

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST ROBERT SOUTHWELL ROMAN CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Kingsbury

LEA area: Brent

Unique reference number: 101543

Headteacher: Mr Ben Cassidy

Reporting inspector: Savi Ramnath

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th September 2001

Inspection number: 196148

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Slough Lane
Kingsbury
London

Postcode: NW9 8YD

Telephone number: 020 8204 6148

Fax number: 020 8905 0287

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Arthur Soares

Date of previous inspection: 30th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21334	Miss Savi Ramnath	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Science	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements Equal opportunities
9053	Ms Viv Phillips	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?
4486	Mr Michael Weller	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
20063	Mr Gerry Slamon	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education Music Modern Foreign Languages - Italian	How well is the school led and managed?
21899	Mrs Gillian Lawson	Team inspector	Geography History Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Special educational needs

Religious education was inspected as part of Section 23 of the Education Act and will be published as a separate report

The inspection contractor was:

WES World-wide Education Service
Canada House
272 Field End Road
Eastcote
Middlesex
HA4 9NA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Robert Southwell is an above average sized, voluntary aided Catholic primary school for children aged between three and eleven. There are 312 full-time pupils and a further 58 children who attend the off-site Nursery part-time. There are 11 classes and all except the two Reception classes and one Year 5 and Year 6 class include pupils of mixed ages. The school is over-subscribed and nearly all pupils are Roman Catholics, with the majority of them coming from a variety of housing situations in the immediate and surrounding areas. The pupils represent a wide range of backgrounds and the school population slightly reflects the composition of the community in which it is based; 22 per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Thirty-nine of these pupils have been identified as needing additional support in English but only four are in the very early stages of learning English. Twenty-eight per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs, nine of whom have statements setting out the specific provision to be made. This is above the average for schools of this size. Approximately nine per cent of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals, a figure which is below the national average. Overall, the attainment of children who are admitted to the Nursery covers the full ability range and not all the children who enter the Reception class have had Nursery provision in the school. The local authority's baseline assessment indicates that children's basic skills when they start the Reception classes are in line with or above those expected of children of a similar age in the borough. Since the last inspection the previous deputy headteacher has been appointed headteacher, and there has been significant improvement made to the accommodation and outdoor play areas.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective and improving school with many very good and some excellent features. The ethos is warm and caring and the school has a productive partnership with parents. This leads to very positive attitudes and very good behaviour on the part of pupils. Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6, and most pupils currently in Year 6, other than those with special educational needs, are achieving levels above those expected in English, mathematics and science. There is a shared commitment to improve, and leadership and management are very good overall. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school's commitment to high standards results in pupils achieving above the national average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Work observed in music is of a very high standard.
- Overall, it provides good quality teaching in Years 3 –6 and the Foundation Stage, which is having a positive impact on standards.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work closely together to lead and manage the school effectively. They bring very clear direction and purpose to the work of the school.
- The provision for pupils identified with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good and pupils make very good progress.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and are very well behaved; relationships throughout the school are warm, caring and supportive.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is very good. Pupils have very good social skills and a strong sense of moral responsibility. These impact positively on their personal development.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Pupils, especially those in Year 1/2 classes and in some lessons in the mixed-age classes in Years 3 to 6, are not always given work which is suitably challenging.
- The involvement of subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Not enough use is made of assessment information to raise pupils' achievement and to help meet the needs of pupils, especially those in the mixed-aged classes.
- Not all activities in the Nursery and Reception classes are planned for and the current system of monitoring does not ensure that all children experience the wide range of activities on offer.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has maintained the good standards outlined in the last inspection report of June 1997 and the key issues for improvement raised in the previous report have been addressed. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has greatly improved. The school has invested wisely in computer resources to raise pupils' attainment, which is now in line with the levels expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. Schemes of work are well established for all subjects and provide useful guidance for planning on a two-yearly cycle. Good assessment procedures are fully in place in English and mathematics and the information is well used to plan future work. The information gained in other subjects of the curriculum is not always well used for planning for pupils' individual needs. The accommodation both internally and externally has been enhanced. The quality of teaching has improved, with a higher proportion of good or better teaching than was previously seen. Overall considerable improvements have been made since the last inspection. The school is very well placed to make further progress: The school improvement plan clearly identifies some of the areas of improvement identified by the inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools*	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A	C	C	well above average
Mathematics	B	A	C	C	above average
Science	A	A*	A	A	average
					below average
					well below average

**Similar schools are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6 has risen year on year since 1997 in line with the national trend, although in 2000 the pupils' performance in English and mathematics was lower than in previous years. The fluctuation is due to the differing proportions of pupils with special educational needs. In 2000, pupils' performance in science was above the national average and that for similar schools; in English and science the results were in line with the national average and that for similar schools. In 2000, the school's targets were achieved but were narrowly missed in 2001. The school continues to have high expectations and further challenging targets are set for 2002. Progress towards achieving the targets for 2002 is good. Test results for 2000 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, were well above the national average in mathematics, above average in reading and average in writing. When compared with similar schools, results were well above average in reading and mathematics but broadly matched those of similar schools in writing. Boys and girls do equally well and the school has in place an action plan to meet the needs of pupils identified as gifted and talented.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress so that many are on target to achieve or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1. The standards of work seen for the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are above the level expected in English, mathematics and science. Music is a strength of the school and standards are well above the levels expected nationally at the end of Year 6 and above expectations at the end of Year 2. Pupils are achieving well. In all other subjects, standards are at the levels expected at the end of Years 2 and 6 except in physical education and design and technology, which exceed the expected standards at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language achieve well and make very good progress throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils are well motivated and keen to succeed. They are interested in what they do and are proud of their achievements. Their attitudes support progress in their learning. They enjoy coming to school and, as one said, "There is nothing I would change in this school".
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good – all pupils are orderly in classrooms and around the school. The playground is a very happy place as pupils co-operate very well in a wide range of games
Personal development and relationships	Very good – pupils help each other willingly and gain in confidence, as they grow older. There are harmonious community relationships between pupils of different backgrounds.
Attendance	Good – and above the national average. There are no unauthorised absences. Nearly all pupils arrive at school promptly and lessons start on time. This has a positive influence on their learning and standards of achievement.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about their work and follow established routines well. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions upon others and the respect they show for the feelings of others is excellent. Relationships between pupils and with adults are also excellent.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In nearly all lessons teaching was satisfactory or better; in one in four lessons it was good and in one in three it was very good or excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in one of the lessons seen. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when one in seven lessons was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning varies in different parts of the school: it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in all other classes.

The teaching of English and mathematics is very good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in other classes. Teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is thorough and systematic in the juniors, with good support for the development of language skills in history and geography and number skills in science. Where teaching is good the strengths include: good questioning to motivate and challenge pupils; good planning with appropriate resources effectively used to increase learning; and the demonstration of good subject knowledge which enables teachers to extend pupils' understanding. The weaknesses are mainly linked to the inappropriate match of work to pupils' abilities, especially those in Year 1/2 classes and in some lessons in the mixed-aged classes in the upper school. Also, assessment is

not used consistently to inform planning in subjects other than English and mathematics. As a result, learning is affected. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage¹ is good and prepares them well for Year 1. However, not all activities available are planned for and the monitoring of individual children's experiences is not sufficiently rigorous in ensuring that all children receive a balanced curriculum. The needs of pupils identified with special educational needs and those at the early stages of English language acquisition are being met well in lessons through the good use of support staff.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good – a broad and relevant curriculum is provided for all pupils, enriched through creative subjects, such as music, and by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The clear emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and this contributes to the good standards attained by the end of Years 2 and 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good – pupils who need extra support are identified early and their progress is carefully tracked.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good – although only very few pupils have been identified at the early stages of learning to speak English, progress in acquiring English and learning across the curriculum is rapid.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good – pupils are encouraged to be responsible and to have a mature, independent and reflective approach to learning. This helps their personal development. Good role models and a clear code of behaviour ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of moral responsibilities and behave well. Opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and awareness of cultural diversity are good. The belief and the values of the Christian faith influence every aspect of the life of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good – the headteacher and staff know each pupil as an individual and support and encourage them well. This does much to promote positive attitudes and is helping to raise standards. Good assessment procedures are in place. However, the information is not well used in all subjects of the curriculum to help plan the next stage of learning.

The curriculum meets legal requirements. Very good support offered to pupils reflects the priority given to their care and well-being. Partnership with parents is very strong and effective and contributes significantly to standards achieved.

¹ **Foundation Stage:** education before pupils enter Year 1, i.e. in the Nursery and Reception classes

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good – the headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, provides strong and purposeful leadership. They have a clear view of the way ahead and have systems to bring further improvements. The team leaders and some subject co-ordinators play their part well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good – the governors are able, active and very supportive of the headteacher. They fulfil their role well, play a full part in the school's strategic planning, and make a positive contribution to the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good – the school evaluates its performance well in a development plan and prioritises the areas for improvement. Monitoring of teaching and learning is under-developed in some subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Very good – educational priorities are supported through very good financial planning. Best value is sought when making spending decisions.

The school is suitably staffed to teach the full curriculum. Support staff make an invaluable contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. The accommodation is used and maintained very well and there is a good range of resources to support learning in all subject areas. There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning, and the subject management roles of some co-ordinators are under-developed. The application of best value principles in the school's management of resources is excellent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Parents are pleased with all aspects of the school, but they are especially content that their children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like school • behave very well at school • make good progress. <p>They are also pleased that the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a positive effect on their children's values and attitudes • expects children to work hard and achieve their best • keeps them well informed • is well led and managed. 	<p>Parents raised no serious concern. Only a very small number mentioned minor matters especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the range of extra-curricular activities

The team endorses the positive views of the parents. However, it does not share their concerns about the range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school, as this is better than that found in most primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The previous inspection in 1997 reported that standards for both seven and eleven year olds exceeded national expectations in English, mathematics, science, music and physical education, and were in line with expectations in all other subjects. In the years following the inspection, initiatives have been put into place to further improve standards: rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in English and mathematics; an increased emphasis on experimental and investigative work in science and on writing in the infants; the adoption of a schemes of work in all subjects; and, the teaching of pupils from the mixed-aged Year 1/2 classes as separate year groups for English and mathematics. All of these have had a beneficial effect on overall standards.
2. Compared to children nationally, standards of attainment on entry to the Nursery are broadly average. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage¹, which covers the Nursery and Reception classes, so that by the time they are ready to start Year 1 nearly all have achieved the Early Learning Goals and many exceed them. Overall progress is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes. However, at times progress is limited. This is partly due to the lack of rigour in monitoring to ensure that all children experience fully the range of activities on offer and insufficient planning. Whilst attainment on entry to Year 1 is often above the national average there are exceptions to this. Previous work indicates that the attainment of the previous Reception class was broadly average on entry to Year 1 whilst the current Year 2 were above average on entry to Year 1. This is a reflection of the year-to-year variation of pupils' abilities.
3. In 2000, the National Curriculum tests results at the end of Year 2 show that pupils attained standards that were well above the national averages in mathematics and reading, and average in writing. When compared with schools considered to be similar because they cater for a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, results in reading and mathematics were well above average and writing was average. Although test results since 1997 have fluctuated, they have remained above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Test results peaked in 1998, then fell in 1999 and showed a slight improvement in 2000 in mathematics but not in reading and writing. The reverse took place in 2001, with results better in writing but not in mathematics. Fluctuating standards were partly due to the variation from year to year in different pupils' abilities and the teaching of pupils in mixed-aged classes. There are no statutory tests in science at the end of Key Stage 1; assessment is carried out by the teacher. The teacher's assessments showed standards above the national average. Results for the year 2001 are better for writing, due to the school's focus on this area, but less good for reading and mathematics at the higher levels.
4. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, for 2000 show standards as well above average in science and average in English and mathematics when compared with national and similar schools' averages. Results in English and mathematics are not as good as those attained in previous years although overall

¹ Foundation Stage is the provision for children aged from three to the end of the Reception Year. QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of Early Learning Goals for the end of the Foundation Stage. These goals are sets of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development

standards in the three subjects when taken together have remained above the national average. The overall trend since 1997 is also in line with the national trend. Some of the fluctuation in results reflects the high number of pupils with special educational needs in the different year groups. Test results for 2001 are a little less good in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in all three subjects. However, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in English and mathematics but with a slight decline in science. When compared with results achieved by the same children in the tests they took at the age of seven, results in all three subjects indicated good progress and above average achievement. Statistical analysis indicates that there is no significant variation in the performance of girls and boys at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 once special educational needs are considered. Throughout the school pupils identified with special educational needs make very good progress. Pupils with average and below average ability, especially in Years 1/2 and in some lessons in Years 3 to 6, are not doing as well as they could in subjects other than English and mathematics. This is because assessment information is not used to plan work to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in these classes. As a result, pupils do not always achieve as well as they might.

5. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' achievements overall are good and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Progress is good in the juniors where the quality of teaching and learning is good. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Similar judgement was made at the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve high standards in music at the end of Year 6 and above expectations at the end of Year 2. In all other subjects, standards are at the level expected at the end of Years 2 and 6 except in physical education and design and technology, which are above expectations at the end of Year 6. Compared with the school's last inspection in 1997, standards have been maintained or improved in all subjects except physical education at the end of Year 2.
6. The school analyses its assessment data carefully in English and mathematics and the information is used well to address weaknesses and to set targets for raising standards in English and mathematics. Plans are in hand to make greater use of statistical data, for example in science. Despite the above average number of pupils with special educational needs in the 2001 cohort, the school had set very challenging targets for that year. Targets were narrowly missed due to the number of pupils with statements but were met for 2000. Despite this, the school continues to have high expectations and is confident that the ambitious targets for 2002 will be met. Indications are that pupils are on course to meet these targets.
7. Pupils achieve well in developing their literacy and numeracy skills and standards are above those typically found for their ages. The use of stories, reports and instructions are featured well in subjects such as science and geography. Pupils are introduced to appropriate vocabulary for the study of subjects such as science, music, art and ICT. This work supports the development of pupils' literacy skills. Pupils' numeracy skills are applied and developed satisfactorily in some subjects. For example, in science and design and technology, they are at the expected standards.
8. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are achieving above average standards in English. By the age of seven, most pupils speak with clarity, using a wide vocabulary. Eleven year olds have a wide and expressive vocabulary, share ideas and give well-considered reasons for their views. Throughout the school, pupils listen attentively to teachers' explanations and instructions and respond appropriately to questions. By the age of seven, most pupils read accurately and understand what they have read. Many are able to discuss their preferences. By the age of eleven, they tackle a wide range of texts confidently,

make informed choices of books and show a good understanding of elements such as inference and deduction. Many Year 2 pupils write independently with phonetic spelling and simple punctuation, while the oldest pupils in Year 6 produce varied and interesting writing, which conveys meaning clearly. There are instances of inconsistency in handwriting and insufficient insistence on good quality presentation at all times.

9. In mathematics, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above expected levels. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact in developing pupils' strategies for developing mental calculations. It has resulted in an emphasis on number and as a result many pupils by the end of Year 2 have a solid grasp of numbers. They add and subtract numbers to 20 and beyond, count forward and backwards in twos and tens and order numbers to 100. Eleven year olds show good numeracy skills. They confidently add and subtract two and three-digit numbers mentally and divide whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and 1000.
10. Standards in science are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Since the previous inspection there has been an emphasis on experimental and investigative science, which has helped to improve standards in this area of the curriculum. However, progress is sometimes limited because the needs of all pupils, especially those in the mixed-age classes, are not always met. Seven year olds confidently investigate the properties of different materials and know that pushing and pulling are different types of forces. Eleven year old pupils have a good understanding of how to plan and conduct an experiment. They can describe the main functions of the heart using sophisticated scientific vocabulary and know how to separate mixtures, for example salt from water.
11. In ICT, standards are similar to those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. In Year 1/2 older pupils successfully word process sentences onto the computer, and delete and insert letters, and some use upper and lower case type with accuracy. Many Year 6 pupils have well-developed skills in ICT and use the computers with confidence. They successfully merge text and graphics and skilfully use CD-ROMs, digital cameras and sound to enhance their work.
12. Throughout the school, pupils generally achieve satisfactory standards in art and design, history and geography at the end of Years 2 and 6. Seven year olds know to look closely at shape and form when drawing and sketching objects, and in history they learn about the lives of famous people. In geography they confidently name some of the features in the local area. Eleven year olds recognise important features of the style of several famous artists including Quentin Blake, learn to use secondary sources for research in history, and develop knowledge and understanding of the periods they study. By the end of Year 6 many have a good awareness of the local area and improve their skills of map reading.
13. In design and technology and physical education, standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Seven year olds design and make vehicles with moving parts, and in physical education, pupils use apparatus well. Older pupils access websites to generate ideas for their designs of musical instruments, whilst in physical education they develop good skills of defence, attack, invasion, receiving and passing when playing New Image Rugby. In music, standards are above average for seven year olds and well above average for eleven year olds. In all classes pupils sing enthusiastically, and many older pupils have a good knowledge of famous composers and accurately read graphic notation.
14. The school is socially and academically inclusive and gives the fullest encouragement to children from different backgrounds, but it does not specifically monitor pupils' academic performance by ethnic origin. From work observed by inspectors, however,

pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to one another. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receiving targeted support make good progress. The sensitive use of questions, collaboration between class teachers and specialist staff and the school's supportive ethos are effective in promoting the good progress of these pupils.

15. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well both in lessons and over time, making very good progress towards targets set for them in their individual education plans. Pupils meet the majority of their priority targets, through good teaching and well-planned and carefully focused in-class and small group support. Targets are challenging and are reviewed each term. Pupils with formal statements make very good progress through the appropriate specialist provision that has been developed within the school and through close relationships with outside agencies. Pupils achieve very well in regular literacy and numeracy sessions when they receive help in small groups from highly effective teachers, thereby making very good gains in skills. The school has identified a number of pupils as gifted or talented. A detailed policy and clear action plan is in place to meet the needs of these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. The previous inspection found the pupils' attitudes and their behaviour to be very good and had a significant effect on standards achieved. This is still the case.
17. The children in the Nursery and Reception classes make a positive start and quickly settle into school routines. Their personal and social skills are promoted very well. They relate well to one another and play co-operatively. Many have good levels of concentration and follow instructions. In the classroom and play areas they behave well and are developing a sense of right and wrong. By the time they start Year 1 the children are ready for the new challenges in the next stage of their learning.
18. A very high proportion of parents replying to the pre-inspection questionnaire and all those at the meeting prior to the inspection agreed that their children like school. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They relish the high expectations and level of challenge offered in inspiring lessons such as those linked to reading 'The Iron Man'. Even when teaching is not of the highest quality, pupils are very willing to work and are very keen to become involved in activities that give them the chance to try something new. In the best lessons they are highly motivated, very enthusiastic, very attentive and focused totally on learning. They are very clear that they are in school to learn, so there is a very strong work ethic. It is only when teachers expect too little of individuals or groups that enthusiasm for a task wanes. Even then, almost all pupils do what is asked of them with good grace. They want to do well and are very happy to rise to the occasion when given a demanding task. This was seen clearly in two lessons about a Shakespeare play, in the way all pupils, regardless of background and abilities, responded to exciting work on characterisation and plot.
19. Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is of a very high standard. Exclusions are extremely rare, with only one, short, fixed term exclusion in five years. The school is a very harmonious community, so any form of bullying or taunting is very unusual. In class, pupils usually listen very attentively, even if the introduction to a lesson is rather long or dull. With gentle reminders, even the younger pupils remember to listen carefully, put up their hands and not to call out. The way in which pupils use their well-developed listening skills, plus their willingness to concentrate and to keep going with a difficult task, contribute very well to the standards they achieve. When lessons are particularly successful, all pupils want to have a go, as in a Year 3/4 class where competition to generate imaginative adjectives became intense. In such lessons, pupils

are reluctant to stop work. Their behaviour elsewhere is just as good, so that lunchtimes are very pleasant occasions and the playground is a very happy place.

20. Personal development is very good, with some outstanding features. This is because the school has a deep commitment to realising its sense of Christian community in practice, with an emphasis on valuing each child as a unique individual with particular gifts and needs. As a result, priority is given to this area of work from the first days of a child's entry to the school. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds show care and consideration for others, as in their great understanding and tolerance of individuals with emotional and behavioural difficulties. They ensure that no one is left out of their games. When someone is hurt or unwell, children comfort the individual and go in search of help quickly. Their levels of respect for others' feelings, beliefs and values are impressive, as evident in the way they respond to thought-provoking assemblies and high quality class discussions such as those about remorse in 'Macbeth'.
21. There are more opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility and to make suggestions about improvements to school life than was the case at the last inspection. Pupils enjoy using their initiative inside and outside lessons. Where teaching is better and offers good opportunities for them to plan and think about their work, they make very good use of the chance to be independent, as in the best literacy and numeracy lessons. Within the day-to-day life of the school, they show a very strong capacity for accepting personal responsibility for what they do. This is reflected in many instances of thought for others and simple courtesy, as well as striving to do the right thing, but recognising when they have broken a rule. This contributes to a very high degree of trust where it is safe to try things, but people do not laugh if you make a mistake with a sum or a spelling. Relationships are of an outstanding quality.
22. Attendance is good, with levels of unauthorised and authorised absence below those found nationally. Almost everyone comes to school regularly and arrives on time unless there is a good reason for absence or lateness. There are a few instances of term time holiday absence that indicate a lack of clear understanding within the family about the disadvantages to children of missing so many lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The overall good quality of teaching has an important effect on standards. Teaching is satisfactory in the Year 1/2 classes and good in all other classes. During the inspection, 77 lessons or part lessons were observed. Of these 99 per cent were satisfactory or better. Twenty-seven per cent of lessons were good, 21 per cent were very good and a further eight per cent were excellent. In one lesson teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory because the lesson did not challenge the older pupils and the majority of pupils made little progress. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when 13 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and only 17 per cent were very good or better. The improvements in teaching are partly due to the increased monitoring in English and mathematics, implementation of schemes of work and improvements that have been made in assessment procedures.
24. Good teaching is found in all subjects, although no judgement is made about the quality of teaching in design and technology as no lessons were observed during the inspection. There is some variation in teaching between the infants and juniors. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science the teaching is at least sound in all lessons. It is very good in both English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching in music is very good across the school. In ICT and physical education, teaching is good in Years 3 to 6.

