

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PANCRAS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124785

Headteacher: Mr S Barker

Reporting inspector: Mrs C Skinner
23160

Dates of inspection: 22nd-24th April 2002

Inspection number: 196111

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stratford Road Ipswich
Postcode:	IP1 6EF
Telephone number:	01473 742074
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, St Pancras Catholic Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Kinlan
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

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23160	Carole Skinner	Registered inspector	English, history.	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9542	Brian Jones	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?
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Art, geography, music, the Foundation Stage curriculum.	
14596	Tony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Mathematics, physical education, special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
16492	Bob Lever	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology, equal opportunities.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Pancras Catholic Primary School educates boys and girls between the ages of four and 11. It is smaller than most schools of its type as there are 156 pupils on roll altogether. The numbers of girls and boys are broadly similar. Thirteen children attend full-time in the Reception class. The school's roll has fallen from 186 in 2001. There are 43 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (28 per cent), which is above average. A third of those pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties, whilst most of the rest have minor to moderate learning difficulties. Four pupils have statements of special educational need (three per cent), which is above average. Approximately eight per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is higher than in most schools. All the pupils speak English as their first language. Twenty-one per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above average. During the last school year, 17 pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission, and 19 left it at times other than those of the normal leaving or transfer. This is a high rate of mobility. Three teachers have left and three have joined the staff in the past two years and the school has experienced difficulties with recruitment. One teaching post was vacant at the time of this inspection and the headteacher was teaching full-time. Attainment on entry to the school is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides an acceptable standard of education for its pupils and has a number of good features. In Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in English and mathematics and achieve very well because the quality of teaching is good and they are given demanding work. The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school, but the overall effectiveness of the leadership and management have been affected by staffing and recruitment difficulties. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils in Year 6 attain above average standards in English, mathematics, art and physical education because of the high expectations which the school has of them. This represents very good achievement given their low starting point.
- The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the school's development and the headteacher's commitment and determination have led the school successfully through a very difficult period.
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and enables pupils to make accelerated progress.
- Pupils' positive attitudes towards school, their good behaviour and personal development, and the quality of the relationships throughout the school promote a calm and happy atmosphere for learning.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which greatly enhances their learning.
- The school provides good levels of care for its pupils and makes good provision for their health and welfare.

What could be improved

- Standards in Year 2 are well below average in English and science, and below average in mathematics and history because expectations of average and more able pupils are too low and the work they are given is not sufficiently demanding.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below average throughout the school and the subject does not meet statutory requirements.
- Assessment procedures are too informal in some subjects and the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is unsatisfactory.
- The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are not sufficiently rigorous.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997 and, since then, it has made a satisfactory improvement, having had to face many challenges along the way. A prolonged industrial tribunal, with its accompanying adverse publicity and greatly increased workload for the headteacher, had a detrimental effect on the school's capacity to move forward during this time. The headteacher led the school through this very difficult period with commitment and determination. In addition, a falling roll, a high turnover of staff and difficulties in recruiting teachers have added to the challenges facing the school. Nevertheless, the headteacher and governors have remained positive and optimistic about the school's future and have managed these changes well. Standards in Year 6 have risen significantly, as has the quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 3 to 6. However, standards in Year 2

have fallen. Curricular planning and the provision for children in the Reception class have improved but staffing and recruitment difficulties have also hindered the development of the role of subject co-ordinators. Although there have been some improvements in the teaching of information and communication technology, the subject still has weaknesses. The use of assessment information to inform teachers' planning remains an area for development. The school's capacity for continued improvement is satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	D	A	A
mathematics	B	D	B	B
science	D	D	A	A

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

The results were higher in English and science than in mathematics because more pupils reached Level 5 (above average). Over the past four years, the trend of improvement in the school's results has been significantly greater than the national trend. The school exceeded its target for the number of pupils expected to reach Level 4 in English, but did not reach its target in mathematics. It has set suitably challenging targets for the 2002 tests. The findings of the inspection are that pupils attain above average standards in English and mathematics and average standards in science. This is slightly lower than the results of the 2001 tests because fewer pupils are on course to reach Level 5. These variations between year groups are not uncommon. Pupils also achieve good standards in art and physical education. Standards are below average in information and communication technology and average in all other subjects. Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 because teachers have high expectations of them and give them demanding work.

Standards in Year 2 are well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics, information and communication technology and history. They are average in other subjects. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory because expectations of average and more able pupils are too low and they are not given work which challenges them and extends their learning sufficiently. Standards in Year 1 are, however, broadly average. Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress, given their below average attainment on entry. Standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and physical development remain below average by the end of the Reception year, but those in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are average. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school, show interest in their work and apply themselves well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons, at break times and around the school. They welcome visitors with enthusiasm and courtesy.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils enjoy shouldering responsibility and show initiative when helping others, both in school and on a wider scale.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Families are responding well to the school's efforts to improve attendance and punctuality. Most pupils arrive promptly each morning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The strongest features of the teaching throughout the school are the relationships that teachers form with their pupils and the way they manage pupils in the classroom, which help to create a positive atmosphere for learning. As a result, pupils are able to concentrate on their work without unnecessary distraction and they grow in confidence and self-esteem as they progress through the school. The quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1. However, it is good in Year 1 and for some less able Year 2 pupils, where expectations are high and pupils are given sufficiently demanding work. For average and more able Year 2 pupils, expectations are too low and the work that is planned for them lacks challenge. Consequently, their needs are not adequately met and their acquisition of skills and knowledge progresses at too slow a pace. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching of English and mathematics is good and promotes good progress and there is evidence of very good teaching and accelerated progress in Year 4/5 and Year 6. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed well across the curriculum in Years 3 to 6. However, the teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory, although improving, because teachers are not fully confident in the subject and are not covering all of the required aspects. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is generally good and meets their needs well. Teachers plan effectively to ensure that activities match the targets on pupils' individual education plans, which are mostly focused on developing their skills in literacy and numeracy. The strongest features of pupils' learning occur in Years 3 to 6, where pupils acquire skills and knowledge at a good rate, show interest, independence and good levels of concentration and have a good knowledge of their own learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There is a varied and interesting range of activities in most subjects, but information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements. Work is not planned at a sufficiently high level for more able pupils in Year 2. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The range of extracurricular activities is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient emphasis on role play and outdoor play in the Reception class.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are supported well by teachers and assistants. Pupils' individual education plans are well organised and targets are clear and achievable. The needs of pupils with statements of special educational need are met very well. Provision is proving effective for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good and contributes significantly to the school's caring, friendly and inclusive ethos. Spiritual development is promoted through times of prayer and reflection and opportunities to appreciate the beauty of art, music and nature. The very good provision for moral and social development is reflected in the relationships, community awareness and respect for others in the school. Good provision for cultural development includes drama, dance and opportunities to appreciate cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There are good procedures for health and safety, first aid and child protection. Adults know pupils well and take great care to ensure their welfare. There are effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics but procedures in other subjects are not rigorous enough. The use of assessment information to guide teachers' planning is unsatisfactory, overall, though good in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.

The school works well in partnership with parents and this greatly assists pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment

Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory, overall. The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear direction for the school. As a result of staffing and recruitment problems he currently holds too many teaching and curricular responsibilities. Teachers with responsibility for different subjects make a satisfactory contribution to the management of the curriculum, but their roles are not fully developed in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. The school improvement plan does not focus clearly enough on how to raise standards in Year 2.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors play an important role in shaping the future direction of the school. They have a good awareness of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities efficiently, except in the provision for information and communication technology. As well as supporting the headteacher and staff, governors pose critical questions about the school's performance and are actively involved in monitoring the quality of curricular provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher and staff have carried out a thorough audit of school effectiveness, which has evaluated all aspects of the school's provision and identified appropriate priorities for improvement. There is a strong commitment to monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, but this is not fully effective in raising standards in Year 2. The monitoring and development of teaching are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that low expectations are eliminated where they exist.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's financial resources are used well to support teaching and learning. There are clear links between the budget and the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The principles of best value are applied appropriately. However, the criteria in the improvement plan for judging how effective spending has been are too vague to assist governors in making judgements.

Staffing is adequate as the headteacher is teaching full-time, but the situation is far from ideal. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, but the designated outdoor play area for Reception children has no covered area and there are insufficient resources to support these children's creative and physical development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations of their children. • Their children like school. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities provided for pupils outside of lessons.

The team agrees with most of the parents' positive views. However, teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough in Year 2 and consequently the teaching is unsatisfactory for these pupils. The inspection's findings agree that the range of extracurricular activities provided is unsatisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the school at below average levels of attainment. A significant number of children in the Reception class have limited communication skills. Most children make satisfactory progress and broaden and consolidate their knowledge in the areas of learning. In the areas of personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in most elements of their creative development, the children are on course to reach the recommendations for the end of the Reception Year. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development, children's attainment is below that expected for their age. This, in general, reflects their limited use of language and the lack of resources for all the designated areas of learning. These standards are similar to those reported by the previous inspection in most areas of learning. However, they are lower in physical development because children do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills in the course of each day.

2. In the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2001, the school's results were well below the national average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, they were well below average in reading and below average in mathematics. In writing, they were in the lowest five per cent of similar schools. The assessments made by teachers in science were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Before to 2001, standards in mathematics were consistently well below average for three years. Standards in reading have varied between below and well below average, whilst those in writing have been very low each year. Overall, girls have performed better than boys over the past four years.

3. The findings of the inspection also show that, in Year 2, standards in reading, writing and science are well below average, which reflects the results of last year's tests and assessments. They are below average in mathematics, which is lower than the 2001 test results, because fewer pupils are reaching Level 3 than last year. Standards are also below average in history and information and communication technology. Pupils achieve average standards in art, geography, design and technology, music and physical education. Compared with the findings of the last inspection, standards are lower in English, mathematics, science and history. This is because teachers' expectations of average and more able pupils are too low. Standards have improved in design and technology and information and communication technology and have remained the same in art, geography and physical education. No judgement was made in music in 1997. There have been improvements in curricular planning and resources in design and technology and information and communication technology, and teachers' expertise in these subjects has increased. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory overall, because average and more able pupils do not make enough progress in Year 2. In Year 1, pupils make good progress and reach average standards in all subjects.

4. In the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2001, the school's results were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics when compared with all schools and with similar schools. The trend of improvement in the school's results since 1997 is significantly greater than the national trend. The percentage of pupils who reached Level 5 was well above the national average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. This reflects the very good emphasis on challenging the more able pupils, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. Boys have tended to perform better than girls in the national tests over the past three years, which shows that the school is addressing their underachievement in Year 2. In 2001, the school exceeded its target for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in English, but did not meet it in mathematics. Suitably challenging targets have been set for 2002.

5. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics, art and physical education. They are average in science, geography, history, design and

technology and music. Standards in information and communication technology are below average, because pupils do not have sufficient experience of modelling, control and monitoring. Compared with the findings of the school's last inspection, standards are higher in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education. Standards have risen because the quality of teaching has improved and teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. In science, there is a greater emphasis on experimental and investigative work. Other reasons for the improvement in standards include better resources, more effective curricular planning and the development of teachers' own skills and understanding in the subjects. In addition, the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have contributed significantly to higher standards in these areas of learning. Overall, pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is very good, although pupils' progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6.

6. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress overall. In Years 3 to 6, they sometimes make very good progress. Several attain, or come close to, Level 4 by the time they take the national tests in Year 6. In 2001, all pupils reached Level 4 in reading and science. Teachers prepare work that is suitable for these pupils' needs and they have support and help whenever possible. The individual education plans that are drawn up for many of these pupils contain clear and specific learning targets, which are reviewed regularly. The school has developed good systems for tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics, so that parents and teachers know what progress they are making.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils have good attitudes towards school. They are eager to learn. In reply to the questionnaire, 95 per cent of parents say their children like school. Pupils' attitudes were good, very good or excellent in 82 per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection. When pupils respond very positively, this is a direct result of good teaching. For example, a junior class stayed intensely focused when the teacher led them in some challenging work in mathematics. Pupils in an infant class concentrated and tried really hard in an art lesson.

8. Behaviour is good. Pupils behave well in lessons, at break times and around the school. They welcome visitors with enthusiasm and courtesy. No disruptive or aggressive behaviour was observed. Pupils organise themselves well for outside play. Different classes take it in turns to play in different areas. Pupils respect when it is their turn to play in the very popular adventure playground. They play together well, even when they are letting off steam exuberantly at morning break. There are very few instances of bullying. The school is free from sexism and racism. Its policy for including all children in its community means that there are some pupils with behavioural difficulties. These pupils respond well to good management by the teachers. Last year, the school made five fixed period exclusions.

9. Pupils' personal development is good. They take turns with classroom jobs. Year 6 pupils manage the music and the overhead projector for assemblies. They train as 'Yellow Hats' and take responsibility in the playground for distributing and collecting the play equipment. Pupils of all ages recognise their responsibility to the wider community. They raise funds for charities of their own choice, especially in support of other children. They take part very eagerly, front and back-stage, in the school's music and drama performances. After the terrorist attacks on September 11, pupils established a close link with a primary school in Manhattan. They exchange letters and e-mails regularly with other pupils. Year 4 pupils, on their own initiative, took on the task of organising and sorting the Christmas post. They obtained sponsorship for their work, and sent the money raised to the fund for the New York Fire Service.

10. Pupils relate well to one another. A positive feature of the school is how well pupils of different ages co-operate with one another in the mixed age classes. Year 6 pupils are eager to help the younger children. The 'Yellow Hats' take turns to play with them in the Foundation Stage playground. 'Yellow Hats' help them if they fall over and carry their trays from the serving hatch to the tables in the hall. Pupils are well aware of the effect of their actions on others. When families

arrive from overseas, pupils in their class welcome them warmly. The school appoints a 'buddy' to help them settle in. Other pupils quickly make friends on their own initiative. They befriend and support pupils who are having difficulties. Relationships between pupils and adults are very positive. Several parents wrote in to say how much teachers are helping their child to improve. At best, there is a feeling of true partnership between the class and the teacher. This is powerful in ensuring a high quality of learning.

11. Children in the Foundation Stage sit quietly and listen attentively when in class. They join in with the group activities provided with pleasure and persist for extended periods of time at an activity. Their behaviour is good and all children have an awareness of the expectations set by the Reception class teacher. This is a significant improvement since the school's last inspection when it was noted that many were inattentive and lacked self-control. When working together, they co-operate well and support one another in their learning. Developing initiative and personal responsibility in learning is satisfactory. In general, they can operate independently within the classroom environment.

12. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. The figures up to 19 April 2002 show 94.3 per cent attendance in the present year. The school has improved significantly on the 93.4 per cent recorded in 2000/01. Attendance, however, does not yet match the good level shown in the previous inspection report. Families are responding well to the school's efforts to improve attendance and punctuality. Most pupils arrive promptly each morning. There are a few instances of pupils losing time because of late public transport. Lower attendance was not a reason for the disappointing results of Year 2 pupils in the national tests last summer. Their attendance was virtually the same as the other year groups.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although there are significant variations between different parts of the school. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good at Years 3 to 6. Although the overall judgement on teaching is similar to that made by the previous inspection, more good teaching was seen in this inspection, and the quality of teaching has improved significantly in Years 3 to 6. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during this inspection. However, a careful analysis of pupils' work in each year group shows that the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall at Key Stage 1, because the expectations of average and more able pupils in Year 2 are too low and they are not given sufficiently demanding work.

14. The main strength of the teaching throughout the school is the relationships that teachers form with their pupils and the way they manage pupils in the classroom. Teachers are supportive and encouraging and value pupils' contributions. They set clear boundaries and expectations of behaviour, which helps to create a positive atmosphere for learning. As a result, pupils are able to concentrate on their work without unnecessary distraction and they grow in confidence and self-esteem as they progress through the school.

15. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. In the personal, social and emotional development of children, the teaching and learning are good. The Reception teacher knows the children well as individuals and has developed a warm relationship with them. Consequently the children feel happy and secure in school and have developed good attitudes to learning. The teaching of formal aspects of literacy and mathematics is thorough and, in general, meets the needs of the children. However, there is not enough emphasis on role-play activities or on outdoor play. The management of children overall is very good and both the class teacher and nursery nurse provide caring support and guidance. They listen with interest to what the children have to say and, when working with them, demonstrate good skills in helping children to develop their language for communication. Planning for children in the Foundation Stage is suitably matched to the recommended Early Learning Goals. The teacher has appropriately modified the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to meet the needs of the children in this mixed age class.

16. Although the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory overall, there are differences between classes. Overall, the quality of teaching is good for pupils in Year 1 and enables them to make good progress in their learning. In Year 2, the quality of teaching for the average and more able pupils who are taught alongside some Year 3 pupils is unsatisfactory, because there is too little challenge in the work provided, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, pupils do not reach the standards that they are capable of achieving, especially in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The teacher's low expectations of the pupils are reflected in the lesson planning and the targets that are set for pupils to achieve. For example, although a number of pupils gained high scores in a recent standardised mathematics test, the work that is planned for them does not recognise their potential and is too easy for them. No pupils are expected to reach Level 3 in English, mathematics or science, and no work is planned to enable them to do this, although some are clearly capable of doing so. There is insufficient use of assessment information to set appropriate challenges for pupils. As a result of these weaknesses, a ceiling is placed on pupils' achievement in Year 2, which means that there is considerable ground to make up once pupils move into Year 3 and work through the school. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, science, history and information and communication technology. It is satisfactory in art, design and technology and geography and good in physical education. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in music.

17. A literacy lesson in the Year 2/3 class illustrated both the good features of teaching and some of its shortcomings. In the first part of the lesson, the teacher's lively approach to reading *The Princess and the Pig* motivated the pupils and increased their enjoyment of reading. Skilful questioning reinforced the pupils' understanding of previous learning and developed their ability to predict what might happen next in the story. There was a good emphasis on reading with expression, which the teacher demonstrated very well, and a clear focus on punctuation. When it came to developing pupils' writing skills, there was some indication of the low expectations for Year 2 pupils as they were given a printed framework, which limited the scope of their writing. Although there was good teaching of descriptive language and extension of pupils' vocabulary, there was insufficient opportunity for them to express their ideas freely or to extend their writing skills. The Year 3 pupils in the same class, on the other hand, had more freedom to express their ideas, and the pupils with special educational needs received good support from a teaching assistant as they improved their knowledge and understanding of sounds.

18. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, although pupils' work shows that, during the current school year, this has not been a consistent picture. Staffing and recruitment difficulties have resulted in one class being taught by two different supply teachers in the autumn and spring terms. At the time of this inspection, the headteacher had been teaching the class for two weeks. A careful analysis of pupils' work in each year group shows that pupils in the Year 4/5 class and the Year 6 class have had consistently good, and some very good, teaching which has enabled them to make significant progress. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and set challenging work for them, based on careful assessment of their attainment and monitoring of their progress. Pupils rise to the challenge and apply considerable effort to their work. The teaching of basic and higher order skills in literacy and numeracy is good and teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. For example, more able Year 4 pupils who are taught alongside Year 5 are given demanding work, which challenges and extends them. As a result, pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate. Teachers set a brisk pace and, consequently, pupils produce good amounts of work in the time allotted. Homework is used effectively as a tool to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good in English, mathematics, art and physical education, satisfactory in science, design and technology, geography, history and music and unsatisfactory in information and communication technology.

19. A very good mathematics lesson in Year 4/5 illustrated well the strong features of teaching in Years 3 to 6. The lesson was based on very well organised planning, which took into account the previous attainment levels of different groups of pupils. It provided very well for pupils in both year groups, and provided very good challenge for more able pupils. After a brisk mental starter, during which the teacher asked individual pupils to explain how they worked things out, the teacher explained very well to pupils how to multiply by partitioning numbers. She moved the lesson on at a challenging pace to cover long multiplication methods. What was particularly effective about this lesson was the emphasis on developing pupils' confidence and their awareness of themselves as young mathematicians. High expectations were evident throughout, including the quality of presentation, and pupils were encouraged by well deserved praise.

20. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils who have special educational needs is generally good. Teachers plan effectively to ensure that lesson activities match the targets on pupils' individual education plans which are mostly focused on developing their skills in literacy and numeracy. These targets provide realistic stages of development, and they are regularly reviewed. Pupils are supported well in lessons. As a result of the good teaching and encouragement they receive, pupils develop positive attitudes to learning.

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

21. The overall quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory, and promote the aims of the school well. The provision for information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements, but the other aspects of the curriculum are generally good, and offer a varied range of opportunities. All subjects of the National Curriculum are included, together with religious education. Appropriate schemes of work are in place and most of the policies for subjects were under review at the time of this inspection. Broadly, each subject receives an appropriate amount of teaching time. In general there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in most aspects of the curriculum, but information and communication technology has not improved sufficiently. Termly and weekly planning is satisfactory and provides appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum. Weekly plans are detailed and are handed to the headteacher for monitoring. They focus appropriately on key objectives that pupils are to learn. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented, and are having a positive impact on pupils' learning in Years 3 to 6. However, they are not working as effectively in Year 2 because insufficient time is given to developing and extending pupils' writing skills and work is not planned at a high enough level for more able pupils. The provision for homework is satisfactory, overall and good in Years 3 to 6.

22. The school provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education. Health and sex education and the use and misuse of drugs are taught to older pupils. Pupils are provided with good information that promotes positive attitudes to a healthy lifestyle. The school uses assemblies and religious education lessons effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of a number of issues, including citizenship. In Year 1, pupils begin by learning classroom rules and the reasons for them. By Year 6 they are studying global issues such as hunger, debt and international aid. Pupils are well aware of environmental issues and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. For pupils in Year 6, the residential week in Shropshire is a high spot of their life at the school. They benefit greatly in learning to live and work together maturely.

23. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Planning for children in the Reception class follows national guidelines for the Foundation Stage. This is an improvement since the school's last inspection when it was judged that the quality of planning needed to be improved. However, in general, provision for indoor and outdoor play is insufficient both in range and frequency. Reading, writing and mathematics are well structured and the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is appropriately planned.

24. The provision for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory, and the findings of this inspection agree with the parents' views in this respect. There is only a limited range available and none for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Much centres round football and matches, although other activities include board games for classes 4 and 5, and an athletics club for Years 4, 5 and 6. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential trip each year. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also take part in regular dramatic productions which make a good contribution to their personal and cultural development, as well as improving their speaking skills. The curriculum is enhanced by a satisfactory range of visitors who come into the school to talk to the pupils. For example, the police liaison officer came for five weeks running to talk about the role of the police, drugs, and personal safety. Class 3 had a visit from the Fire service, complete with a fire engine.

