures in place. Little use is made of the library or information and communication technology to find information about aspects of the subject. The coordinator is knowledgeable and affords good leadership in the subject. She is coordinator for science and special educational needs in addition to carrying out the responsibilities of deputy headteacher of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. During the week of the inspection it was not possible to observe all aspects of the physical education curriculum. Inspection evidence is drawn from observations of lessons in dance, games, and gymnastics. There were no significant weaknesses highlighted in the last report and standards have been maintained.
135. At the end of both infant and junior stages, pupils achieve standards at the expected level for their age in those aspects of the physical education curriculum observed. They make expected progress in developing control and co-ordination in travelling, jumping and balancing when using large apparatus to practise gymnastic skills. Pupils are broadening their experiences of using a range of stimuli to create dance-like movement sequences and they are acquiring competence in a range of games skills. All pupils make at least sound progress, and there is evidence that some pupils make good progress and achieve results that enhance their self-esteem.
136. At the age of seven, pupils demonstrate good co-ordination when using large body movements. They move with control and make good use of general space. In the hall they move freely, engage in a range of warm up activities and are able to stop and start movements safely. In Year 2, pupils show good skills in throwing and catching a bean bag eventually using these skills effectively in a game. In gymnastics, pupils work confidently on large apparatus as they develop a sequence of movements involving a roll, a jump and a balance, varying their speed, height and direction.
137. At the age of 11, pupils move around the hall with increasing control. Year 3/4 pupils show growing competence in catching and passing an airflow ball both individually and to a partner. In Year 5/6, pupils successfully transfer their own sequences to from the floor to large apparatus and are beginning to evaluate their own efforts and those of others. In the lesson, pupils were challenged to develop a sequence with specific criteria to follow including stretch, curl, wide, narrow, fast and slow. Enthusiastic discussion followed and pupils produced a good number of appropriate responses. They showed appreciation of movement as they successfully completed the challenge with jumps, a variety of rolls, flips and bunny hops. The school currently supports an effective swimming programme, and most pupils achieve the swimming requirements of the National Curriculum before the time pupils leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. They make sound progress overall and achieve results which enhance their self-esteem.
138. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In lessons seen, teaching was always at least satisfactory, and good in 20 per cent and very good in 20 per cent. Teachers are enthusiastic about teaching physical education, and have appropriate subject knowledge. In the best lessons, planning is good clearly identifying what pupils are to learn, appropriate challenging tasks are set, and a brisk pace is maintained. Pupils work with enthusiasm, enjoyment and commitment. They clearly enjoy the sessions and all change into appropriate clothing. Pupils are willing to share ideas, work co-operatively and make good use of opportunities to practise their skills. Behaviour is good; apparatus is sensibly and responsibly used and, in competitive situations, pupils show due regard for laws and fair



play. In very good lessons, pupil performance is used well to demonstrate achievement, focus on good practice and encourage others to observe and evaluate their own actions. In a Year 3/4 lesson, where pupils were developing their bat and ball skills, the teacher pointed out good practice to the pupils and analysed why particular movements were effective. This helped pupils in improving their own performance and provided lower attaining pupils with ideas they could incorporate in order to develop their own skills. However, this good practice is not consistent and pupils are not always given the opportunity to comment and evaluate upon performances. This limits both their development in physical education and their speaking and listening skills.

139. The enthusiastic coordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. She has overseen the production of an appropriate policy document and a scheme of work that allows for the coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum based on the Manchester scheme. However, although the scheme is fully implemented, assessment of pupils' abilities is not yet firmly established, although there is a clear action plan for this to happen. Consequently, this sometimes prevents teachers from planning the next stage of learning by building on the work pupils have learnt in the previous lessons. At present, there is no opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching, which limits the coordinators' effectiveness in gaining an overview of the subject across the school. This is planned for next term. The provision for a number of extra-curricular activities, and the skills of visiting specialists enhances the physical education curriculum, as does the experience gained by pupils in competing with other schools. Little use is made of the library or information and communication technology to find information about aspects of the subject. Resources for physical education are satisfactory and the hall is extensive enough for large classes of pupils.