25. Teaching for the children in the Foundation Stage is good overall and has been maintained since the earlier inspection. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of children and provide a very caring environment. Relationships and behaviour are good. The support provided by the Nursery nurse and classroom assistant is good. They play an important part in creating a secure environment and help to provide the individual support and encouragement, which typifies the teaching in the Foundation Stage. Joint planning ensures that children in the Reception classes receive similar learning opportunities. Previous plans show that the range of activities organised is effective in promoting learning in all areas of the curriculum. However, plans do not always clearly identify intentions of what children will learn from each activity. As a result, interactions with children are not always sufficiently focused and adult time is sometimes spent in overseeing activities rather than in direct teaching. Although staff know the children well, the monitoring of individual children's experiences is not sufficiently rigorous to provide information that would ensure a balanced curriculum and meet the needs of all children, especially those of the more able.
26. The teaching of English and mathematics has benefited from the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. It has also benefited from the organisation into smaller groups and the use of an extra teacher during the literacy and numeracy sessions. Overall, lessons are carefully planned with clear learning objectives. Whole-class sessions are lively with brisk questioning on a shared book, for example, or a mental mathematics session. In the best practice, teachers have high expectations and there is a high level of challenge. The shared texts in English are stimulating and pupils are challenged to use vocabulary precisely and adventurously. Guided reading also ensures that pupils use texts appropriate to their attainment levels. In mathematics, very good use is made of assessment information to challenge pupils at different levels of attainment. Pupils rise to the challenge. End of session discussions are also used very effectively to reinforce learning. In the Year 1/2 classes, although reading is well taught, writing outcomes are not planned for as effectively and pupils are sometimes left unsupported. In mathematics, although assessment is effective, the pace slows and pupils lose motivation when teachers spend too long explaining tasks and organising pupils into different attainment groups.
27. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge in most areas of the curriculum. Teachers also pool their knowledge very effectively when planning in teams. The use of a specialist teacher ensures expert coverage of music. For example, in a Year 6 music lesson the teacher's very good subject knowledge of woodwind instruments enabled her to teach the pupils to identify time signatures, perform introductions to songs and to understand sound production in flutes. Pupils respect the teacher's knowledge. Their interest is further stimulated by the range of instruments available. Teachers' knowledge and use of ICT has improved through recent training, although some would still benefit from more experience of differing software. Secure subject knowledge was also well demonstrated in a Year 5 science lesson where the objectives were for pupils to know how the heart works and what it does. The teacher's knowledge of the workings of the heart and pulse rates, and the use of photographs and a model led to active discussion. Pupils consequently showed very good understanding of the concept of circulation and the function of veins and arteries.
28. Teachers have improved their planning since the last inspection. The adoption of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has considerably helped planning for English and mathematics. Planning in these subjects ensures that objectives and tasks are identified for the less able and to extend the most able. Shared planning in teams has ensured that there is less variation in teaching and attainment between classes. In other subjects, planning is inconsistent. Learning intentions are more descriptive of the

activities to be undertaken than of what is to be learned. Further, plans do not identify the provision for pupils of different abilities or ages. Consequently, identical work is often set for all pupils and high attainers are not always sufficiently challenged.

29. Teachers' expectations vary. There is a much higher degree of challenge in the juniors than in the infants at the start of the school year. This is particularly true of pupils' writing where short fragments are accepted from Year 2 pupils, or where writing tasks take the form of little more than colouring and labelling. Teachers use a wide range of methods and groupings effectively. In history and geography, stimulating artefacts and visual aids are used to promote curiosity and discussion. Portable whiteboards are used well in English and mathematics to aid note making and quick calculation and for the teacher to rapidly assess individual learning. Effective use is made of drama, role-play and dance to reinforce learning in other subjects. For example, in physical education, dance in the 1950s was linked with the history lessons.
30. Although lessons are generally well structured, with a clear introduction and a conclusion which reinforces what the pupils have learned, the use of time in the main part of the lesson varies. In Years 3 to 6 most teachers maintain a brisk pace and often set time targets for the completion of an activity. This ensures that pupils remain on task and the work rate is high. In some lessons, in the lower school, too much time is spent giving instructions, or most pupils have to wait inactively while a few demonstrate what they can do. As a result, pupil interest and motivation declines and learning is affected.
31. The management of pupils is generally good and often very good. The warm relationships between teachers and pupils result in the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. Most teachers convey infectious enthusiasm and are very positive in their use of praise. This leads to the willingness of pupils of all abilities to participate and to take risks. For example, a teacher of a Year 1/2 class very skilfully used some pupils' spelling errors to increase their understanding of letter combinations whilst pupils with special educational needs in Years 5 and 6 felt secure enough to read some Shakespeare aloud and to attempt their own witches' chants.
32. Teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory in the Year 1/2 classes and good in Years 3 and 4. Most teachers use questioning skilfully to ascertain pupils' understanding, ensuring that both boys and girls and pupils of differing abilities contribute. Teaching assistants are also effectively deployed to ensure that pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language understand and respond appropriately. Running records are kept of pupils' progress in guided reading groups. Teachers also make good use of the end of lesson discussions to review the learning objectives and to discuss with pupils how much they have achieved. They also evaluate pupil progress at the end of the week and revisit objectives if necessary. A good example of a teacher assessing need and adapting her teaching was in a Year 3/4 class. The teacher had noticed that a few pupils found it difficult to distinguish between questions and statements. She then focused on questions and the use of question marks during a small group guided reading session. Teachers give good oral feedback to pupils. The marking of work is more varied and is less consistent. Comments in English are helpful and constructive, but written comments are not given on all work in other subjects.
33. Homework is set regularly in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and used satisfactorily to support learning. Occasional research topics are set to reinforce learning in other subjects. Reading books and spellings are sent home regularly in the Year 1/2 classes.

34. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Individual teachers and classroom assistants know their pupils' needs well through careful identification and close relationships with other professionals and parents. Whole-school structures are in place to ensure regular assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress. For example, there are standardised reading and spelling tests and objective structures for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The majority of teachers have sufficient knowledge to meet identified pupils' needs. Class teachers know their pupils well and suitable work is provided for the pupils identified on the gifted or talented register.
35. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is very good, particularly for pupils who are at the early stages of English language acquisition. A part-time teaching assistant with EAL expertise supports pupils well in lessons. Effective planning ensures that work is adapted so that these pupils share the same objectives as the rest of the class. For example, pupils read a simpler version of the same story used by the whole class in a literacy session. The teaching assistant helped the pupils to vocalise their learning and supported them in making oral contributions to class discussions.

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

36. The curriculum makes a good contribution to the educational standards achieved by pupils and meets all statutory requirements. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is now broad and balanced and provides pupils with a relevant preparation for the next stage of their learning. The school has successfully tackled shortcomings identified in the last inspection report. Design and technology and ICT now meet National Curriculum requirements and aspects of these subjects are no longer under-developed, resulting in a positive effect on pupils' achievement. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught including a modern foreign language.
37. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Planning for these young children incorporates the recommended Early Learning Goals and children benefit from a wide range of activities. Although planning in Reception classes is corporate not all activities are always planned with sufficient detail to ensure that learning develops systematically. Overall, children are well prepared for the National Curriculum in Year 1.
38. Curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection and all subjects have clear guidelines and schemes of work to support teachers' lesson planning. The school has drawn on the latest guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to incorporate the most up-to-date practice, and appropriately adapted planning in most subjects. Teams of teachers are now able to plan systematically for the ongoing development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, and to provide continuity in pupils' learning. However, practice is inconsistent and work in Year 1/2 and in some mixed-aged classes in Years 3 to 6 is not always planned to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities. The governors' curriculum committee is rigorous in its approach to curriculum policy and regularly reviewing curriculum, with positive effects on standards.
39. Pupils' personal development is at the core of the school's mission statement. The detailed programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) provides well for sex education and in teaching an awareness of the misuse of drugs. Citizenship is effectively linked to the programme through a wide range of activities, including gaining

a better understanding of democracy through a mock school election, visiting the local Magistrate's Court and the work as a 'Fair Share' school. This involves pupils working with national charities to recognise and support the needs of others.

40. Provision in English and mathematics is good and has been further strengthened by the official frameworks of the National Strategies, both of which the school has implemented successfully. All pupils have a lesson each day in literacy and numeracy, and skills in these areas are well developed across the curriculum. Provision for ICT is much improved since the last inspection. It has been developed in line with recent official guidance, and meets the revised national expectations. Pupils are beginning to apply their ICT skills in other subjects.
41. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school's focus on early identification and the effective use of data collected to target support more precisely means individual needs are met quickly with successful results. The school uses a mixture of strategies for supporting pupils both in and out of the classroom. It fully meets the National Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs and is well prepared for the forthcoming revised version. Individual education plans accurately identify pupils' targets and these plans are well supported in classes. Pupils on higher stages of the special needs register have their statutory provision very effectively met through the close links with outside agencies and the good relationships the school has with other professionals and parents.
42. The provision for pupils with EAL is very good. For the majority of EAL pupils who are bilingual their needs are not pronounced and they are well catered for by an inclusive curriculum. The four pupils who are at the early stages of English language acquisition receive in-class support from a teaching assistant. Weekly planning identifies appropriate provision to ensure access to the same curriculum. The school's EAL policy contains aims that all school policies should give a positive reflection of cultural diversity. There are 24 languages spoken by pupils in the school apart from English. Other languages are celebrated in assemblies and through displays. Linguistic achievement is celebrated in classrooms. For example, a child in the Reception class was encouraged to write her name in Arabic script as well as using English spelling, whilst a Year 6 pupil was encouraged to translate a prayer from Polish into English verbatim, much to the approval of his peers.
43. The curriculum is socially inclusive and all pupils have equality of access. For example girls and boys play rugby together and participate on an equal footing in all the activities the school has to offer. The school's mission statement which heads every curriculum document ensures a strong focus on individual pupils and their needs. This results in all pupils being fully included in the life of the school. The school responds sensitively to the needs of pupils from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures. However, at times pupils in the mixed-age classes do not achieve the highest possible standards because work is not always well matched to their needs.
44. The school provides a good range of activities outside the school day. For example, sporting activities include 'Fit Kids', Gaelic football, cricket, gymnastics and athletics. Through Brent Sports Development, pupils have access to football coaching through Queens Park Rangers Football Club and opportunities to take part in gymnastic clubs and multi-sports sessions. The school has been represented at swimming galas, rugby tournaments, football festivals and fun runs with some success. The school choir has performed with Harrow Philharmonic Orchestra, and other activities include the recorder and guitar clubs, and drama. Residential school journeys take place for Years 4, 5 and 6 to Buckden, the Gordon Brown Centre and Normandy.

45. The school makes good use of resources from within and from outside the school to enrich the curriculum. All classes are given opportunities to visit places of interest relevant to their studies in school. Younger pupils visited Bekonscot, Whipsnade, the London Zoos and the National Gallery. Older pupils went on field trips to local centres, for example the Welsh Harp and Fryent Country Park. There are frequent theatre and concert trips and the school welcomes visiting theatre groups. These visits and visitors enhance the curriculum for pupils as is shown in their work around the school. For example, a recent production of 'Macbeth' inspired in Year 5 and Year 6 pupils a range of high quality discussion and writing.
46. The local community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. The school has particularly strong links with the local parish through the parish team and is well supported by the school chaplain. Good use is made of the church buildings for special services and as a resource for learning. Close links with national and local charities have enabled pupils to lead and manage campaigns to raise money for the homeless, for victims of floods and for children in need.
47. The school has good and constructive relations with partner institutions. There are good relations between staff at local primary schools and these links are used well for joint meetings and training sessions. Very good links with the main secondary schools to which pupils transfer enable a steady and straightforward movement for pupils to their next stage of education. The school has close links with local Catholic initial teacher training institutions.
48. The school's overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and continues to be a strength of the school, as it was at the time of the last inspection.
49. The school's encouragement of spiritual development is very good, particularly in its everyday life and routines, where individual experiences and significant occasions are valued. A telling example was the way in which the birth of a grandchild for a much-loved member of staff was celebrated joyfully by the children during hymn practice. In assemblies, opportunities are provided regularly for reflection on personal and wider issues, including the value of love and life in the wake of the attack on New York and Washington. These are usually very meaningful and pitched at a level where children of all ages and backgrounds can think and pray about the themes presented. In lessons, fewer opportunities are planned for reflection, critical thinking and for pupils to experience moments of inspiration than might be expected. When teachers do allow pauses for thought or provide work that inspires or moves pupils, such occasions make an invaluable contribution to spiritual and personal development.
50. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. This is because all of its work reflects the school's sense of being a community that reflects Christian values in service to its members and to the wider society. The headteacher and deputy headteacher set an example in the way that everyone is valued whatever his or her background, talents, strengths and weaknesses. This was reinforced in an assembly where weekly awards were presented. Children were reminded that in reflecting on how well someone like Michael Owen lives his life, he will be valued more for the time he gives to others less fortunate than himself than for his hat-trick against Germany. The school's ethos and routines promote children's awareness of right, wrong and other moral principles impressively, with very clear links to playground and class rules.