25. The provision for equal opportunities is satisfactory overall. Boys and girls have equal opportunities within the curriculum, but only pupils in Years 3 to 6 are able to take part in school clubs. The school ensures that all pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit and funding is available for those with financial difficulties. Curricular provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. There are generally good arrangements to support them. Individual education plans are well organised and targets are clear and achievable. They focus mostly on literacy and numeracy, but some pupils also have targets that include personal and social development. The needs of those pupils who have statements of special educational needs are met very well, and considerable care is taken to see that they are receiving the recommendations set out in their statements. Provision is proving effective for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils capable of higher attainment are challenged well in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 but not always sufficiently in Year 2. The school has not identified pupils who are gifted and talented. There is good inclusion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

26. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. The local police beat officer comes to school at least once a fortnight. The police liaison group works with two classes each year. These activities strengthen pupils' ability to stay safe. A high point for Year 6 pupils is the day spent with the 'Crucial Crew' at the Suffolk County Show. Professionals from the ambulance, police and fire services set up real life situations in which pupils decide what to do in an emergency. A Hindu assembly and a Hindu visitor widened pupils' knowledge and understanding of another faith. The groundsman from Ipswich Town came to talk about looking after a football ground. This inspired the pupils to ask him some searching questions. A dental nurse helped pupils in Classes 3 and 4 learn how to look after their teeth.

27. The school has good, constructive links with other schools. Shared activities with the two other local Catholic primaries include music, information and communication technology and design and technology. St Pancras, with its high quality learning in mathematics at junior levels, shares its skills with another local primary. It works closely with the Catholic secondary school to which most of its pupils transfer. This secondary school hosts many of the activities, including an annual football tournament.

28. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, and reflects the school's aims and values very well. It is a significant strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. It is enhanced through religious education and good, thought-provoking assemblies. In these, pupils enter very quietly to an atmosphere of well-ordered calm. Music is played as they arrive, often 'live' by a teacher with his guitar. All sit very quietly waiting for the assembly to start. The focus during the time of the inspection was Christian and assemblies began with prayer. Spiritual uplift is also to be found in the very good singing by the whole school. Pupils are encouraged to think about their own and other people's ideas, beliefs and actions. They have the opportunity to develop an appreciation of the natural world in science, geography and some of their other work. In art they study the work of famous artists such as Picasso, and then try their hand at drawing and painting in a similar style. Each classroom has a display called "Here I am," which is the

title of the school's religious education scheme. Here there are prayers written by pupils on display together with familiar prayers and objects such as the Hail Mary and the Rosary. Morning and afternoon sessions end with quiet time and prayer. Year 2 have reflected on happy and sad times and given their own examples such as a birthday, or when one of their cats was trapped for a while.

29. The very good provision for pupils' moral development is strongly linked to the school's caring ethos and religious foundation. All staff provide very good role models for pupils and have very high expectations of good behaviour. Adults in the school show respect for one another and for the pupils, and the headteacher leads by example in this, as in many aspects of the school's life. Management of pupils' behaviour is usually positive and brings the best out in them. Rewards, such as the use of points for independent or good work, help to encourage pupils in good behaviour and attitudes, and do much towards building their self-esteem. Adults make pupils aware of what is expected of them and help them to develop an appropriate idea of what is right and wrong. Moral issues are taught and dealt with well. All classrooms have the school rules and expectations on display. Physical education plays a good part in helping pupils to have an awareness of fair play and rules, and they learn how to win and lose appropriately.

30. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. It is a caring community where everyone is respected, and the adults always have time for pupils when it is needed. Again, the headteacher leads by example. Older pupils take responsibilities such as the 'yellow hats' at playtime or after lunch in the playground, whilst others help at the school lunches themselves. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities and have a hand in the organisation of aspects of the school. Pupils take part in two productions each year, which gives them the opportunity to work in a group for the benefit of the whole school. The school supports several charities, especially those that benefit children who are ill or in need. Year 6 pupils have the chance to go on a residential trip to Shropshire where they learn some of the social skills of living in a group for a while.

31. There is good provision for cultural development. Through history, pupils learn about the legacy of previous civilisations, such as Ancient Greece, as well as how British culture has changed over the centuries. Pupils have many opportunities to make music and sing in lessons, assemblies and performances. In one assembly seen during the inspection, four pupils performed a dance routine that fitted the assembly's theme about facing troubles in everyday lives. There is a strong emphasis on drama and pupils enjoy visiting dance and theatre groups. Pupils enjoy a variety of experiences in art and design and learn to appreciate the work of a wide range of artists. In religious education, pupils learn about the beliefs and traditions of other world religions than their own. For example, pupils in Year 2 learned about Divali and made divas, while Year 1 pupils made Divali cards. Year 4 pupils made Mendhi patterns and Year 5 pupils created colourful masks as part of their work about a Caribbean Carnival.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school has a strong caring ethos and cares well for its pupils. It has rigorous health and safety routines, and it is updating its policy during the present term. It carried out a full risk assessment of the premises during the past term. The site manager checks the buildings every day. He keeps the school in good, clean condition and attends to many minor defects himself. The school has appropriate procedures for child protection. A class teacher is the designated teacher. She works closely with local agencies and updates her training regularly. The school includes the requirements for child protection in a staff meeting at least once every term. Arrangements for first aid are very good. No fewer than 11 members of staff have training in first aid.

33. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Class teachers and assistants know their pupils well and have established good relationships with them. Teachers discuss pupils' personal development at consultation meetings with parents and cover this aspect fully in the annual reports to parents at the end of the year. The school works hard to make

sure that all pupils feel fully included in the life of the school. This applies to its sporting, musical and dramatic activities, as well as lessons.

34. The school provides good personal support for its pupils. Ninety-six per cent of parents answering the questionnaire say that the school helps their children become mature and responsible. The school has a good, effective assertive discipline policy, which has clear unambiguous rules. When pupils keep the rules successfully, staff give appropriate praise and encouragement. They apply sanctions consistently when pupils break the rules. Each class agrees and negotiates its rules in detail. Where pupils have had behavioural difficulties, a teacher can choose to set them targets for getting good behaviour points. A very positive feature of the policy is that pupils themselves can choose to set targets. This was happening during the week of the inspection, and pupils were improving their behaviour on their own initiative. Within the discipline policy, the school has good anti-bullying procedures. It is strong against both physical and verbal bullying. It sets out to resolve most personal disagreements through discussion with the pupils involved. Where necessary, it calls in the parents of both pupils to discuss the matter. In the present school year, it has needed to do this for only one incident each term.

35. The school has very good procedures to encourage attendance and punctuality. Class teachers complete the registers manually, and the administrative officer enters the totals into the computer system every week. She gives early warning if attendance falls. The improved procedures and communication with parents are achieving a reduction in absence of more than ten per cent during the current year. The administrative officer contacts parents if a pupil is late frequently. She advises the headteacher if a pupil's attendance is causing concern. The educational welfare officer comes in to school once a fortnight. She gives effective support when families are having difficulties. For some years, the school has awarded certificates for 100 per cent attendance. It now offers awards to pupils with lower attendance who achieve a significant improvement. The potential to win certificates is motivating these pupils successfully. It has a positive effect on the school's attendance. It also helps the school to include these pupils fully in achieving their potential for academic and personal success.

36. The care and support for pupils who have special educational needs are good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils that they work with well. The supportive ethos of the school and its care for the individual ensure that pupils with educational needs have good opportunities to take part in all that the school offers. There are good procedures for identifying pupils who have special educational needs and the school's tracking procedures enable those involved with their education to follow their progress carefully. Pupils' records are well managed and provide a clear picture of contacts, progress and outside agencies involved. These agencies make appropriate reports for annual reviews.

37. Children in the Foundation Stage are well cared for and it is evident that they feel at ease in the Reception class. Assessment and record keeping procedures for these children are satisfactory. Baseline assessment is carried out when the children enter the Reception class and the results of these are beginning to be used to track the progress made by individual children. On-going observations of the children at work are based on the Local Authority's guidelines and provide a clear overview of the progress individual children make in their learning.

38. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. The school has effective systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. Very soon after children enter the school in the Reception class, they are assessed using the Local Authority's procedures designed for this age range of children. This information is beginning to be used to track the progress of individual children as they move through the school. In the intervening period between the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6, the school routinely carries out reading and mathematics tests and uses these to analyse attainment levels and evidence of progress. The results of these tests provide the school with a judgement of the levels pupils are expected to achieve in the following year and to set targets for Year 6. In literacy and numeracy, teachers assess pupils'

progress in lessons and from their recorded work against the objectives that were set. These assessments are related to the pupils' individual and group targets. The school has recently introduced target boards for pupils in English and mathematics, which is helping to focus pupils more intently on their learning. However, in science and all other subjects of the National Curriculum, assessment procedures are informal. This was noted in the school's last inspection. The school has rightly identified the need to review current arrangements and to develop a whole school cohesive approach to formalise assessment methods. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is unsatisfactory. In Year 2, there is a lack of understanding of the higher levels pupils may achieve and, consequently, these are not planned for. This is reflected in the pupils' low results in the end of Key Stage 1 tests over the last four years.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. Parents think well of the school. They value the quality of teaching and learning. A parent writes: "My son has progressed beyond my wildest dreams. He really seems to enjoy coming to school". Even a parent who was concerned about the recent staffing difficulties writes that these have not had an adverse effect on his son's learning. Another parent writes: "I believe my son has made excellent progress in his four years at St Pancras. I find the staff dedicated and approachable". In fact, 98 per cent of parents say they feel comfortable when approaching the headteacher and staff.

40. The school provides good information for parents. There are 'helpful hints' booklets for parents on reading, writing, spelling, number and advice for when a child first comes to school. Frequent newsletters notify parents about activities and events. The pupils' annual reports give detailed information on what the children know and can do. The prospectus and the governors' Annual Report to parents are clear and attractively presented. Both documents cover the statutory requirements.

41. The previous report noted that the school consults parents about ideas for the school improvement plan and the school maintains this good practice. Each term, there are formal meetings between parents and class teachers. Parents review their child's progress and discuss targets at these meetings. In the summer term, they can discuss their child's written report. Parents form a large part of the friends' association, which runs social and fund-raising events. They enthusiastically attend their children's musical and dramatic productions, and the sporting events. However, some parents do not participate fully in the life of the school.

42. Parents' contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory overall. Many parents of younger children enthusiastically share books with them at home, sometimes twice a day. This has a positive effect on their children's progress in reading. However, only a few parents come in as volunteers to help in class. The homework policy is working well in most families. Younger children do number games and spelling practice in addition to reading. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 focus mainly on English and mathematics, but homework also extends their learning in science and other subjects. At present, some parents do not provide effective support for their children's learning at home.

43. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed by the school. They are involved at an early stage when the school has any concerns, and they discuss the targets on their child's individual education plan. Parents are invited to the reviews of these targets, and at the annual reviews for those pupils who have statements, parents' views are sought and recorded.

44. Induction procedures for children who are starting school are satisfactory. Home visits form the initial part of each child's entry into the Reception class. Parents are then invited to bring their child into the school for two visits before entry in the autumn term. Parents are provided with the necessary information to raise their awareness of what the school provides and the role they can play in their child's education. Parents can also borrow books from the pre-school library during the summer term before their child starts school. They meet with the Reception class teacher at regular intervals through the year to discuss their child's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The school's leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Their effectiveness has unavoidably been impaired by the many challenges the school has had to deal with since the last inspection. A prolonged industrial tribunal, with its accompanying adverse publicity and greatly increased workload for the headteacher, had a detrimental effect on the school's capacity to move forward during this time. The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school and receives good support from the governors. He has created a clear vision for the school's development, which is shared by staff, governors and parents, and he has led the school through this very difficult period with commitment and determination. During the past three years, circumstances beyond the school's control have resulted in a falling roll, which has recently caused a reduction from seven classes to six. As a result, most pupils are now taught in mixed age classes, and some pupils have had a change of teacher part way through the year. In addition, a high turnover of staff and difficulties in recruiting teachers have added to the challenges facing the school. Nevertheless, the headteacher and governors have remained positive and optimistic about the school's future and have managed these changes well.

46. Staffing and recruitment difficulties have also hindered the development of the role of subject co-ordinators. Some teachers have quite a heavy burden of responsibilities: for example, one teacher has responsibility for the Foundation Stage, literacy and religious education. Some subjects have no leadership at present as co-ordinators have left and the school has not been able to recruit a replacement with appropriate experience and expertise, as in the case of information and communication technology and science. Staffing difficulties have also resulted in the headteacher taking on a full-time teaching commitment for the summer term. Whilst this ensures that pupils who have had their education disrupted earlier in the year are now receiving a good quality of education, it also places a significant burden upon the headteacher and inevitably curtails the extent of his management role. As he also holds the responsibility for co-ordinating special educational needs and physical education, and is currently teaching the latter in every class, the pressures on his time are significantly high. Teachers who currently hold responsibility for different subjects make a satisfactory contribution to the management of the curriculum, but their roles are not fully developed in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

47. The co-ordination of special educational needs is carried out very well. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and teachers, assistants and parents are kept well informed about all aspects of the pupils on the school's register for special educational needs. There are good contacts and liaison with local schools. The new Code of Practice is scheduled to be in place for the autumn term.

48. The management of the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is the responsibility of the Reception class teacher who consequently has a clear overview of provision for these children. She has worked hard to develop the Foundation Stage curriculum, particularly in a class which also contains Year 1 children. The quality of relationships within the Reception class is good and the teacher is well supported by the nursery nurse.

49. The headteacher has carried out an audit of school effectiveness, which has evaluated all aspects of the school's provision in great detail and has highlighted those areas where improvement is needed. Subject co-ordinators have contributed to this by evaluating standards and provision in their own subjects and identifying priorities for development. This provides a clear agenda for the school's future work while also showing what is done well. The headteacher and governors have also produced a long-term vision and strategic plan for the school covering the next three years, which focuses, rightly, on raising standards in Year 2 and, in the longer term, on rebuilding the school's roll to its former levels. The school improvement plan for the next academic year is not yet in place, awaiting the outcome of this inspection. However, the previous year's plan did not tackle the problem of low standards in Year 2 with sufficient rigour, and did not set out a clear agenda to show how this would

be addressed. Consequently, the problem remains. The school has, however, been successful in setting challenging targets for Year 6 pupils and taking appropriate action to meet those targets.

50. Although there is a commitment to monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, this is not fully effective in practice in terms of its impact on the standards achieved by the pupils, especially in Year 2. The monitoring and development of teaching are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that low expectations are eliminated where they exist. The school has made a good start on implementing performance management procedures. The headteacher's objectives, and those of most teachers, are effectively linked to whole school targets and priorities. However, apart from in Year 6, where the teacher's target for pupils' progress is very specific and measurable, others are less specific and there is no objective, other than the headteacher's own, relating to the progress of Year 2 pupils, which is the school's main priority for improvement. This weakens the effectiveness of the system. There are appropriate procedures for the induction of new staff. Training for staff is matched to the needs of the school as a result of monitoring and to the needs of individuals identified through appraisal.

51. The governors play an important role in shaping the future direction of the school. They have a good awareness of what the school does well and what needs to be improved, and they have a supportive and constructive relationship with the headteacher and staff. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities efficiently, except in the provision for information and communication technology, and carry out the majority of their work effectively through committees. As well as supporting the headteacher and staff, governors pose critical questions about the school's performance and are actively involved in monitoring standards and the quality of curricular provision. For example, the Curriculum Working Group recently focused on geography, and governors were involved alongside staff in sampling pupils' work and examining documentation. However, the criteria by which governors make decisions about areas to focus on are not clearly enough linked to whole school priorities. For example, although information and communication technology is a developing area which still has some weaknesses, this has not been chosen as focus for governors' monitoring activities, despite the fact that considerable expenditure has been allocated to it.

52. The school's financial resources are used well to support teaching and learning. The budget is monitored carefully by the administrative officer, headteacher and governors' finance committee. Efficient financial procedures ensure that governors have a clear view of how the budget is spent throughout the year. There are clear links between the budget and the priorities identified in the school development plan. Over the past few years, careful and efficient financial management have ensured that the school did not incur a budget deficit, despite its falling roll. The governors are concerned to ensure that the school gets good value for money. They discuss alternative sources of supply and question the headteacher and staff about the rationale behind proposed expenditure. However, although the priorities in the school development plan are costed, the criteria for judging how effective spending has been are too vague to be of any real use to governors. The financial reserves carried forward into the current year are within acceptable levels and the school now has an appropriate contingency fund of between four and five per cent of its total budget.

53. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. There is an appropriate number of teachers, who have suitable experience to match the needs of the curriculum but difficulties with recruitment have led to the headteacher taking over a class. The school has an above average number of teaching assistants, who support a range of pupils, including those with special educational needs, in classes and when withdrawn for extra help. There is a suitable number of other support staff in the school. The midday staff provide good support and make an enthusiastic contribution to school life. The administrative officer works very efficiently to ensure the school's smooth everyday running. The caretaker maintains the school well.

54. The school has satisfactory accommodation overall. Classrooms are of an adequate size but the hall is cramped for assemblies, lunches and physical education. There is limited storage space, and the storage of furniture in the hall reduces its size. The library accommodation is adequate and a

new computer suite has just been installed. The building allows disabled people access and toilet facilities for the disabled are available. The playground has recently been resurfaced and there is an adventure play area with a soft surface. The small, grassed area and playground are used well to support the range of physical activities on offer and for break times. The indoor accommodation for Reception children is sufficiently spacious to support their learning. However, the designated outdoor play area has no covered area. Consequently, access and use are dependent on the weather.

55. Levels of resources, which were identified as inadequate in some areas at the last inspection, have been improved. The new computer suite has improved the provision for information and communication technology but there is insufficient hardware to support the teaching of the controlling and monitoring element of the curriculum. Resources for design and technology, geography, historical artefacts and games equipment are now satisfactory. Resources in mathematics, science and physical education are good. In the Foundation Stage, resources for outdoor play and role-play activities are inadequate to meet the needs of young children. Neither are there sufficient resources to help develop children's knowledge of different cultures.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to raise standards further and improve the quality of education provided for the pupils, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Raise the standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 in English, mathematics, science and history by:

- raising expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and providing sufficiently demanding work for them, especially those who are more able;
- ensuring that enough time is devoted to developing pupils' writing skills, particularly in producing extended pieces of work;
- developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in a planned way across the curriculum;
- ensuring that individual pupils' targets contain enough challenge;
- making sure that the school development plan sets out clearly how the low standards in Year 2 will be improved and that it includes specific and measurable criteria by which to judge the success of the action taken to bring about improvement.

(Paragraphs 2, 3, 13, 16, 17, 21, 25, 49, 70, 71, 73, 75, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 84, 88, 90, 104, 105)

2. Raise the standards achieved by pupils throughout the school in information and communication technology by:

- Making sure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are fully covered;
- Giving sufficient time to the subject;
- Ensuring that there are enough resources to teach all aspects;
- Developing ways of using information and communication technology as a tool for learning across the curriculum;

(Paragraphs 3, 5, 21, 92, 96, 99, 103, 108, 109-112)

3. Improve and formalise assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics and ensure that assessment information is used effectively to guide teachers in planning the curriculum;

(Paragraphs 38, 81, 92, 99, 103, 108, 112, 115, 119)

4. Increase the rigour with which the quality of teaching and learning is monitored to ensure that high expectations are maintained.

(Paragraphs 46, 50, 51, 87, 108, 112)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

1. Seeking ways to improve the range of extracurricular activities on offer.

(Paragraphs 24, 119)

2. Improving the planning and resources for role play and physical development in the Reception class.

(Paragraphs 1, 15, 23, 57, 59, 60, 61, 65, 66, 68)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

34

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	0	4	17	13	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	50	38	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

YR – Y6

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

156

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

32

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

4

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

43

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

17

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

19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	14	5	19
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys				
	Girls				
	Total	13	12	18	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (71)	63 (61)	95 (86)	
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys				
	Girls				
	Total	12	14	12	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (64)	74 (61)	63 (61)	
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)	

Numbers of boys and girls are omitted where the total of either in the year group is ten or fewer.

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	13	11	24
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	11	13	
	Girls	10	8	11	
	Total	23	19	24	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (68)	79 (64)	100 (88)	
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	12	
	Girls	10	10	9	
	Total	22	21	21	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (73)	88 (73)	88 (73)	
	National	72(70)	74 (72)	82 (79)	

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	4
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	110
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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)	6
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y1

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	138

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	353534
Total expenditure	338916
Expenditure per pupil	1822
Balance brought forward from previous year	(500)
Balance carried forward to next year	14118

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	156
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	13	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	22	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	39	0	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	42	5	2	7
The teaching is good.	76	20	2	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	31	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	18	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	87	13	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	71	22	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	20	2	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	20	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	33	27	7	13

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

57. Children are admitted to school during the year in which they become five, either part time or full-time, depending on when their fifth birthday occurs. Overall, when children enter the school, their attainment is below average for their age. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with these children. The quality of teaching and learning, including that for children with special educational needs, is satisfactory overall. Appropriate attention is paid to finding suitable activities for the children in more formal lessons that help to broaden and consolidate their learning. However, provision for role-play is too limited in terms of both scope and frequency. By the end of the Reception Year, children's achievement is satisfactory and most are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development, creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, standards are below those found in most schools for this age group in aspects of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their physical development. This is similar to the judgements of the school's last inspection, apart from the children's physical development, which was judged to be broadly in line with national expectations. Provision for the children under five was identified as a key issue in the previous report, when the quality of planning was said to require more specific detail. This issue has been addressed and the planned curriculum now takes into account the areas of learning as recommended in the national guidance for the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. Most children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. This shows good achievement and reflects the good teaching, where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. The children are very settled and eager to explore new learning. They show appropriate confidence and form effective relationships with adults and other children. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when it was noted that the children found it difficult to relate to new situations, routines and adults. They have learned to share and take turns while playing and working together. However, a number of children need encouragement to link up with others while at play rather than playing alongside them. The children behave well and show consideration towards each other. They listen carefully to others both in the classroom and during school assemblies, when they are very well behaved and try their best to join in with the hymns and prayers. Most children respond positively and are developing mature attitudes to their learning. Children are able to attend to their personal hygiene appropriately and most can undress and dress themselves independently before and after physical education, but sometimes need help with socks and footwear. The children enjoy learning. For example, when participating in independent activities, they sustain their interest well and show great pleasure in what they achieve. All children settle quickly to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, and show ability to concentrate for appropriate periods of time.

59. Personal and social development is strongly promoted in all areas of learning and the planning is thorough. A strong feature of the teaching is the warm, encouraging relationships with the children and the caring nature of the provision that allows all children to feel secure and to grow in confidence. The adults provide very good role models for the children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to develop an awareness of others. However, although teaching of relationships and interactions are of good quality, the provision for free play is too limited in terms of scope and frequency. Although the Reception teacher does ensure there is sufficient time for the children to choose activities for themselves, the

opportunities for children to initiate their own ideas through role-play are limited and the range of resources available to extend fully this aspect is insufficient. Neither do the resources available provide children with the opportunity to experience cultures other than their own.