51. There is very good support for pupils' social development, partly as a result of the school's exceptional provision for their moral development. From the start, adults work tirelessly to help children develop a strong sense of self worth and awareness of the rights and needs of others. Sometimes in the effort to help younger individuals to develop very good listening skills and work habits, too much critical attention is paid to occasional lapses of concentration. Otherwise, the way in which adults model respect and courtesy, including that shown to pupils, is reflected in the typical high standards of children's responses and social behaviour. There are many chances for pupils to work together co-operatively and to contribute to fund-raising initiatives for charity. Older pupils, in particular, are encouraged to voice opinions and to have them acted on, as with the colour scheme in the girls' toilets and review of uniform.
52. The school's active approach to pupils' cultural development is very good, resulting in great respect for people from diverse backgrounds. This was evident during the week of the inspection when pupils were reminded about Jewish New Year celebrations. The high quality of work in music, where pupils begin to appreciate different composers and styles, contributes well to their aesthetic awareness. The use of art galleries in school and stimulating work in drama, including that with visiting theatre groups, extend cultural awareness. The skills of local people are used where possible in experiences such as International Afternoon and Indian dance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

53. One of the school's main priorities, in close co-operation with outside agencies and the parish, is to ensure that the school is a safe and welcoming place for all children, including those in any way at risk or vulnerable. Its ethos and procedures, including those for child protection, ensure that there is a stable, caring environment conducive to learning. There are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development, which are supported by the exceptional contribution of the welfare officer. She knows children particularly well and is careful to note not only the inevitable bumps and falls in the playground, but all incidents and slight changes in behaviour that might indicate a need for adult help. Attendance is monitored with care, so the school is well aware of the need to track holiday absences to improve attendance levels where possible. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying are very good. This is because they are linked to well-understood rules and an ethos of mutual support within the school community. As a result, the school is very well placed to use the quality of care provided as a platform for raising academic achievement to even higher levels.
54. The school's systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance have much improved since the last inspection and are now good. An Individual Review Record is completed for all pupils twice a year. It clearly indicates what pupils can do in all core and non-core subjects. It includes points for discussion with pupils and their parents and pupil targets. With a few exceptions, teachers' comments are detailed and give clear indications of how the pupil can improve. The school also operates a pupil transfer pack. This contains the last Individual Review Record sheet and a sample of the pupil's average work and their best work. The pack travels with the pupil from one year to the next and is intended to be used by the class teacher at the start of the year, and by supply teachers who are unfamiliar with the class. There is also a tracking card for every pupil that includes information such as reading ages, spelling ages, special educational needs and needs as a user of EAL.

55. Subject co-ordinators are expected to keep portfolios of pupils' work, although these were not in evidence for all subjects. The progressive development of skills is not only exemplified in pupils' work from Reception through to Year 6 but also discussed at staff meetings. Standardisation of National Curriculum levels is conducted through team meetings. Subject co-ordinators monitor samples of pupils' work, although this currently takes place only in English and mathematics. Although pupil progress is reviewed in team meetings at the end of the week, work is not always adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed-aged classes in subjects other than English and mathematics. A strength of the process is the identification of pupils who have not met their targets or who have exceeded their targets. The school has just started compiling targets for talented and gifted pupils. All teams identify pupils needing additional help. These are reviewed each term. Overall these systems are detailed and generally effective. However, not all teachers use the information available to them sufficiently to plan work according to pupils' needs. Also, pupils are not reminded of their targets at the start of a new year.
56. Individual teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils with special educational needs through careful and detailed assessment and the involvement and close links with other professional agencies and parents. The school provides identified pupils with very effective levels of personal support and guidance. Individual education plans are useful in enabling teachers to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress. Targets are specific and measurable and include criteria for success and have regular review dates. The monitoring and recording for pupils with a statement of special educational needs are very good and annual reviews very effectively meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. The school fulfils its aims well by providing a very inclusive education for pupils with special educational needs
57. Support and guidance for pupils with EAL is very good. New arrivals to the school are welcomed and, where necessary, support is given to the family. For example, a Tamil family was introduced to a Tamil speaker. Admission procedures are geared to ascertain cultural information and forms are designed to ensure questions about other languages are framed positively. Since 1997 a tracking record has been in place which highlights whether pupils use EAL and what other languages are used at home. In the autumn term teachers assess all pupils with languages other than English, using the local education authority Stages of Development and the QCA national guidance to assess linguistic ability and the progress of bilingual learners. Short-term targets for pupils with EAL are contained in teachers' weekly plans and an overview of targets for these pupils is contained in termly review records. In addition to the regular sampling and monitoring of all pupils' work, the headteacher ensures that the work of EAL pupils is monitored at least once a year. These pupils also receive effective in-class support from a teaching assistant with expertise in EAL.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The previous inspection report found that links with parents, carers and the community were beneficial and helped to support the pupils' learning. This is still the case. Partnership with parents begins with good quality information provided by the school, such as the lively prospectus enhanced by humorous illustrations, regular newsletters and a magazine-style annual report from governors, which is clear and easy to read. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is very good. This is because they value education and are very willing to become involved in the life of the school and to help their children with work they do at home. Parents make very good use of the link book, which is very helpful for those whose children have special educational needs.

59. The school provides information for parents on children's progress through twice-yearly individual reviews. The quality of the records used for discussion of a child's achievements and targets for improvement, halfway through the year, is very good. The written reports sent to parents at the end of the year do not always reflect the teacher's knowledge of what each child has learned and needs to do to improve, as well as the interim records. Overall, information for parents about progress is good.
60. The special needs co-ordinator has very good relationships with parents. They are kept informed of their children's progress and are invited in regularly to review meetings. A good example of this is the work done through the home school link books, which shows a very effective partnership between parents and teachers to meet the needs of each individual.
61. There is very good support for parents of EAL pupils, particularly of those newly arrived in the school. For example, when a Tamil family arrived as asylum-seekers, the school introduced the mother to a Tamil-speaking member of staff. This member of staff not only assisted with the introduction of the children to English schooling; she also provided much continuing help over a longer period of time.
62. Links with parents are very effective because the school has focused on improving what was already a strong working partnership by monitoring and reviewing arrangements for events such as open evenings, induction visits and consultation meetings. Parents responded readily to carefully targeted surveys. There is very high attendance at meetings and other occasions, including Communion Presentation Mass and at social functions organised by the Friends of the school. It is clear that the school's partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's achievements.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher provides a strong lead for the school's work. He has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and has been responsible for the good improvements made since the last inspection. His strong commitment to equal opportunities and educational inclusion underpins the school's strong Catholic ethos. The headteacher is highly regarded by staff, governors, parents and pupils, who admire his work in creating a climate in which pupils are made to feel valued. All staff are dedicated and hardworking, and share a strong sense of purpose and commitment to the pupils in their care.
64. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and team leaders, who undertake their delegated responsibilities effectively to provide a good lead to staff teams. The headteacher and his deputy, who are both outstanding classroom practitioners, have effective systems in place for monitoring the quality of teaching in order to achieve consistency of practice. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, and areas for further improvement have been identified. Subject co-ordinators give good support and informal guidance to colleagues. They monitor teachers' plans and pupils' work to ensure coverage of the curriculum and are effective in their management of the subjects. However, with the exception of the co-ordinators of literacy and numeracy, their role is not yet well enough established in helping iron out the remaining inconsistencies in teachers' practice across subjects and key stages. This is an area for development that has already been identified by the school.

65. The governors are a very well informed, dedicated group of people with a broad range of experience and expertise in financial, educational and personnel matters. Their work is well co-ordinated through committees with well-defined terms of reference and a clear plan of action stemming from the priorities in the school improvement plan. The combination of good quality information from the headteacher and observations gathered first-hand from visits, ensures that governors have a clear view of the school and areas for development. A strength of the work of the governing body is the way in which they never lose sight of the school's mission statement. At all committee meetings and meetings of the full governing body, they are reminded of the aims and purpose of the school and judge the quality of their work accordingly. The dedication of the governing body is reflected in the many very effective and innovative strategies it has put into place. The governors organise an annual conference day when they carry out a thorough review of the school's work over the previous year, and invite guest speakers to keep them informed about educational innovations. Governors arrange an annual party for governors and all staff so as to form an effective relationship between the people who are working in the interests of the pupils. Another very praiseworthy development has been that of duty governor. Governors assume this responsibility on a monthly basis, during which time they attend assemblies, sit on interview panels, visit classes and are readily available to the headteacher should the need arise. Full reports are presented to the governing body. The vice chair provides regular newsletters for members of the governing body so that all are fully informed of what is happening in the school.
66. A thorough analysis of strengths and weaknesses, involving governors, teaching and non-teaching staff and parents, was the starting point for the current school improvement plan. It is a thoughtfully constructed document, which is guiding development and is securing significant improvements as, for example, in ICT and the learning environment. The plan is clearly focused on raising attainment in all subjects, and funds are used effectively to improve the curriculum and to raise attainment. For example, spending on resources and training to implement the literacy and numeracy strategies, as well as on ICT and special educational needs, is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Continual review of the improvement plan ensures that the school remains on track to meet its targets and that priorities are still relevant to its changing needs.
67. Data analysis is thorough in English and mathematics and includes a detailed evaluation of patterns of attainment by gender. It is under-developed in science. Target setting procedures are in place, and have been usefully extended so that end of year targets are set for each individual and cohort in Years 3 to 6 in English and mathematics.
68. The management of special educational needs is very good. The deputy headteacher works hard and very successfully to co-ordinate this area. There are sufficient numbers of well-trained teachers and classroom assistants, many of whom have attended specialist training as well as training in numeracy and literacy. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are good and relationships with other professional bodies are very good. The funds the school receives for pupils with special educational needs are very appropriately targeted and efficiently managed.
69. The management of the provision for pupils with EAL is very good. Currently the co-ordinator is on leave and the headteacher is maintaining a watching brief. There is a useful policy in place, which is central to the purpose and vision of the school and a clear plan of action, which has been implemented. Training for the assessment of pupils

learning EAL has been received by the headteacher and the co-ordinator and shared with all staff. Additional funds allocated to the school have been well used to buy additional resources, including dual language texts, provide training, and appoint a part-time Tamil-speaking teaching assistant who provides very good support. The school feels it is still learning, but much is clearly embedded in practice and attitudes.

70. Financial management is very good. The school has very good financial systems in place to control the budget. Very good use is made of funds allocated for specific purposes. This results, for example, in a high level of support for pupils with special educational needs and those who have EAL. Learning support assistants are well trained to help these pupils in their learning. As a result, these pupils make very good progress. Very good financial control is complemented by efficient school administration. Day-to-day administration is very good. It is unobtrusive and effectively serves the needs of staff, pupils, parents and visitors to the school.
71. The school takes excellent steps to secure best value for money. Consultations with governors, staff and parents preceded the upgrading of computers and improving the learning environment. Quotations from different contractors are very carefully considered. There is a good emphasis on staff training to ensure that teachers are confident in using the new ICT equipment.
72. The school is staffed appropriately and there is a good balance of experience and expertise, which provides stability. The number, qualifications and experience of staff match the demands of the curriculum and of pupils with special educational needs or EAL. Teachers are well assisted in class by the well-trained learning support assistants, who work competently with the groups they are responsible for. There are very good procedures for the induction of newly qualified teachers and experienced teachers new to the school. There are also very good procedures for informing and supporting supply teachers. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is very good. Three members of the governing body have received training in performance management and are fully involved in the process.
73. The accommodation is good, and the caretaker and cleaning staff work hard to ensure that the premises are clean and in good order. There is a purpose-built nursery class and specialist rooms for music and special educational needs. The accommodation, including a shower and specially adapted toilet, provides well for pupils with special physical needs. There was a substantial under-spend in 2000 which the governors prudently held over to extend the building in light of increased baptisms in the parish. This need to extend is no longer there and the school has identified ways in which this money is to be spent. A significant proportion was spent on computer provision but spending on the existing accommodation has been given high priority. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to successfully create a pleasant, bright and safe learning environment in which its pupils can learn and play together. This is another example for its great concern for the well-being of the pupils in its care. Learning resources are in good supply and are of good quality. The school makes very effective use of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' learning and their social development.
74. The school gives good value for money. This judgement takes into account pupils' personal circumstances and prior attainment, the quality of education provided, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development, improvement since the last inspection and the outcomes in terms of standards achieved. It also takes into account the unit cost of education, which is about average for a school of this type.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to build upon the many strengths of the school and further improve the standard of work and quality of the education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff, in co-operation with the local education authority, should:

□ **Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Year 1/2 classes and in some lessons in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6 by:**

- raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve;
- completing the revision of the schemes of work for each subject so that there are clear plans, which identify the development of pupils' skills and knowledge, especially those in the mixed-age classes;
- ensuring that assessment information is used consistently to assist planning to meet the needs of all pupils.