Communication, language and literacy

60. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. However, by the time they complete the Reception year, many are still below the recommended Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy. On entry to the school, a significant number of children show limited communication skills. Many children only use familiar words in isolation to identify what they do and do not want. Few children construct more complex sentences. In general, staff provide appropriate opportunities for children to communicate with each other while at work and play. Throughout all the areas of learning, both the Reception teacher and nursery nurse talk to the children individually and in small groups, to ensure that all children extend their vocabulary and have the ability to use their language and communication skills for a suitable range of purposes. All adults show children that they value their efforts at communicating. However, opportunities for children to take part in role-play are limited, which restricts their language development.

61. Although the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in this area of learning, the direct teaching of literacy is generally good and most children achieve well, particularly in writing. This was clearly evident in the analysis of children's work. For instance, on entry to school, most children know that marks on paper carry meaning and attempt to ascribe meaning to the marks. By the end of the Foundation Stage, many children confidently 'have a go' at writing independently that sometimes includes punctuation. For example, a more able child wrote, "I went to the prk (park) wiv (with) Alen and I went to Asd (Asda) as well. At Asd wey (we) got som (some) shopin (shopping)". Most children are able to use their ability to hear the sound at the beginning of words in their writing. The children sustain attentive listening and enjoy listening to stories. They handle books well and most know that information can be relayed in the form of print and understand the concept of a word. The higher attaining children read a range of familiar words in simple texts independently. However, there is a wide spread of ability and although many children are confident to share their reading books, they need encouragement and support to talk about the books, using the appropriate vocabulary. Consistent strategies used by the teacher and nursery nurse enable the children to recognise and say the initial sounds of words. The Reception teacher has appropriately adapted the National Literacy Strategy to suit the needs of the children in the class and give them the opportunity to develop independence in selecting an activity. Account is also taken of the few Year 1 children in the same class. However, the provision of a full range of activities to develop the children's use of language and carry out 'pretend' writing tasks through play is limited.

Mathematical development

62. Children's mathematical abilities are very varied when they start school and many have difficulty in using and understanding the vocabulary associated with practical mathematics. The satisfactory teaching in the Reception class successfully promotes children's understanding of number, although few attain the Early Learning Goals for mathematical development by the end of the Reception year. Most children can count and know the numbers one to ten, have an idea of what they represent and are able to write the numbers unaided. Most children are familiar with the terms 'add' and 'take away' and confidently relate addition to combining two groups of objects and subtraction to 'taking away' when solving problems involving objects up to ten. Although many children use language such as 'more' or 'less' to compare two numbers, their use of mathematical language underlying the development of mathematical concepts such as measurement, time and capacity, for example, is below average. Children are provided with an appropriate range of practical experiences, such as sorting, matching, number puzzles and building with bricks to help develop mathematical ideas. Most children are able to recognise and name a triangle, circle, square and rectangle and can recreate a repeating pattern with two colours.

63. The more formal activities for mathematics are introduced carefully to the children and in general meet the needs of all children. The work is well planned and the children are encouraged to develop their mathematical understanding through play activities and singing rhymes. For example, during the introduction to a numeracy lesson on the passage of time, the teacher skilfully used the song *Here we go round the Mulberry Bush* to help children learn and order the days of the week. The group activities reinforced the children's understanding and use of mathematical language about marking specific moments in time. For example, they drew pictures to show that "Yesterday we painted" and "Tomorrow we will be singing". The classroom is also used appropriately to display numbers and encourage children to explore mathematical ideas.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children enter the school with a basic level of general knowledge which the Reception teacher builds on effectively to help them know more about the world around them. The teaching and learning are good overall and most children are on course to meet the expected standard by the end of the Foundation Stage. Activities are well planned and organised and make careful links between the recommended areas of learning and National Curriculum subjects. Taking themes such as 'Ourselves' 'Teddy Bears' and 'Living Things', activities are planned to enable children to explore aspects of the environment and to relate the work to their own experiences. Through the use of books, photographs and a suitable range of materials and equipment, the children are encouraged to develop their scientific, historical and geographical knowledge and understanding. Support staff are used effectively in small group situations when direct teaching is involved. All adults use skilful questioning techniques to focus children's attention and probe their understanding. Children show interest in features of living things and know that animals need a home to keep them warm and safe. They match adult animals to their young and recognise and name the main parts of their own body. Most children identify the type of house they live in as being detached or semi-detached and draw pictures of "my family who live in my house".

65. In their work on the theme of 'Teddy Bears', the children compared old and new bears and learned about famous story bears, such as Rupert Bear and Winnie the Pooh. They begin to show an emerging sense of chronology by sequencing pictures of humans growing old, starting with a newly born baby and ending with an elderly person. However, their use and understanding of the language of time, such as 'then' and 'now', are still at a relatively early stage. An appropriate range of construction toys and materials are provided for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. Their skills in design and technology are well developed, as seen in their drawings and evaluations of the models of swings, slides and see-saws that they made with construction toys. The children become increasingly confident in using the computer and demonstrate the necessary skills in their control of the mouse when clicking on icons to make things happen in programs that support their literacy and numeracy development. Although the children are introduced to a suitable range of religions and beliefs through the personal and social areas of learning and through the religious education programme followed throughout the school, there are insufficient role-play resources that reflect a variety of cultures.

Physical development

66. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, in this area of learning and children make satisfactory progress in developing physical control and awareness of space. However, their large movements are relatively uncontrolled and generally below the standard expected for children of their age. The enclosed outdoor play area adjoining the classroom has insufficient equipment for these young children to engage them in learning to refine their skills in balancing or clambering. Nor are there any wheeled toys for the youngest children to develop co-ordination and control by riding tricycles or pushing prams. The area itself is not used frequently enough for free physical play or as an extension to the classroom activities. Children only have access to the facilities at break times. However, they do use the hall for physical education lessons, which are usually taken by the

headteacher. Good learning in these lessons is due to the teaching of specific movement skills and the imaginative approach that keeps all children involved and active. For example, in showing them how to move as tigers, hop as kangaroos and gallop as horses, the children learn to move in various ways. However, although they move freely and with pleasure, their movements are at a relatively early stage of development and lack the control to adjust speed or change direction. When playing in the outdoor area, children in general negotiate the space successfully when running and chasing other children but the lack of resources does not enable them to fully extend their physical development.

67. Manipulative dexterity is well developed and the children's ability to handle tools such as scissors and operate a computer mouse with control is good. Many activities allow them to learn, practise and refine their manipulative skills and children competently pick up small items of equipment when engaging in play activities and make marks with a variety of painting and writing materials. Teaching fully maximises what the children can do in this aspect of their physical development. Good features of teaching relate to the opportunities provided for children to improve their skills in manipulating tools and the good teaching of skills during physical education lessons.

Creative development

68. Children make satisfactory progress in developing their creative skills and most are on course to meet the nationally recommended levels of attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory and most activities are appropriately resourced and organised. However, the range of resources for role-play is insufficient and does not fully enable children to play out imaginary situations and dress up accordingly. When they do have the opportunity, children use the resources imaginatively and are able to sustain aspects of characters for appropriate periods of time and talk about what they are doing. For example, while at play in the 'Vets', children re-enacted the role of vets by treating the soft toy animals, giving them injections and checking them over with the stethoscope. In general, they play co-operatively as part of a group and can collaborate well when using the construction toys. Their creative play outdoors, however, is restricted by the lack of suitable equipment for the youngest children to freely access on a daily basis.

69. Children sing a variety of simple songs from memory and particularly enjoy joining in with the sounds and actions of songs such as *Old Macdonald had a farm*. In their artwork, children paint teddy bear portraits and print with a variety of objects such as cotton reels and stickle bricks. They learn how to mix colours when painting and clearly they are receiving effective support and guidance from adults while they work. They use a variety of materials to create their favourite meal on a plate and have used pasta, pieces of polystyrene and tissue paper to make necklaces. When building with bricks and the construction toys, children make homes for the farm animals and, after discussion and with the support of an adult, make a farmyard scene and engage in imaginative role-play of life on a farm.

ENGLISH

70. Overall, standards in English are well below average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. This is a decline from the standards in the last inspection in Year 2, and an improvement in standards in Year 6. Standards in Year 2 have fallen because teachers' expectations of average and more able pupils are not high enough. The work they are given is not sufficiently demanding. These low expectations have been reflected in the school's performance in the national tests for Year 2 over the past four years. Standards have risen in Year 6 because the teacher has very high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. As a result, the school exceeded its target for 80 per cent of the pupils to reach Level 4 and above in the 2001 national tests and is on course to meet its target in 2002, although there are more pupils with special educational needs in this year group than the previous one. Many pupils enter the school with low levels in communication, language and literacy. As they move from Year 1 to Year 2, their achievement in English is unsatisfactory, overall. However, pupils with special educational needs make sound progress towards their targets as they are given suitably adapted work and receive good support in the classroom. As pupils move from Year 3 to Year 6, their

achievement overall is very good as they start from below average standards and reach above average levels of attainment by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. Pupils' progress accelerates during their last two years in school, when they make significant headway. Generally, girls make better progress than boys in Years 1 and 2. No significant differences were noted in Years 3 to 6, although test results show that boys performed better than girls in the last three years.

71. In Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are below average. In general, pupils listen attentively to stories, explanations and instructions, as when the teacher in Year 1/2 read *The Jolly Witch* by Dick King Smith and pupils had to listen carefully for a given word or phrase which they were holding and then hold it up for all to see. In Year 2, some pupils speak fluently and audibly and use an appropriate range of vocabulary to give explanations and answer questions, but others lack the vocabulary to express their ideas and are not confident enough to ask questions. This was evident in a lesson for Year 2/3 pupils when they were asked to explain the meaning of 'reading with expression'. They were unable to do this without the teacher's help. There is not a strong enough focus on developing pupils' speaking skills in a structured way, although the school has recently identified this as an area for improvement and is beginning to address it.

72. Pupils in Year 6 attain good standards in speaking and listening. However, this is not the case in all year groups in Years 3 to 6, as pupils in the Year 3/4 class have weak skills in this aspect of English. This is because there has not been enough emphasis on developing them in the past. Where these skills are weak, attainment in writing is also low as a consequence. In Year 6, pupils speak and listen confidently in a wide range of situations. For example, in a history lesson, they listened with rapt attention as the teacher talked to them about how radios and other audio equipment have changed since 1948. They then took part with interest in discussions about this aspect with a partner and the rest of the class. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils spoke clearly and articulately to the whole class when they explained the outline of the story they were writing.

73. Pupils' reading skills are well below average in Year 2. More able pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds or the context to help them tackle new words, but they do not read with great fluency. Average pupils read repetitive texts carefully but find it difficult to read words out of context. Less able pupils do not have a sound range of phonic skills to help them work out unfamiliar words. Pupils do not know how to locate simple information in the library. Pupils enjoy reading sessions with their teachers as when Year 2/3 pupils read *The Princess and the Pig* in a literacy lesson.

74. In Year 6, standards in reading are above average. The more able pupils read their books fluently, confidently and accurately and with appropriate expression. They enjoy reading and make effective use of non-fiction texts to support their learning across the curriculum. Average pupils have a sound variety of strategies to help them tackle new words. They understand what they have read and can discuss the ideas, events and characters in a story. Pupils generally make good progress in making inferences and deductions from a text. Less able pupils sometimes misread words and do not realise from the context that they are incorrect. They are unable to give a detailed account of what they have read. Pupils are able to locate and make use of information in non-fiction texts and have a good understanding of how to use the library, which they do weekly.

75. Pupils' writing skills are well below average in Year 2. The work completed by pupils during the year shows that they do not have a growing awareness of the structure of a story because they have too few opportunities to learn and practise story writing. They write simple instructions and explanations, and, occasionally, retell a story they have heard. More able pupils do not write with sufficient imagination and draw on a limited range of vocabulary. Average pupils write simple phrases and sentences but their writing lacks variety, and spelling and punctuation are often inaccurate. Only a few pupils in Year 2 use capital letters and full stops with complete accuracy. Less able pupils find it difficult to sustain a clear, simple sentence structure. There is an over use of undemanding worksheets, often requiring predictable or one word answers, which limit the style, quality and quantity

of pupils' writing. In Year 1, pupils are making good progress in writing and are achieving average standards for their age.

76. In Year 6, standards are above average because pupils have many opportunities for developing style, structure, fluency and imagination in writing. Writing is often extensive, lively in content and rich in interesting vocabulary. Pupils are equally competent in writing fiction and non-fiction texts and choose words carefully for effect whatever the chosen genre. For example, one pupil wrote "Snow was melting in my mouth like a raindrop slowly melting into the pavement" and another "The great black cloud which will soon be hovering over many houses and streets is extremely hazardous, scientists confirm today." Whereas average and more able pupils use complex sentence structures and their spelling and punctuation are generally accurate, the work of less able pupils relies on more simple grammatical structures and there are more errors in spelling and punctuation. Pupils develop a neat handwriting style and take a pride in the presentation of their work.

77. In all classes, standards in literacy are the same as those found in English. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory in Year 2, and good in Year 6. It is largely satisfactory in other year groups. Some teachers use worksheets in some subjects for pupils to record their work. These are often superficial in their coverage of topics and do not develop pupils' writing skills or broaden their experience of the purposes of writing. There is too little use of information and communication technology to enhance writing and to develop skills of word processing and editing.

78. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning in English is unsatisfactory overall. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection. However, it is good for pupils in the Year 1/2 class. Low expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are at the root of underachievement in the subject. Planning does not take full account of the wide-ranging needs and abilities of pupils in a mixed-age class. The teacher's expectations of average and more able pupils in the mixed Year 2/3 class are not sufficiently challenging so they do not achieve the standards of which they are capable. In a Year 2/3 lesson on the use of descriptive language to write a character profile, more able pupils were constrained by having to write simple sentences inside a framework with a given number of lines in a confined space, although they were capable of more demanding and imaginative work. However, in the same lesson, the teacher's lively approach to a shared reading session motivated pupils to read aloud with expression and enthusiasm and skilful questioning helped to reinforce their understanding of the story. The work completed by average and more able pupils in Year 1 shows that they have far more opportunities to develop writing skills, and, in particular, to write freely and at length.

79. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, which is an improvement since the previous inspection, although the evidence in pupils' books shows that pupils in the Year 3/4 class have experienced some unsatisfactory teaching during the year. The quality of teaching and of these pupils' work has improved significantly since the beginning of the summer term as a result of higher expectations and more demanding work. Teachers achieve a good balance between teaching reading, comprehension and writing skills, and the mechanics of grammar, spelling and punctuation. There is a growing emphasis on developing pupils' speaking skills, which is already beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Pupils study a wide range of texts, including myths, legends and fables, and authors from Shakespeare to Roald Dahl. They have opportunities to write stories, playscripts, autobiographical accounts, film reviews and persuasive texts. There is plenty of variety and pupils are encouraged to think about and develop the style and content of their work. In a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher focused pupils' attention on what makes a good piece of writing by examining with them selected scripts that had been assessed at Level 4 and Level 5. Pupils were encouraged to identify the features and characteristics that made them successful, with a view to incorporating these in their own writing. Each pupil's folder contains assessed pieces of work, which the teacher uses skilfully to show them how to improve their own writing and reach a higher level of attainment.

80. A good feature of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is the use of hard-backed drafting books, which develop in pupils a sense of the importance of writing and give it status throughout the key stage.

Pupils take a pride in these books and present their work neatly, even though it is at the drafting stage. In using these books, pupils develop as writers, rather than just completing exercises, and they can see their own progression and improvement from year to year. Every pupil is given targets in English, which are written on their 'target board' and displayed prominently on their desks. These are generally very effective in focusing pupils on what they need to do to improve their work and achieve a higher level. These features are all improvements since the last inspection. However, more able pupils in Year 2 have targets that do not challenge or extend them sufficiently.

81. The co-ordinator is an English specialist and has a clear picture of where improvement is needed. She monitors planning, has sampled pupils' work and has carried out literacy observations in every class. Although she has identified the reasons for underachievement by some pupils in Year 2, this has not had an impact on raising standards for those pupils. Assessment procedures are sound in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. However, assessment information is not used effectively in Year 2 to enable the teacher to plan sufficiently challenging work for some pupils. Marking varies from unsatisfactory to good: some gives too much praise for mediocre work and few constructive comments on how pupils can improve their work, whilst some is analytical and evaluative and shows pupils clearly what they need to do to reach a higher level. Classrooms have book corners containing an appropriate range of books and the subject is adequately resourced overall. The library is small but provides a central focus for developing pupils' research skills.

MATHEMATICS

82. Pupils in Year 2 attain below average standards. This represents a decline in standards from the results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests, and also from the findings of the last inspection. Both of these reported average standards. Standards are lower because no pupils are achieving Level 3 and there is no evidence that they are given work at this level. However, the results of a standardised test that was administered recently show that nine out of the 24 pupils in Year 2 gained above average scores, and three of these gained scores well above average. This indicates that although they have the potential, there is insufficient planning and challenge for pupils who could attain higher levels in mathematics. Since 1999, when standards were low, the overall trend in mathematics for this age group has been upwards, matching the national average in 2001. Assessment data show that the present Year 2 pupils had average attainment in mathematics when they entered the school. Achievement and progress are, therefore, unsatisfactory, overall. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress.

83. In Year 6, standards in mathematics are above average. This matches the results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests and is a good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be average. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. The trend over the past years has been erratic, with above average standards in 1999, and below average in 2000, rising again in 2001 to above average. Past results show that there have been differences in boys' results compared with those of girls, but this was not apparent during the inspection. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.

84. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory overall because expectations of the pupils are too low. This represents a decline since the previous inspection. However, pupils in Year 1 are making good progress and achieving average standards. Work is planned to meet the demands of the National Numeracy Strategy but, in general, in the Year 2/3 class, pupils in Year 2 receive work at Level 2 and are not challenged sufficiently to take them further. For example, although pupils successfully add and subtract simple sums, no evidence was seen in their books that those who can manage a higher level work with higher numbers. Although pupils work in halves and quarters, there is no planning to take them on to recognise two fractions with the same value, such as four eighths equalling a half. Pupils in Year 1 successfully count forwards and backwards and, in a good lesson, they were focused well on their work because the teacher had

pitched her challenge accurately for them and their level. They understand the terms 'longest' and 'shortest,' and they estimate some of their work before working out and checking. Some pupils in this group are working at Level 2, for example, ordering and using place value to 100. Year 2 pupils in Class 3 understand how to find the missing numbers in simple problems, and in one lesson, they were calculating which pairs of numbers give a total of 25. They order numbers to 100, but are not being stretched to use larger numbers. In their work on shape, space and measure, there is a small amount of work showing the use of centimetres, but Year 2 pupils are not challenged to use standard units of weight or capacity.

85. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are learning to apply mathematical skills to everyday problems, as when they mix paint and find out the various quantities needed. They understand equivalent decimals and fractions, and work in ratios and proportion. Teachers plan well and ensure that pupils are challenged enough to forge ahead. For example, they use mathematical terms well, and understand words like rhombus, parallelogram and trapezium. Pupils in Year 6 have worked out the perimeter of a football pitch as though they were the linesman. They have surveyed the number of times that lottery numbers have occurred, and have produced charts to show their findings. Although there is evidence of data handling in all Year 6 pupils' work, it is not covered as thoroughly as the other parts of the mathematics curriculum.

86. Teachers have established good relationships with pupils, and often create an atmosphere of "young mathematicians" at work. For example, in a very good Year 4/5 lesson, the teacher provided high levels of challenge, which encouraged pupils to respond very well. They were eager to answer questions and were very well focused on their work. Pupils respond very well to this and are keen to work and achieve. Year 3 pupils understand fractions, use pictograms and solve word problems successfully. They know how to round up, find the perimeter of a triangle and are beginning to rely less on worksheets and more on their own workings. Teachers ensure that pupils progress as they get older, including those in mixed age classes. Year 4 pupils tackle problems of supermarket shopping, work in decimals and use standard units for weighing. Progress is very good by the time pupils are in Year 6, and this is borne out by the results of all the testing that the school carries out and analyses. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards their own targets.

87. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented successfully, and the mathematics co-ordinator has had recent training, keeping up to date with the latest trends. The subject is satisfactorily led, although the monitoring of teaching is insufficiently rigorous. The headteacher examines teachers' plans, but there is no time allocated for the support and observation of teaching and learning in the classroom. Recent staffing difficulties have prevented this but the school has already identified this as an area for development. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed appropriately across the curriculum, as when they measure accurately in design and technology. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning in mathematics. There is a good range of resources to support teaching and learning in the subject.

SCIENCE

88. In Year 2, standards are well below average, which is lower than the findings of the school's last OFSTED inspection when they were below average. This is similar to last year's end of key stage assessments by teachers when standards were very low. By Year 2, pupils, particularly those capable of higher attainment, make unsatisfactory progress. A well below average percentage of pupils achieves average standards and none exceed the average. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress suitable to their targets and receive appropriate support from the learning support assistants. No significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls were observed.

89. In Year 6, standards are average. This is higher than the previous inspection in 1997 when standards were below average. There has been a trend of steeply rising standards since then but present standards are lower than last year's very high test results, when all pupils attained the national

average and almost half exceeded it. This is simply due to differences between year groups and not is significant. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and more able pupils, have made good progress in Years 3 to 6 with rapid progress in Year 6. This inspection finds no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

90. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory, overall, in Years 1 and 2. The lesson seen during the inspection was satisfactory and promoted sound progress. An analysis of pupils' work in Year 1 also showed evidence of satisfactory teaching and learning. However, scrutiny of Year 2 pupils' work showed unsatisfactory learning, particularly for those pupils capable of higher attainment. This results from the lack of challenge and low expectation in the teaching. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection, when teaching was also unsatisfactory. In the Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher provided clear planning for a simple investigation but did not differentiate between Year 1 and 2 pupils or identify those capable of higher attainment. The Year 1 pupils showed average understanding that plants need water to grow and identified which plants provide food for humans. The scrutiny of work shows Year 2 pupils record their observations using simple tables but there is little evidence of expressing their own ideas. They use simple equipment and make related observations of investigations but do not consider whether they are fair ones. Pupils describe the similarities and differences between materials but do not consider why some materials are suited for specific purposes. Their work on the forces of pushing and pulling is not extended for those capable of moving further.

91. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make steady progress. In Year 6 they are good and pupils make more rapid progress. Overall, pupils' achievement is good. This shows a good improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when the quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties are well supported in lessons, which enables them to keep up with others. Lessons are well planned, resourced and executed. In all lessons seen, teachers managed pupils' behaviour well and pupils were generally keen to learn. Pupils enjoy science and work co-operatively on investigations. They try hard to concentrate on their work and make effective use of the time available. Good management means that the pupils carry out investigations safely and sensibly and all make steady gains in their knowledge. Pupils co-operate well and discuss their work sensibly. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher showed a relaxed and confident manner and pupils were keen to learn. He explained very clearly irreversible and reversible changes in materials and gave amusing examples to ensure understanding: "If I burn your tie can I turn the ashes back into a tie?" The lesson had very good pace and tight time limits were set for the investigations.