[paragraphs 4, 10, 26, 28, 29, 30, 38, 43, 55, 97, 100, 109, 118, 119, 121, 133, 134, 141, 147]

□ **Improve the provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes by:**

- ensuring all activities available to children are carefully planned;
- reviewing the current assessment procedures to ensure that all children experience fully the wide range of activities on offer, in order to prepare them better for the next stage of learning.

[paragraphs 2, 25, 78, 83, 85]

□ **Improve the frequency and rigour with which teaching and learning in subjects other than English and mathematics are monitored and evaluated, providing, where necessary, guidance and training for staff who are to be involved.**

[paragraphs 64, 119, 124, 135, 142, 159]

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor issue should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- ensure consistency in the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work so that comments encourage pupils and inform them about ways to improve their work. *[paragraphs 32, 117]*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	16	21	33	1	0	0
Percentage	8	21	27	43	1	0	0

Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	312
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	96

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	39

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2	24	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	24
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	44	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (84)	98 (89)	98 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	24
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	44	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (89)	98(93)	88 (76)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		6	25	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	18	24
	Girls	17	14	19
	Total	38	32	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (86)	73 (95)	98 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	22
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	33	34	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (93)	72 (100)	89 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	17
Black – other	6
Indian	8
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	209
Any other minority ethnic group	22

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5:1
Average class size	25

Education support staff: Y R– Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	172

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	58
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35
Number of pupils per FTE adult	29

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000
-----------------------	------

£

Total income	761166
Total expenditure	773824
Expenditure per pupil	2098
Balance brought forward from previous year	77515
Balance carried forward to next year	64857

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

370
205

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	24	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	25	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	25	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	44	12	3	3
The teaching is good.	73	24	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	36	8	1	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	23	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	20	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	34	1	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	28	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	27	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	37	15	1	4

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

76. Children enter the Nursery in groups in the autumn term following their third birthday. They attend for three terms on a part-time basis before transferring to full-time education in the Reception class in the September of the academic year following their fourth birthday, if they meet the religious admission criteria. At the time of the inspection, there were 28 children in the Nursery and 45 in the two Reception classes, many of whom had just started school for the first time. Not all the children who enter the Reception class have had Nursery provision at the school.
77. When children start in the Nursery, their attainment overall is average. A broad and rich curriculum is offered in the Nursery and Reception classes, and most children make good progress so that nearly all are on course to reach the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage and in many areas exceed them.
78. The quality of provision for the Foundation Stage has generally been maintained since the last inspection and is continuing to give children a good start to their education in Year 1. The overall quality of teaching is good when looking at the progress that children have made from the start of the Reception year to the time they start Year 1. However, there are minor weaknesses, which need to be addressed in order to further improve the quality of provision. Although planning is appropriately referenced to the Early Learning Goals, the recommended curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes, learning intentions are not always clear, and not all activities available to children clearly identify specific learning outcomes. As a result, interactions with children are not always sufficiently focused. Adults in both the Nursery and Reception classes target individual children for observations and appropriate records are maintained. However, the monitoring of individual children's experiences is not sufficiently rigorous to provide teachers with information which will help ensure that all children receive a balanced curriculum and challenge the more able. Although the staff know the children extremely well and maintain some records of the activities they take part in, the present system makes it difficult to ensure that all children have experienced the activities planned. Whilst in both classes many informal observations are made, few are written down, so it is difficult for staff to always remember which children have had experience of the activities planned. This is essential in order to make sure that all children have a suitable balance of activities and that they build on what they already know.
79. Induction procedures are good and nearly all children, including those with special educational needs and with English an additional language, make a happy start to school life. Parents and carers have opportunities to visit the school formally but are welcome to discuss problems and concerns on a day-to-day basis. All staff who work with the children are suitably qualified and sensitive to their needs. They are involved in planning and make a valuable contribution to children's learning. The monitoring of the provision in the Foundation Stage is under-developed.

Personal social and emotional development

80. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Most children make good progress and are on target to meet, or in many cases exceed, standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. During the week of inspection a significant amount of time was spent on 'settling in' the new intake and activities were organised to

support the development of independence and confidence. Many had quickly learned the school routines such as lining up and listening quietly to the teacher, and as a result children make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. Very positive relationships have developed between children and adults that effectively promote a happy and secure environment. Children are happy and confident and most part easily from their parents and carers at the beginning of the session. In both classes, children respond positively to the experiences offered to them and show an eagerness to explore new learning situations. For example, in the Nursery, children showed particularly good concentration and persistence when they mixed powder paints to print bold and attractive patterns using a range of shapes. Older children in the Reception classes willingly share resources when playing together, take turns when using the large wheeled toys and show independence in the literacy session when they follow instructions and work without direct supervision. Children treat school property carefully, help to clear away at the end of a session and are beginning to develop an appropriate understanding of right and wrong.

81. Teaching is very good in this area, and, as a result, children learn quickly. The warm, welcoming and caring way staff respond to children is a strength, and positive relationships have developed between children and adults that effectively promote a happy and secure environment. Adults provide good role models, particularly when they talk to and question the children. All value each child's contribution. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and explain to children the reason why some behaviour is acceptable and some is not. Partnership with parents is good and makes an important contribution to the children's personal and social development. Both the Reception and Nursery classes maintain a good day-to-day dialogue with parents and carers as they come to bring and collect their children.

Language and literacy and communication

82. Overall, provision is good in both Nursery and Reception classes and the vast majority of children exceed the recommended goals by time they enter the Year 1/2 classes. Listening skills are above average and this supports children's learning effectively in all areas of learning. Despite their brief time at school, many share experiences readily and talk at length in well-formed sentences to give clear interesting information. A few less confident children speak only briefly, giving general information. Through structured play most children use language correctly when discussing their ideas in the role-play area set up as 'an office' in the Nursery and as 'The Three Bears' House' in the Reception classes. Most children listen attentively to their teacher reading stories, for example 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', and readily join in discussions. Staff introduce books well at story times, and children accurately identify the front of a book and know which way to turn the pages. Their early reading skills are developing well and many are beginning to link letters to sounds appropriately. Previous work shows that there are group sessions during which children learn the letter of the week. These are effectively followed up through activities and classroom displays in which the letter features. Younger children in the Nursery are beginning to use pencils with increasing confidence to make marks and 'trace' pictures and by the time they get to the Reception class most overwrite their names, draw pictures to communicate their ideas and have developed an understanding that writing is a means of communication. Earlier work shows that by the end of the Foundation Stage nearly all have learnt to write their names using recognisable letters and many write sentences independently, using capital letters and full stops correctly. For example, they write invitations to the Teddy Bear's Picnic, create their own 'passports' and write simple sentences about the adventures of 'Betty the Bear'.

83. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In both classes, adults are aware of the importance of spoken language and encourage this through role-play activities and individual discussions. However, opportunities are often missed during children's chosen activities to help them to extend their communication skills. There is a suitably wide range of books in both classes to meet the needs of the children. Many stories are shared and children learn the purpose of print and how books are used. Children are encouraged to take books home to share with their families and most do so regularly. Activities planned to develop writing skills are effective in helping children to become 'writers'. In both classes the children have access to writing areas, and staff encourage the children to use a wide variety of writing tools. Previous plans show that the Reception classes take part in the school's literacy programme, which has been adapted for this age group.

Mathematical development

84. Provision in this area of learning is good in both the Nursery and the Reception classes. Children make good progress and reach the level expected by the time they are ready to start Year 1. Many exceed the expected standards in number work through the implementation of the numeracy strategy. Children currently in the Nursery match shapes and sequence patterns with developing confidence. Many are learning to sort equipment according to criteria such as colour, shape and size and are beginning to explore concepts of capacity and measures when they use sand and water to fill containers of various sizes. Older children in the Reception classes know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes such as circle, square, triangle and rectangle, and accurately identify some of these shapes when making shape pictures of houses or sandwiches for the 'Three Bears'. Earlier work shows that many children by the end of the Foundation Stage successfully recognise, count and use numbers up to and often beyond ten. Many identify missing numbers up to 20 and correctly identify the different coins needed to make 10p. Children collect data about the visits made to a hospital and present the information in simple block graphs. Many use mathematical terms such as 'more than', 'less than' and 'altogether' in context and are beginning to solve simple problems and correctly use associated symbols. In both classes the children are familiar with number rhymes, such as 'Five Currant Buns', which reinforce their knowledge and understanding of number.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This is seen in the good progress children make from entry into the Reception class and what they have achieved by the time they move into Year 1. Expectations are appropriate and past work indicates that many children by the end of the Reception year have well developed skills in carrying out and recording simple addition and subtraction and in identifying missing numbers. Although adults make good use of incidental opportunities to reinforce learning in mathematics, such as when counting how many boys were wearing sweatshirts or jumpers to school, other opportunities are missed. For example, there is not always sufficient intervention using targeted questioning by adults to encourage children to apply their developing mathematical skills when using sand and water or in the role-play area.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. Overall provision for the children's development in this aspect of the Foundation Stage curriculum is good and most children meet, and many exceed, the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the time they begin work in Year 1. Children's earlier work and past planning show, for example, that many begin to

understand the needs of living things when planting seeds and investigating mini-beasts. They successfully monitor the growth of their cress seeds and learn about the life cycle of a frog. Reception children correctly name their body parts and label facial features. All children use ICT to support their learning. Some children currently in the Nursery know the function of the buttons on the computer keyboard whilst older children in the Reception classes demonstrate increasing control when using the mouse, for example to move items of clothing across the screen to dress teddy. Previous work shows that children learn about the environment through their seasonal walks and understand some of the differences between the present and the past when comparing seasonal differences in autumn and springtime. The current Reception classes have made a good start to developing their geographical vocabulary when following planned routes around the outside play area and identifying the position of the different parts of the school.

87. All members of staff promote and develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Teaching is good and children learn well. Staff provide many opportunities in both the Nursery and Reception for children to explore the natural and man-made world.

Physical development

88. The Nursery and Reception teachers make good provision for the children's physical development and the children exceed the goals expected at the end of the Foundation stage. Both classes have access to secure areas so those children can have regular opportunities to increase their confidence in a wider space. They run, jump, climb and use large wheeled toys with an increasing awareness of space. In both year groups children demonstrate sound manipulative skills when using construction toys, and when painting, writing, drawing, cutting or colouring. Most handle small tools such as pencils, scissors and glue spreaders competently, and good opportunities exist for children to paint with different sized brushes, practise writing patterns, mould clay and play-dough, and balance bricks. They take apart and build with construction toys, manipulate jigsaw pieces, pour water and sand into containers and place items accurately when engaged in small world play.
89. The quality of teaching is good. In both classes teachers ensure that children have access to a wide range of resources, including, crayons scissors and glue. This increases their ability to use and control tools. In the outdoor areas adults interact well with children. They have a good awareness of the children's safety and take every opportunity to support and extend their physical skills and development.