92. The headteacher is looking after the subject until a new co-ordinator is appointed. He has monitored the arrangements for the subject and has a clear view of its strengths and what needs to be improved. However, the monitoring of teaching in the subject is not rigorous enough. Since the previous inspection, teachers' knowledge and confidence have improved. The school now follows national guidelines when planning the curriculum, and resources have been much improved. Opportunities for pupils to develop investigative and enquiry skills have also been improved in Years 3 to 6. The subject makes a sound contribution to developing pupils' numeracy skills as they display findings in graphs and charts and make accurate measurements. Limited use is made of information and communication technology. It is sometimes used, for example, to display and interpret data in graphs, but sensors are not available to measure temperature or monitor other external events. Little use is made of the Internet or CD-ROM information for research, or of word processing to write up investigations. There is very little work on display to represent the subject. The science curriculum is balanced and all required aspects are covered across the school. However, assessment procedures are not rigorous enough and do not inform the planning of future work. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils work co-operatively on investigations and are developing awareness of environmental issues.

ART AND DESIGN

93. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe the teaching of art and design in the Year 1/2 and Year 2/3 classes. Judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' work, displays and teachers' planning throughout the school. Indications are that standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. This judgement is similar to that made by the school's previous inspection in Year 2, but shows that standards have improved in Year 6, where the quality of teaching is now good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similar standards to other pupils. All pupils make good progress and achieve well when compared to the standards attained on entry to the school. There are no variations in attainment between girls and boys. The broad range of experiences planned for pupils is evident in the work on display and in their previously completed work.

94. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, in Years 1 and 2, although there is evidence of good teaching in the Year 1/2 class, where examples of pupils' work are of a high standard. Pupils get off to a good start in Year 1, where the teacher provides well planned opportunities for them to draw, paint, print, make collages and work with a variety of different materials. For example, pupils have experimented with tools and techniques for collage making, using a range of materials such as fur, fabric, foam and different papers to create colourful designs that show good use of pattern, texture, shape and form. There is good teaching of basic skills, such as observational drawing techniques. In the lesson that was observed, good features included clear explanations by the teacher, so the pupils knew exactly what was expected of them, and skilful support and guidance as they worked, which enabled pupils to improve their observational drawing skills. Pupils were encouraged to feel the textures of different fruit, look closely from different angles and use their pencils in different ways to achieve a variety of effects. In Year 2, pupils' work is of a satisfactory standard. They have experimented with pastels and paints to draw portraits and have made a collection of materials that are associated with hot and cold colours. In the lesson observed, on the theme of weaving, the Year 2 pupils explored a range of simple techniques such as using wool for weaving on paper plate card frames and threading wool over and under the stems of pipe cleaners. The Year 3 pupils in the same class, experimented with weaving ribbons on grill trays. Because the lesson was well organised the pupils made good progress and produced weavings that pleased them. Overall, however, their art and design work shows little individual flair and imagination.

95. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 3 to 6. An analysis of the pupils' work across all the year groups indicates that the teaching of a range of skills in art and design enables pupils to make good progress in their learning and to achieve high standards. In the Year 3/4 class, where pupils have studied the work of Rosina Wachtmeister, they produced some innovative collage pictures in a similar style using materials, foil, music scores and paint. Their observational drawings of musical instruments show skilful use of pencils and charcoal to achieve good results. This is further developed in the Year 4/5 class, where pupils have drawn models from different angles that show great attention to detail, line and form. Some particularly impressive examples of their work were the drawings of a life model in a box. The very good teaching in this class of specific art and design skills has clearly enabled pupils to produce work of a very high quality. They have used a 'window' viewfinder to isolate a small section of paintings by artists such as Monet and Van Gogh and, through the use of various graphic media, developed landscape drawings of their own that show very good use of line, shape, colour and tone. Examples of their work on shape, based on the work of Gustav Klimt, are also of a high quality. This includes work with textiles where pupils have contributed to a wall hanging by designing, dyeing and stitching pieces of cloth using some of Klimt's motifs. The Escher style drawings are further examples of the pupils' skilful use of pencils to design and create images in his style. The range of work in three dimensions is well developed. For example, photographs of pupils' work in Year 6 show they have transposed the painting by Picasso, *Tomato Plant with Decanter*, into card sculptures, and have also used paint and pencils effectively to produce pictures inspired by the work of Picasso. This has been extended further to pupils creating distorted pictures by cutting magazine pictures into strips and slightly separating them before sticking them down again. A

strong feature of the teaching of art and design in the school is the effective use made of sketchbooks to teach observational drawing skills.

96. The co-ordinator for art and design is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and provides good leadership for the subject. She has produced a detailed scheme of work for each class that provides a good structure for the progressive development of pupils' skills. To go with each theme, the co-ordinator has also put together a pack of materials and examples of pupils' work that provide very good support for teaching. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, as at that time the units of work had yet to be completed and to have an impact on the standards achieved. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Although there are no formal procedures, all pupils have their own portfolio of art work and a sketchbook that stays with them throughout their time in the school. Art is integrated well into many subjects across the curriculum. Good examples of this were seen in history, geography and in literacy, where pupils had written poetry based on their study of Escher's work. However, there was less evidence of pupils incorporating information and communication technology in their art and design work. Resources are adequate to support the teaching and learning of each unit. The subject enjoys a high profile in the school and makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. For example, there are many opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively with others, to explore the work of artists from other cultures, to reflect on their significance and to develop an appreciation of the many forms of art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. During the course of the inspection, it was only possible to observe one lesson. Evidence gained from this lesson, an analysis of previous work, teachers' plans and discussions are sufficient to show that pupils attain average standards for their ages throughout the school. This shows a good improvement from the previous inspection, when attainment was below expectation in Year 2 and poor in Year 6. Progress was also poor but now all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in developing their skills and understanding within the design and make process. Achievement is sound and there are no significant variations in attainment between boys and girls.

98. The previous inspection indicated unsatisfactory teaching and learning as teachers lacked expertise and pupils learnt little. Indications are that they have now improved and are satisfactory across the school. From a scrutiny of previous work it is evident that, by the end of Year 2, pupils understand that the making process begins with a plan. They use pictures to develop and communicate their designs. They select from a range of materials, tools and techniques and learn to join various materials. In Year 1, pupils have been soundly taught to make moving pictures using flaps, levers, slides and split pins. In Year 2, the teacher has given appropriate opportunities for pupils to make glove and stick puppets. Pupils have also made buggies, which use axles and have tested some of them. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate products and suggest improvements are not always given. In the Year 4 lesson taken by the co-ordinator, teaching and learning were good. The teacher gave good instruction for pupils to use a hacksaw and pupils made good progress in developing their cutting and joining skills as they constructed a basic photo frame. They worked sensibly and safely and co-operated well. In Year 5, pupils have disassembled two electronic games and have generated their own designs using the knowledge of circuits learnt in science. They completed a design challenge to make an alarm to protect a valuable object on display. Previous work in Year 6 shows pupils have been soundly taught. They have designed and made moving toys using cam mechanisms. Designs contained diagrams with labelled parts and pupils demonstrated an awareness of constraints. There was, however, little evidence of evaluation in terms of what worked well or what could be improved.

99. The co-ordinator manages the subject efficiently. There has been a significant improvement in the quantity and range of resources, which are now adequate for the new guidelines. The school has introduced national guidelines, which ensure that skills are now systematically built on but assessment

arrangements are not in place to record pupils' skills at the end of each unit. Pupils measure accurately to support numeracy, but there is little use of information and communication technology in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

100. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe one lesson in geography in the Year 1/2 class. Judgements are based on the analysis of pupils' work throughout the school, discussions with pupils and teachers and on the school's planning. The evidence indicates that pupils reach average standards in Year 2 and Year 6. This judgement is the same as that made at the previous OFSTED inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress relative to their previous attainment. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

101. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. In the previous inspection, teaching varied from good to unsatisfactory. An analysis of pupils' work in Year 2 shows they have studied, and are aware of, features of lifestyles in Bangladesh at a level that is typical for their ages. For example, they have looked at aspects of life on Bhola Island, such as the housing, food and schooling, and compared it with life in their own country. Pupils' work shows that they have a satisfactory knowledge of local places. This is due to the teaching, which places a strong emphasis on studies at a local scale. They identify the school site on maps and aerial photographs and locate the main features. This knowledge is built on well in Year 3, where pupils give directions from the school to specific points in the local area. In the Year 1/2 lesson observed, the teacher harnessed the pupils' interest well as she read about and discussed the life of a child living in Hong Kong. By encouraging pupils to ask and answer questions, the teacher developed their understanding of the differences between living in Hong Kong and living in England. Previous stories read to the pupils have introduced them to features of places as far apart as Africa and Canada. An analysis of pupils' work shows that they gain a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of places, and suitable opportunities are provided to develop their geographical skills. For example, in the Year 1 / 2 class, pupils develop an awareness of what the weather is like around the world by locating where the hot and cold places are on a world map. Pupils in the Year 2/3 class develop a greater understanding of how temperatures, rainfall and sunshine conditions vary around the world. The work planned is appropriately challenging for most pupils to respond to at their own level.

102. The analysis of pupils' work indicates that the pupils' local knowledge continues to be built on effectively in Years 3 to 6. In the Year 3/4 class, pupils carry out a survey of why people choose to live in the immediate area, the jobs they do and how far they travel to work. They present their findings in a variety of ways, such as pie charts and bar graphs. However, little evidence was seen of the use of information and communication technology to record their findings. Pupils in Year 4 visit Harwich and learn how the main features and characteristics compare with those of their own locality. They plan the best route there using an Ordnance Survey map, noting direction, co-ordinates and features they pass on the way. They are aware of how people affect the environment and consider how different waste materials, such as paper, metal and garden waste can be recycled. Pupils draw on their knowledge of the local area well in Years 5 and 6. They have compared the geographical features that appeared on maps of Whitton village 150 years ago with those of the present day and have identified differences in terms of the human impact on the natural environment. Year 5 pupils debated issues to do with the local traffic and considered how effective improvements such as bus lanes and 'park and ride' have been. Their writing shows that they have undertaken a decision-making exercise on the advantages and disadvantages of having a by-pass. In Year 6, pupils have made steady gains in their knowledge and understanding of water and its effect on landscapes and people. They visit the River Orwell and carry out an enquiry into the cause of the pollution, putting forward reasons, such as the building of factories and the sewage that flows into the river. The more able pupils consider what could be done to resolve the issue. Most pupils learn to use appropriate geographical vocabulary when carrying out an enquiry inside and outside the classroom.

103. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator, who has developed detailed plans to support the teaching of geography throughout the school. This is a significant improvement since the school's previous inspection, when it was said that planning in geography did not develop progression in geographical skills. Curricular provision is broad. It includes use of the local area, fieldwork in other locations, consideration of environmental issues and a strong element of varied map work. This promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well as, for example, they learn about their own and other cultures, know how people affect the environment and have the opportunity to work together. The analysis of work shows that the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are applied appropriately in the subject. However, information and communication technology is not fully used to support pupils' learning in geography. Formal assessment procedures are an identified area for development. Resources are adequate to support the teaching of all units and good use is made of visits to places of geographical interest to enhance the quality of pupils' learning.