Creative development

90. Provision to promote children's creative development is satisfactory in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Most children attain the level of skill necessary to reach the Early Learning Goals. All children mix colours and learn to use paint and brushes with increasing accuracy and in the Nursery they learn the techniques of printing very quickly. Previous work shows that they have had experience of a variety of techniques including painting, printing, collage and drawing. In the drama role-play area children use their imagination and act out situations they have observed; for example, they prepare a meal in a kitchen in the Nursery and assume the role of the bears in the 'Three Bears' Cottage' in the Reception classes. Children know a range of simple songs and rhymes and respond to changes of pace and volume as they sing. Most are able to perform actions in time to music.

91. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have high expectations of what the children will achieve. They enthuse and motivate the children to work hard and learn new skills. All work is highly valued. Where intervention by adults is particularly well judged during imaginative role-play situations, children make good progress in developing their social and language skills.

ENGLISH

92. Results in the National Curriculum tests for 2000 show that standards attained by seven year olds were above average in reading, and average in writing. When compared with similar schools, results were well above average in reading and average in writing. At the end of Year 6, standards were average when compared with all schools as well as similar schools. The trend at the end of Years 2 and 6 shows that although results have fluctuated they have remained above the national average for the past three years. Test results at the end of Year 2 show that boys performed better in reading whilst girls did better in writing. At the end of Year 6 the performance of boys was not as good as that of the girls. However, the difference in performance between boys and girls currently in Years 2 and 6 is not significant.
93. Standards overall in English are good and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is good in the Year 1/2 classes. The vast majority of pupils speak clearly and confidently in whole-class sessions, for example giving explanations of what they have previously read, and using appropriate vocabulary. They listen very attentively to their teacher and to each other. Pupils' speaking and listening in Years 3 to 6 is very good. Most speak confidently and articulately. Pupils reading 'The Iron Man' used oral language adventurously to explore ideas and to show their appreciation of imaginative vocabulary. Older pupils reading 'Macbeth' used an appropriate formal register when speaking in role. They were able to give judgements of Macbeth's character, supporting their opinions by referring to events in the play. Boys and girls are equally articulate. Pupils with special educational needs spoke enthusiastically about what they enjoyed in a performance of Macbeth. Pupils with EAL were able to improvise dialogue in a drama lesson as effectively as other pupils in the class
94. Standards in reading are very good throughout the school. At the end of Year 2, pupils of all abilities read regularly and with enjoyment. They are able to discuss their preferences. High attaining pupils read ambitiously and voraciously, showing excellent understanding of events and characters and tackling texts aimed at older children. Even lower attaining pupils are able to read texts with simpler vocabulary and sentence structure. They sound out words and self correct using phonic and contextual cues with confidence. At the end of Year 6, all pupils read regularly and belong both to school and public libraries. They read fluently and with expression. Lower attainers make occasional errors with longer words and difficult vocabulary but are able to work out meaning from context. All are able to discuss their preferences in authors and genres, and the events and characters in books. Higher attainers show a well-developed appreciation of an author's purposes. Many are less aware of the use of library classification systems to locate information.
95. Standards in writing are good overall. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls. Although by the end of Year 2 there are examples of good writing this is variable and not sustained across Year 1/2. The range of types of writing, fiction and non-fiction, has widened since the previous inspection but previous work shows much of the writing for the first half of the year was fragmentary.

Higher attaining pupils sequence their writing logically and add interest to their sentences by using a variety of beginnings. They accurately spell frequently used words and choose appropriate and precise vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils are able to write in clearly punctuated sentences, using full stops and capital letters appropriately. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Some words continue to be spelt phonetically but simpler words are spelled accurately. Handwriting is more varied. No pupils are using cursive script by the end of Year 2. Although writing is legible, average and lower attaining pupils are not always distinguishing between upper and lower case letters. Some writing in handwriting exercises is less well presented than in completed work in English books. Standards in writing observed during the inspection were no more than satisfactory.

96. Standards in writing at the end of Year 6 are good and writing observed in lessons was often very good. Pupils are offered opportunities for a range of types of writing, such as stories, poetry, explanations, letters, diaries and arguments. Higher attaining eleven year olds organise their writing well into coherent paragraphs. They employ complex and varied sentences and are able to sustain a story of several chapters. Their writing is fluent and neatly presented. Pupils of average ability are also able to punctuate their work accurately and to use paragraphs. They vary sentence structure and use connectives. The content is lively but not always coherent. Some spelling is careless and work is not always checked carefully. The content of the writing of less able pupils is interesting to read but punctuation and spelling are less accurate and simpler sentence structures are employed. Handwriting is inconsistent. A number of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are still printing rather than using cursive script.
97. Teaching in the Year 1/2 classes is satisfactory. Where teaching is effective, for example in whole-class shared reading sessions and guided reading sessions, stimulating texts are chosen and teacher questioning is lively. The teacher also encourages pupils to make connections with other stories they know, building on their knowledge and understanding. Praise is used positively and pupils of all abilities are expected to respond. As a result, pupils of all abilities reading the story 'Suddenly' could recall characters and events in the story and could make predictions about what would happen next. This included pupils with special educational needs who were helped by teaching assistants to focus on the text. Word level phonic skills and spelling are also taught well in whole-class sessions, for example, Year 1 pupils being encouraged to identify words with the initial letter 's' in the story, and Year 2 pupils being encouraged to use the whiteboard to spell vowel-consonant-vowel combinations. Teaching was less effective where pupils were expected to write independently. Learning was limited because the task was not explained clearly, expectations were not sufficiently high, writing was not modelled sufficiently and, in some instances, insufficient support was provided. In one class, pupils were not provided with word lists or dictionaries, so many were frequently asking for spellings. The result was that some pupils were slow to begin writing. Only the most able pupils produced writing of any length or with interesting content.
98. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good, with some examples of excellent teaching. A wide repertoire of teaching styles is employed, including role-play. Teachers' questioning is brisk, challenging and fully inclusive. Teachers have high expectations that all pupils will participate, and lessons are well planned and prepared to ensure that pupils of different ages and abilities can succeed. Consequently, pupils of all abilities in the Year 3/4 classes showed very good understanding of Ted Hughes' use of description in 'The Iron Man'. They were stimulated to write as vividly in their own alternative story beginnings. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from being

in smaller groups but having access to the same learning objectives as their peers. As a result, pupils of all abilities in Years 5 and 6 have enjoyed 'Macbeth', are able to make judgements on character and have used very imaginative language when writing in role. For example, one pupil wrote: "I have done a deed too powerful to control. I have killed my lord, my guide. My head is preoccupied with thoughts." Pupils with EAL also learn effectively. They are very well supported and encouraged to vocalise their thoughts before putting them in writing.

99. Pupils are very well behaved and show very positive attitudes to learning. In Year 1/2, pupils join in enthusiastically, repeating the refrains in the story. They all are willing to have a go at spelling and are tolerant and constructive in helping others when they make mistakes. They are very attentive. Where concentration or interest wavers it results from weaker teaching such as unnecessary intervention, or insufficient guidance and support for writing tasks. In Years 3 to 6 pupils of all abilities respond to the challenge. They are all willing to contribute to discussion, for example suggesting alternative story beginnings. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 willingly improvise, act a role or question each other. They are very appreciative of one another's efforts, often spontaneously applauding. Concentration is good and pupils persevere with demanding tasks.
100. The adoption of the National Literacy Strategy and team planning have ensured a greater consistency of approach across classes. There are no marked variations between classes as identified in the previous inspection. All pupils have full access to the English curriculum. The organisation into smaller teaching groups and the deployment of an extra teacher during the literacy session has helped teachers focus more on differing needs. Tasks and learning objectives are well matched to pupils' levels of attainment in Years 3 to 6. This was less evident at the beginning of the year in the Year 1/2 classes. The English curriculum is enriched by opportunities for drama for all classes and visiting theatre groups and writers.
101. The assessment of pupils' attainment, recording and reporting are much improved. Marking is helpful and constructive, particularly for older pupils. Comments on English in pupils' Individual Review Record, with a few exceptions, are detailed and formative. All pupils have literacy targets.
102. The subject is well led. The National Literacy Strategy is fully implemented. Training was given initially by the English co-ordinator and the headteacher, and in the last two years by the co-ordinator and the team leaders. The English co-ordinator has observed teaching in all classes and this has informed feedback to staff, training and planning. Medium and weekly planning is prepared in teams and is monitored both by the co-ordinator and team leaders. This is an effective combination. The action plans for the development of English are appropriate and based on need. For example, the school recognises the need to widen the range of non-fiction reading and writing and is building up resources accordingly. A new handwriting policy was agreed at the end of last year but it is too early to evaluate its effect. There remains a need to use the literacy hour more flexibly, particularly in the Year 1/2 classes, so that guided writing is as effective as guided reading. There is also a need to agree more specific curriculum targets for literacy and analyse assessments particularly of pupils' writing in more detail.

MATHEMATICS

103. The good standards identified at the time of the last inspection have been well maintained. Inspection evidence show that standards of attainment are above those expected for pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6. National test results for 2000 show that at the end of Year 2 the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 was above the national average. The percentage pupils achieving the expected Level 4 at the end of Year 6 was in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 at the end of Year 2 was well above average, whilst those reaching Level 5 at the end of Year 6 was close to the national average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance was well above average for seven year olds and average for eleven year olds.
104. Pupils enter Year 1 with good levels of attainment in mathematical development. Teaching in the Year 1/2 classes is satisfactory overall and, as a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. The quality of teaching is very good in Years 3 to 6 and pupils make very good progress, particularly in number work and its application, which are central to National Curriculum and National Numeracy Strategy requirements. This represents a significant improvement in teaching in Years 3 to 6 since the last inspection.
105. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced and many features, such as the mental sessions and the discussions of strategies, are securely embedded. An analysis of pupils' books shows that the programme of work is covered systematically and thoroughly.
106. There is a strong emphasis in all classes on mental computation. All pupils benefit from regular practise at the start of lessons, and their understanding of mental strategies is good in Year 1/2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils throughout the school develop good instant recall of number facts. In the most successful lessons, teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in the mental sessions. The excellent relationships that exist between all members of the school community give pupils of differing attainment the confidence to offer answers, knowing that they will be appreciated. Teachers use a good range of resources such as 'counting sticks' and individual cards, to allow all pupils to answer, checking each answer quickly. In these lessons, questions are carefully targeted to challenge all pupils. An excellent example of this was seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils with special educational needs were fully involved even though they were being helped by a support assistant. This is not the case in all lessons. Some teachers leave the questioning of these pupils to the person who supports them and they do not benefit from being part of the whole class. However, the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The support that these pupils receive from the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and learning support assistants during lessons specially planned for them is of a very high quality. As a result of this provision, and class teachers' understanding of their needs, pupils with special educational needs have full and equal access to the curriculum and make progress similar to that of other pupils in whole-class lessons. There was no evidence during the inspection of a difference in the attainment of boys and girls. In the good lessons, teachers challenge all pupils to answer questions, with boys and girls working together at all levels of attainment. Pupils with EAL are well included in lessons and make progress comparable to that of other pupils of similar ability.

107. Pupils develop a good understanding of the number system and of place value. Most pupils currently at the start of Year 2 are beginning to understand the place value of digits and to sequence numbers to 100. In a lesson where they were being challenged to add and subtract multiples of tens, pupils quickly devised strategies to answer the question “I have 40. How many more tens do I need to make 100?” By the end of Year 6, most pupils make good use of their understanding of place value to multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and 1000 and devise efficient strategies to work out, for example, 2.93×41.5 . Work from last year’s Year 6 pupils shows that, by the end of the year, pupils calculate fractional and percentages of quantities and they understand, for example, that $0.41 = 41/100 = 41\%$. They also gain a good understanding of negative numbers because teachers provide them with interesting tasks such as measuring temperature to -8.2 degrees centigrade. Throughout the school there is a consistent approach to teaching pupils the correct mathematical vocabulary, so that by the end of Year 6, pupils show they understand situations by describing them mathematically with use of symbols, words and diagrams. In a very good Year 4 lesson, for example, the teacher used very effective strategies to challenge pupils to develop and use the correct terminology. As a result, pupils themselves set questions such as “What is the total of 32 and 9?” and “Increase me by 9 to make 18, what am I?”
108. All aspects of mathematics are given due consideration. Pupils gain a good understanding of shape and measure and of data handling. Recent improvements in ICT have provided pupils with opportunities to develop their data handling skills in meaningful ways across the curriculum. Most pupils, by the end of Year 6, collect separate data and use a frequency table to represent them, while higher attaining pupils go on to explain the conclusions demonstrated by graphs and diagrams, including pie charts. Analysis of pupils’ work shows that by the time they are eleven, pupils know the angle sum of a triangle and measure and draw angles to the nearest degree using a protractor.
109. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1/2. Of the three lessons seen in the Year 1/2 classes, teaching was good in one and satisfactory in two. Although teaching is never less than satisfactory, expectations of what pupils can do are not as high as in Years 3 to 6. Common features of all lessons are the good management of behaviour through positive relationships. As a result, behaviour is good although some pupils in Year 1/2 do not work at a good pace because not all teachers have high expectations of them in this respect. The pace of teaching and learning sometimes slows after a stimulating mental session, when the teacher explains to different groups of pupils what they are to do while others wait for their instructions.
110. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is very good. Of the eight lessons seen teaching was excellent in two, very good in four, and good in two. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and they understand the importance of direct teaching when explaining work to the class. Teachers are very successful in motivating pupils to learn. As a result, pupils work very hard during all parts of lessons and this allows teachers to continue to teach as pupils work on individual or group tasks. An example of this was seen in an excellent Year 5 lesson where pupils were using ‘multiples of the divisor’ method, for example, to divide 296 by 9. Pupils worked conscientiously and behaved impeccably as they worked. Consequently, the class teacher and the support assistant were able to concentrate effectively on groups of less able pupils, to allow them too to make excellent progress. The pace of this lesson was brisk and purposeful, and the outstanding relationships, allowing for high expectations, made this lesson a joy and honour to observe.

111. Teachers throughout the school have good knowledge of the subject and plan their lessons well, sharing the learning intentions with pupils. Most lessons end with a good plenary session, which gives pupils an understanding of what they have learnt. Assessment is well used to plan work for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 need to make better use of assessment information to increase the pace of pupils' learning right from the start of the school year. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and most teachers are successful in showing pupils how they can improve, either through positive feedback in lessons, or by written comments in their exercise books. Other subjects such as design and technology and geography make a good contribution to pupils' numeracy skills.
112. The subject is conscientiously led by a well-informed co-ordinator. She has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and monitored its delivery in the classroom. This has resulted in improved teaching since the last inspection. The co-ordinator continues to monitor teachers' plans and pupils' work to ensure coverage. National tests are closely analysed to identify any weaknesses in provision or to identify any groups of pupils who might be underachieving. There are good procedures in place for monitoring pupils' progress and for setting realistic but challenging targets for individual pupils. There is a good range of resources to support teaching and learning and these are well managed. Learning support assistants are well trained, efficiently prepared, and provide very good support to pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

113. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are above the level expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. There is no significant gender difference in pupils' learning, All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning EAL, make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory progress in the Year 1/2 classes.
114. In 2000, the National Curriculum test results show that at the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is in the top five per cent of schools nationally when compared with all schools at the expected Level 4 and well above the average at the higher Level 5. The school's performance in relation to similar schools was well above average. Girls did slightly better than boys. The results of the statutory teacher assessments for seven year olds for the same year indicate that standards were above average at the expected Level 2 and well above average at the higher Level 3. Results for 2001 are slightly less good and reflect cohort variation from year to year.
115. Pupils at the start of Year 2 accurately identify and label different parts of the body. Higher attaining pupils develop and extend their research skills by finding out about the functions of some of the major organs, such as heart, kidneys and brain. Previous work shows that by the end of Year 2 pupils have experienced a wide range of science topics and many are beginning to record their observations in drawings and simple tables whilst higher attainers write brief sentences. Most use scientific vocabulary with increasing confidence and understanding and make sound progress in their investigative skills. For example, they enthusiastically investigate the properties of a range of materials, and understand why some materials are useful for specific purposes. They know that plastic is waterproof and best suited for raincoats, and that some materials are attracted to magnets and others are not. Most know that materials, such as water, chocolate and wax, change their state when heated and higher attaining pupils know that some changes are permanent. Many have a clear

knowledge and understanding of the difference between natural and man-made light when investigating light sources. Younger pupils of all abilities know the five senses. They know that force is a power used to move an object and that squashing, twisting and stretching are examples of different types of forces.

116. Since the last inspection, there has been a greater emphasis on experimental and investigative science and as a result, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a good understanding of how to plan and conduct experiments in a logical manner. This was well demonstrated in an experiment investigating which materials were the best for soundproofing a box. Current Year 6 pupils confidently describe the main functions of the heart using appropriate terminology such as 'veins' and 'arteries' and know the effect of exercise on the body. Examination of the work covered by the previous Year 6 pupils shows that by the end of year, most make careful predictions, observations and records as part of their investigative work and clearly understand the concept of a fair test. This was well exemplified in a number of investigations, for example, when investigating the weight of air. In Years 3 to 6 pupils of all abilities build on their earlier knowledge of materials. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 understand the differences between materials and know that they exist in different forms, for example, that water can be solid as ice, liquid as water, or gaseous as steam. Many know that there are different ways of separating soluble and insoluble materials and that a solution of salt and water can be separated by heating. Their knowledge of forces includes an understanding of balanced and unbalanced forces and through diagrams they show how sound waves are transmitted. Younger pupils in the Year 3/4 classes know that shadows are formed when an object blocks the light source, and that shadows move and change in length during the day because the sun moves. Most accurately construct simple circuits to enable a bulb to light, while higher attaining pupils investigate the effect of introducing more than one bulb into a circuit.
117. In all classes, literacy and numeracy skills are used well to discuss, record and measure scientific findings in experiments and observations. The pupils read instructions and write purposefully to record their investigations. Most confidently represent their work in a variety of ways using graphs and tables. A good example of this was where pupils in the Year 3/4 classes used tables to show the results of their investigation on which type of kitchen towel is the most absorbent. Previous work shows that work is not always well presented and that insufficient use is also made of ICT to support learning or to improve presentation.
118. The quality of teaching and learning, including that for pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL, is good in Year 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Overall, teachers' confidence and competency have improved and most show a secure understanding of the science curriculum. However, teachers' planning and a scrutiny of pupils' earlier work reveal that there are some weaknesses in current practice which limit the progress that pupils make, especially in the mixed aged classes. For example, pupils in Year 1/2 and in Year 3/4 are often given identical work regardless of their abilities. Consequently, the progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is limited. Short-term plans do not take sufficient account of the two age groups nor make appropriate reference to the levels of attainment that pupils are expected to reach. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to assess pupils' attainment and progress and to set work which is best suited to pupils' needs. Where teaching is most effective, the lessons are well planned and the teachers are supported by very good subject knowledge. This enables them to deliver the subject matter confidently, answer questions from pupils correctly and make the relevant teaching points. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 5 lesson about the

heart. Objectives were discussed with the pupils so that they knew what they were supposed to learn. In such lessons, teachers carefully target questions to individual pupils ensuring all ranges of ability are involved in the lesson. There is a good balance between practical investigation and direct teaching, and activities maintain pupils' interest and learning through the whole lesson, as demonstrated in a Year 5 lesson on the function of the heart. Good use is made of discussions and questioning to help pupils recall and consolidate their knowledge and understanding and to challenge them to think for themselves, for example, "How can we remember the function of the veins and arteries?" In response, pupils willingly made valuable contributions to the class discussion. Most teachers focus well on developing key vocabulary and clear scientific language. This was particularly well done in a Year 3/4 lesson where the pupils were discussing the different magnetic and non-magnetic materials. In Year 1/2 where teaching is satisfactory, work is not always well matched to the needs of pupils and older higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. As a consequence, progress in learning in these lessons was deemed to be low. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils well and this promotes a calm learning environment in which pupils enjoy what they do. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning, and attitudes and behaviour are good. In all classes, there is sometimes over-reliance on worksheets when pupils could give their own written accounts of the work and extend their literacy and numeracy skills.

119. The co-ordinator, new to the post, is qualified to manage the subject. There is a useful policy, which provides helpful guidance for teachers. The school uses the QCA document as its scheme of work and this is beginning to play an effective part in helping to raise standards. However, the scheme needs to be adapted to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils, especially those in the mixed-age classes. The co-ordinator has undertaken a limited amount of monitoring of plans and pupils' work but does not yet have a full understanding of the subject strengths and weaknesses across the school. This needs to be developed to include a more rigorous monitoring of standards of teaching and learning in all classes. Throughout the school, teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, comments do not always provide guidance to pupils as to why work is good and what they need to improve further. Resources are adequate and used well with careful attention to safety. Good use is made of the school grounds to develop the pupils' understanding of the environment. However, ICT is not well used as a tool to support work or to improve presentation in science. Limited use is made of homework to enhance learning.

ART AND DESIGN

120. Standards of work seen at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations for pupils' ages, and have been maintained since the last inspection. The school has recently adopted the QCA scheme of work and teachers' emphasis has been to develop work through specific topics. Evidence from previously completed work, teachers' planning, discussions and display work in the classroom and around the school shows that pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to develop artistic skills and express ideas and feelings using pencils, watercolours and pastels. The school has recognised that pupils currently have fewer opportunities for three-dimensional work and using textiles. Plans are in hand to address this with the adaptation and revision of the new scheme of work.
121. By the age of seven, pupils develop collage techniques using natural materials found in the environment, such as leaves, flowers, pine cones and pieces of wood to make a 'human body'. This shows originality. They reinforce their mathematical knowledge

of shape by creating colourful, symmetrical butterflies, and successfully mix paints and blend colours for their bold and bright paintings of mini-beasts. Many understand the terminology 'portrait', 'landscape' 'foreground' and 'background' when copying photographs and comparing the outcomes. Previous artwork shows pupils' ability to use paintbrushes, scissors and glue, and a range of materials, but outcomes are frequently rather similar.