HISTORY

104. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe the teaching of history in Years 4, 5 and 6. Judgements are based on this evidence, an analysis of pupils' work in all years, discussions with pupils about their work and an examination of the school's planning. Indications are that standards are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. It is unsatisfactory in Year 2 because average and more able pupils do not make sufficient progress. Pupils' attainment and achievement in Year 1 are satisfactory. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the subject. Standards in Year 2 are lower than they were in the previous inspection, whilst those in Year 6 are similar. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

105. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory overall, although it is satisfactory for Year 1 pupils and some lower attaining Year 2 pupils. Average and more able Year 2 pupils are not given sufficiently demanding work to enable them to reach high enough standards. Most of the work in pupils' books consists of drawing or colouring in pictures. Pupils show an emerging understanding of chronology and can relate episodes from stories of famous people's lives. However, there is no evidence that they are able to use simple sources of information to answer questions about the past or that they understand why people acted as they did. Pupils have learned about Grace Darling, Mary Seacole, George Stephenson and Boudica by listening to the teacher and drawing or labelling pictures. They have not developed sufficient historical enquiry skills. There is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills through history. In Year 1, however, pupils have investigated toys 'now and then' and have had more opportunity to handle artefacts and learn through enquiry.

106. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. It is good for more able Year 4 pupils and for those in Years 5 and 6. Some very good teaching was observed in Year 6. In Year 6, pupils have sound factual knowledge of many aspects of life in Victorian Britain and are able to describe the characteristics of Victorian society using a broad range of appropriate terminology. They use information texts very well to find out about education, transport, leisure and living conditions. The teacher clearly has very high expectations of the pupils and there is very good development of literacy skills through the subject. Pupils create well-structured work to explain what they have discovered and present this in a neat and organised manner. The features of good teaching observed during the inspection include a strong emphasis on historical enquiry. Teachers question pupils skilfully to encourage them to work things out for themselves. For example, in a Year 4/5 lesson, the teacher questioned pupils about the differences between education in Ancient Greece and their own experience. This led pupils to an understanding of how the role of women has changed. Teachers also provide opportunities for pupils to empathise with those who lived in previous times. For

example, pupils in the Year 4/5 class expressed their feelings and opinions about what it might have been like to be a child in Ancient Greece. Some Year 4 pupils wrote letters as if they were evacuees during World War 2 writing to their parents.

107. A very good lesson in Year 6 illustrated the best features of teaching in Years 3 to 6. Pupils were finding out about some of the changes that have taken place in Britain since 1948 and some of the reasons for these. What made this lesson so effective and interesting for the pupils was the teacher's use of artefacts, including radios from different decades, an old gramophone and 78rpm records. The pupils were fascinated as the teacher wound up the gramophone and showed them how it worked. Skilful questioning made pupils think carefully: "What decade do you think this is from? What clues does it give us as historians?" The teacher created an 'artefact timeline' by showing them an original valve radio, a transistor radio, and others leading up to the latest pocket sized radio with earplugs. Pupils were given the opportunity to handle and examine artefacts, to speculate and analyse the evidence. There was a very good emphasis on historical enquiry and investigating the reasons for change, which led pupils to a good understanding of the impact of new technologies on life since 1948.

108. The curriculum is well planned to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum. However, the recent re-organisation into six classes has resulted in some inconsistencies as topics were originally assigned to year groups and all classes except Year 6 now contain pupils from two different year groups. In addition, the work covered by Year 2 pupils throughout the year does not reflect the topics in the curriculum plan. The subject leader was absent on leave at the time of the inspection. However, the headteacher, in consultation with other staff, has carried out a thorough review of the subject as part of the school's effectiveness audit. The review has identified the same priorities for development as this inspection. There are currently no formal procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. The only way that standards and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored is through the headteacher's scrutiny of teachers' planning and the observation of work on display around the school. Although there is some use of information and communication technology to support learning, such as using CD-ROMs for research, this is not sufficiently well planned and developed throughout the school. The subject makes a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they learn about the legacy of ancient civilisations to modern society, discuss moral dilemmas and work collaboratively to discuss and share ideas. Resources in the subject are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. Judgements are based on a limited amount of previous work, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. Standards are below average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Across the school, pupils have had insufficient opportunities to use computers and to develop appropriate knowledge and skills in all aspects of the programme of study. Until recently, resources were inadequate and there was little direct teaching. The recently installed computer suite, staff training and class lessons are beginning to improve things, but standards in Year 6 are not significantly higher than those lower down the school. Standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were well below expectations at Key Stage 1 and further ground was lost at Key Stage 2. Overall, pupils' achievement in the subject is unsatisfactory, including that for pupils with special educational needs. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.

110. In Year 2, attainment is below average because of a lack of previous opportunities and the time allocated to the subject is much lower than in most schools. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress developing text and data handling skills and they have no experience of using controllable toys. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is average in handling and communicating information, but standards of attainment are low in controlling, monitoring and modelling as the school lacks some basic resources, such as sensors and equipment for control technology. Pupils have few opportunities to control events in a predetermined way, sense physical data, and explore patterns and relationships with the aid of

computer simulations or models. Pupils make little use of computers in other subjects beyond simple word processing and some data handling in mathematics. They do, however, use the Internet and CD ROMs for research, and pupils in Years 3 to 6 have e-mail addresses. Year 4 pupils used the Internet to research their topic on the 1940s and Year 6 searched for information on artists.

111. Learning in the subject is unsatisfactory as teachers are not providing the full range of opportunities. Teaching, therefore, is unsatisfactory, although the skills of teachers have improved since the previous inspection, when teaching was not judged but pupils' progress was poor. Previous work shows pupils have been soundly taught to handle text. In the Year 5 lesson seen, the teacher gave clear instructions to reinforce working with text. Pupils used a variety of fonts, colours and sizes. They were able to cut and paste their work and imported graphics. This was also evident from previous work on the story of the birth of Jesus.

112. The previous co-ordinator left almost a year ago and only a watching brief is kept on the subject. This means that teaching and learning are not sufficiently monitored. The headteacher is aware that, although there has been a significant input of training for all staff under the government initiative, expectations have to be established at an appropriate level. The school has adopted national guidelines to ensure that pupils receive a balanced programme but this is not fully in place. There is a clear policy for using the Internet. There is no assessment in place to track pupils' progress and assist lesson planning. There is little evidence of work on display or in books across other subjects and no portfolio of previous work is kept. Although the school has made some progress since the previous inspection, insufficient has been done to improve the provision and training adequately. The subject does not fulfil National Curriculum requirements.

MUSIC

113. Pupils throughout the school attain average standards for their age. This judgement is the same as that made by the school's last inspection. Pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory. However, their achievement in singing is good. They sing a variety of songs with enthusiasm and skill, matching the dynamics of their voices to the requirements of different songs. For example, when singing as a large group, they change from singing lively songs to very reflective hymns, performing both with complete conviction and equal enjoyment. It was not possible to observe any music lessons in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection. However, during assemblies, pupils respond with enthusiasm and sing a variety of challenging songs from memory. Their singing shows good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. No evidence was seen of the younger pupils having access to or being able to play instruments during the time of the inspection. Music enhances the self-esteem of pupils with special educational needs and they make satisfactory progress. No differences in the attainment of boys and girls were seen.

114. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. All teachers take their own class for music, but it was only possible to observe one lesson in the Year 4/5 class during the inspection. In this lesson, pupils were learning about how sounds could be captured and modified through the use of a tape recorder. The lesson was well presented with pupils having the opportunity to listen to and identify the recorded voices of people familiar to them before preparing their own recording. They responded well to this and enjoyed listening to the recordings. After working in small groups to prepare their own performance, the pupils showed an enthusiasm to record their work. At this time in the lesson, the pupils used their voices appropriately to act out a situation rather than using them to explore melodic patterns. Most pupils listened to their own taped recordings attentively and made positive comments about the recordings of others. However, there were a few pupils who found this more difficult and consequently the pace of the lesson was slowed down by the teacher having to stop and correct the few who were not always productively engaged at all times. Overall, pupils enjoyed the lesson and most made a good effort. They made satisfactory gains in their knowledge of different kinds of voices and began to extend this to exploring the different sounds they could make with a variety of implements they found in the classroom. When performing their own composition to

the class, they demonstrated an appropriate sense of the effects of different textures with their improvised instruments. Overall, however, very little evidence was seen of pupils using instruments or learning how to play them during the inspection.

115. The music co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, which he uses well to challenge and extend pupils' musical experiences. When leading the singing for instance, this inspires pupils to improve their performance, while at the same time encouraging active participation. As a result, the pupils respond with enthusiasm, experience the sheer joy of singing and achieve well. Pupils learn new songs well and show that they can sing expressively with good attention to breathing, diction, phrasing and pitch. Although there has been a choir in the past, at present it is not functioning. Neither is there any extra-curricular music tuition available for the pupils. However, pupils do have the opportunity to participate in school productions. The policy is currently subject to re-drafting. The school has a coherent scheme of work based on units of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. The subject is adequately resourced with an appropriate supply of percussion instruments. However, the range of tuned instruments and recorded music to listen to is more limited and an identified priority for the subject. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology in the subject. Overall, singing has a high profile in the school and makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. The pupils sing reflective pieces of music from a range of cultures and have the opportunity to collaborate in performing. The school has rightly identified the procedures for assessing the level of achievement being reached by pupils as an area for development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. During the inspection, it was possible to see only three lessons. All lessons were taught by the co-ordinator. Lessons were observed in Years 2, 3, and 6, and the topic for all classes was within the framework of athletics, and involved the various techniques of running. Indications are that standards in Year 2 are average and those in Year 6 are above average. This is broadly the same as at the time of the last inspection. Planning is good and the schemes of work are devised well so that all pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The school reports that by the time pupils leave at the age of eleven, all are able to swim, using recognisable strokes. Overall, pupils' achievement in the subject is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.

117. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good, overall, with some that was satisfactory and some very good. In Years 1 and 2, where teaching was satisfactory, pupils learned various running styles. They warmed up well and their attitudes and behaviour were very good. The teacher used praise and encouragement frequently and lessons were appropriately organised and managed. Safety and consideration for others were emphasised very well, and all pupils were aware that they must be careful when running about. Pupils worked equally well as individuals, in pairs, and as a whole class. Skipping, running slowly and fast and turning were all included and pupils learned how to change direction and vary their speed. In the Year 3/4 lesson, pupils practised these skills and then created simple sequences that they demonstrated to the class.

118. In the very good Year 6 lesson, it was clear that pupils had made very good progress and were now able to apply the skills that they had previously learned to the various activities in the lesson. They worked out their own warm-up sequences with a simple directive from the teacher to "start at the top and work down". They all understood that this warm-up is very important in athletics in order to avoid any strain on muscles. They are improving their running skills for Sports Day later in the term. Pupils worked in pairs, devising a sequence that had to increase the heart rate. Safety was again emphasised here, and all pupils were aware of the risks in such a limited space, and consequently behaved responsibly and with maturity. Pupils were free to work out their own sequences and as a result produced some very good work. Turning, skipping, shuttle running, sprinting and pace running were all included. A very good part of the lesson involved pupils learning to start a sprint properly,

responding to the commands, "Take your marks", "Set", and then starting. Every pupil in the class was able to do this successfully at the end of the teaching session. They were invited to comment on their feelings when held in the starting position, and they said that "eager" and "ready to go" were the things uppermost in their minds. The planning and organisation of the lesson were very good and enabled pupils to learn very well. As a result, their attitudes and behaviour were excellent and they applied themselves very well to the work. This was an interactive sports coaching session, and standards of attainment were above average as a result of this very good teaching and working partnership between teacher and pupils.

119. There is a good, broad and balanced programme of physical education across the school, based on national guidelines. An area for development is the opportunity given to younger pupils to evaluate their own performances, saying what they liked and perhaps how it could be improved. This good practice is already seen in Year 6. Leadership of the subject is good and provides a strong role model for the rest of the staff. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The subject is well resourced. Informal assessment procedures are satisfactory, and there is a limited range of extracurricular activities.