122. By the age of eleven, pupils are increasingly competent in using a variety of materials, tools and techniques. They recognise important features of the style of several famous artists including Van Gogh and Picasso and are able to access websites to gain more information about them. In Year 6, they examine in detail the techniques of Quentin Blake and many successfully capture the essence of the techniques used to show different facial expressions and movements. Pupils evaluate their own work carefully and that of others and skilfully use ideas so derived to improve the quality of their finished product. In Year 5, their paintings of the pictures and the signs found in the stone seals in Hanappa, an Indus city, are of a very high standard, showing a good use of well-matched colours and tones of pastels, crayons and paints. Their observational drawing of a pencil pot and its contents shows their improving pencil control and their developing skills in the use of shading techniques to show the depth of the object. Younger pupils in Year 3/4 confidently paint self-portraits, showing their developing skill in the observation of facial features and attention to detail. In connection with work in history they produce detailed drawings of Tudor portraits, whilst drawings of Roman artefacts show that most have an increasing awareness of a sense of proportion and perspective. Throughout the school, pupils make good use of their artistic skills in supporting their work across several subjects of the curriculum; for example, in science they put their skills to good use to draw diagrams of circuits, and in English illustrate the story of 'Macbeth' with careful and attractive drawings. There are, however, limited opportunities to use ICT skills to support art and design, and the use of a sketchbook is insufficiently developed to provide maximum progression in the extension of skills.
123. The teaching of art is satisfactory with some very good practice. In the few lessons observed the teachers clearly set out what is to be learned and share this with pupils so that they know exactly what is expected of them. In the best practice they demonstrate techniques well and teach the necessary skills, as was seen when Year 3/4 pupils prepared printing blocks using polystyrene tiles. This is an example where careful preparation and particularly good intervention by the teacher enabled pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those with EAL, to learn in a pleasant atmosphere. Throughout the school, pupils are attentive when techniques are being explained and join in discussions willingly, giving sensible opinions on questions about the task. This was well demonstrated in a Year 6 lesson on creating characters in the style of Quentin Blake. Resources were well organised and support staff were well deployed so that there was constant support for less confident pupils. Pupils work well collaboratively, sustain interest and enjoy the lessons. They are very appreciative of one another's efforts, show pride in their work and are happy to explain their work to visitors.
124. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has a personal enthusiasm for the subject. She is clear what needs to be done to improve art and is supported by the growing confidence of teachers in the subject. Although she provides good advice and supports colleagues informally, she has yet to work alongside them to share expertise and gain a greater knowledge of the work undertaken with pupils outside of the year group in which she works. Currently there is no whole-school format for tracking

individual pupil's development of skills, an area that the co-ordinator recognises as needing further development. Resources are good, well managed and used effectively. Good use is made of museums to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of art and famous artists. The use of materials and artefacts from other cultures and traditions to inspire work in art is developing, as is the use of ICT. Displays of pupils' work are effective in creating a stimulating environment in some areas throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

125. Due to the school's timetabling arrangements, no lessons were observed during the inspection. However, evidence was obtained in discussion with teachers and pupils and by looking at completed work on display and teachers' plans.
126. The sound standards identified in the last inspection have been maintained at the end of Year 2 and improved upon at the end of Year 6, where standards are above those expected for eleven year olds. Evidence indicates that the quality of teaching supports good progress in pupils' learning. These significant improvements in provision and attainment have been achieved through the enthusiastic and well-informed leadership of the subject co-ordinator, which has helped to improve teachers' understanding of the subject. Where learning support assistants or parents have particular expertise in the subject, such as in food technology, this is well used by class teachers.
127. The recently introduced planning arrangements are rapidly becoming established. They help teachers plan tasks that offer interest and challenge at the right level. Work on display and photographic evidence show that teachers place good emphasis on developing pupils' designing, making and evaluating skills, as, for example, when Year 2 pupils design and make vehicles with moving parts. Pupils' progress in skill development is assessed at the end of each unit of work and this forms the basis for teachers' future planning. Pupils are expected to evaluate their work as it develops, identifying possible improvements. Food technology is appropriately represented in the school's planning. Pupils design healthy diets, linked to their work on health and growth in science, and bake cakes and biscuits from recipes. The school is successfully identifying links between other subjects and design and technology. For example, pupils in the Year 1/2 classes design and make diva lights to enhance their work in religious education and to increase their understanding of cultural traditions of another religious community. Another good example is where pupils in Years 5 and 6 design, make and improve musical instruments, thus enhancing their work in music. Completed work shows that boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and those who have EAL, have full and equal access to the curriculum. Teachers report that pupils enjoy the subject and work hard to produce good quality work. Their very good behaviour and their ability to work constructively together, make a strong contribution to their learning. Completed work is generally imaginative and takes account of aesthetic consideration.
128. There is a good range of resources to support teaching and learning. These are well managed and are readily available to teachers. Pupils' developing skills in ICT are being used to support pupils' work in design and technology. For example, Year 2 pupils produce labelled designs on the computer, and Year 6 pupils access websites to generate ideas for their designs. The co-ordinator has a clear plan for the future development of the subject. One area for development identified is to continue to make links between design and technology and other subjects so as to provide pupils

with further opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum. The effectiveness of the subject is well monitored within the different teams and recommendations are fed into the school improvement plan. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as teachers ensure that they teach the correct vocabulary and expect pupils to measure and assemble precisely.

GEOGRAPHY

129. Pupils' standards in geography throughout the school are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils' achievement at both key stages is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL make good progress due to well-targeted in-class support and effective opportunities to use their own experiences in the classroom. These pupils are also well supported for literacy by small group work and extra reading sessions.
130. Standards since the last inspection have been maintained and there has been sound improvement in the development of pupils' geographical enquiry skills. Curriculum planning has improved through the adoption of national schemes of work. These changes have had a positive impact on the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and skills in the subject.
131. By the age of seven, pupils record details of their journey to school. They begin to recognise some of the human and physical features of their own locality and understand the position of their school in relation to the surrounding environment through fieldwork activities. Younger pupils begin to explore the world following the journeys of the school teddy bear and discuss ways of travelling to well-known places. For example, in one lesson, pupils were delighted to find 'Barnaby Bear' was travelling to Dublin. Most pupils had travelled to several places in Ireland for holidays and many knew Ireland well. The teacher used their experiences well to develop their knowledge by careful questioning and good prompts. They were proud of their learning, and gave good descriptions of the various ways to travel. They named airports, ports and cities with no difficulty and described many of the physical features of districts well known to them. Teachers develop pupils' geographical skills by encouraging them to plot very simple routes. Pupils recognise features of weather and climate and associate them with the seasons. They begin to understand how the weather can affect physical and environmental features. However, lack of evidence in work samples and limited evidence in lessons indicates teachers do not stretch more able pupils, for example by asking them to consider the effects of physical processes, such as unusually heavy rainfall, on people's lives.
132. By the age of eleven pupils use globes, atlases and maps to locate different countries, oceans and rivers and the equator with increasing confidence. They can identify the global distribution of major mountain ranges using atlases and CD-ROMs. Higher attaining pupils use the Internet to discover how mountains are formed. This results in good learning for individual pupils. Younger pupils in Year 3/4 extend their skills in mapping and work on scale. Older Year 4 pupils skilfully use co-ordinates to read maps and plot routes in their local area. Many are familiar with street maps and recognise the symbols and marking for distinctive buildings and features. In the lessons where the teacher uses pupils' own experiences well to encourage and motivate them, they respond enthusiastically and learn effectively.

133. The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory with some good examples in Years 3 to 6. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers introduce the learning objectives to the pupils, resulting in a clear focus for each lesson. Pupils are interested in the subject and this is promoted by a good use of resources to explain and exemplify. In the best lessons seen expectations are high and lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. The range of activities stimulates pupils' interest and uses effectively their past experiences of different countries, climates, holidays and travel. Pupils respond by asking questions and they begin to develop some geographical lines of enquiry. Teaching is lively and questioning is sharply focused so that pupils work at a good pace and explore the topic in a detailed and thorough way. Where teaching is not so effective, low expectations and lack of challenge slow the pace of learning.
134. Planning is done by teams of teachers using a national scheme of work and guidance and is generally secure. However, assessments of pupils' attainment are informal and although records are kept of their progress, these are not generally well used to target performance or to extend opportunities for higher attaining pupils, particularly in the area of independent investigation.
135. The subject is managed satisfactorily and the co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning but the lack of release time for classroom monitoring diminishes opportunities to improve teaching and share good practice. The school uses field trips and visitors well to enhance the curriculum.

HISTORY

136. Lessons were seen only in Years 3 to 6. Judgements about standards at the end of Year 2 are based on the analysis of pupils' work, discussion with them and teachers' planning. The school has effectively maintained standards in history since the last inspection. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected nationally and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL make good progress in their speaking, listening and research skills due to expert support in the classroom and effective literacy reinforcement.
137. There has been sound improvement in the subject since the last inspection because of the review and development of the curriculum. The school has adopted schemes of work which focus on the progression of concepts and skills as well as factual knowledge and an emphasis on historical interpretation and evidence-based inquiry. There is also more use of artefacts, and resources have improved. All of these factors have had a positive impact on the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and skills.
138. By the age of seven, pupils develop a growing sense of chronology. Year 2 pupils demonstrate a detailed knowledge of famous people, such as Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale, listing their achievements, key events in their lives and reasons why they are remembered. They understand the changes that have taken place over time and know that things were different in the past. This work is successfully built upon in Years 3 to 6.
139. Many eleven year olds have a sound knowledge of key events and dates in British history. They learn to recognise when evidence is from a first-hand source. Pupils' sense of chronology and the passage of time continues to develop soundly. For

example, most pupils in the juniors know that the Tudors came before the Victorians. They know that ancient Egyptians lived many hundreds of years before either and that Queen Victoria reigned during the 19th century. They have a good understanding of the everyday life of the ancient Romans and Greeks and use this knowledge well to make comparisons with their own lives and between the past and present. They use pictorial evidence to draw conclusions about life in ancient civilisations and recognise the ways in which historians gain their evidence. For example, in one lesson Year 3/4 pupils were intrigued by pictures of artefacts from ancient Egypt and used them well to make observations about life and death among wealthy Egyptians. They were fascinated by the detail of evidence in pictorial sources and made good links with previous learning, about hieroglyphics for example. Older pupils compare and contrast reasons for modern exploration with those of the Tudors. This work is successful with the majority of pupils because the teachers have good subject knowledge and useful questioning techniques, and provide a helpful framework for lower attaining pupils and those with EAL to work from.

140. The teaching is generally satisfactory with some good lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In the best lessons the high levels of interest and enthusiasm shown by the pupils for history are encouraged and extended by the provision of good quality resources and good use of pupils' own experiences, particularly those pupils with EAL. This was well demonstrated in a Year 3/4 lesson when the teaching focused on the use of pictorial evidence to learn something about life of the ancient Egyptians. Through a mixture of questioning, prompting and explaining, the teacher was successful in getting the pupils to recognise the symbolic meaning behind the decoration and embellishment of early artefacts and link this with previous learning.
141. Pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactorily assessed, on one occasion each year, through the use of school's own assessment tasks. However, higher attaining pupils do not always get the extension work they need because assessment is not used well to target higher learning skills and develop critical thinking. Teachers provide well for lower attaining pupils but the structured and circumscribed nature of tasks means that opportunities are lost in lessons for higher attaining pupils to develop independent thinking.
142. The subject is managed satisfactorily and the co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning but has had no opportunity for classroom observation. Her monitoring of pupils' work is done on an informal basis by looking at books, displays in classrooms and around the school. The sharing of good practice and the monitoring of teaching and learning is under-developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

143. Standards of attainment in ICT for pupils throughout the school are consistent with standards expected nationally. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory at the end of Year 2 and good at the end of Year 6. This is because older pupils have more access to direct teaching, more time in the computer suite and are taught ICT in a more systematic way and this has a positive effect on achievement. On the other hand, younger pupils frequently work in pairs or in threes at individual computers in the classroom with limited direct teaching. There has been good improvement in ICT since the last inspection when progress and teaching at both key stages was unsatisfactory. New government funding has enabled significant progress in the subject with the provision of additional computers, many of which are networked and have Internet access. New opportunities funding has resulted in an improvement in

both competence and confidence in teachers which has had a subsequent positive impact on pupils' learning. Many pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL make good progress in ICT because of additional support in the classroom and more access to computers in small group sessions.

144. Younger pupils in the Year 1/2 classes are becoming increasingly confident users of ICT and work well together. They use word processing to assemble text and incorporate pictures. They clearly understand that text can be entered into a computer and printed out and are delighted with their finished work. Year 2 pupils confidently explain what they need to do to achieve successful results. For example, in one lesson, three pupils confidently explained how they retrieved work, how they selected words from the word bank and what they needed to do to save their work using two different systems. Higher attaining pupils recognise there are several ways to convey information and all pupils can use the talking word bank facility. Pupils become familiar with the keyboard and develop stronger manipulative skills, although very few are able to complete basic tasks such as logging on and opening programs, or saving and retrieving work quickly, and this slows down the progress they make in lessons. Pupils can enter a series of commands to move a floor turtle in a range of directions. They collect information carefully and display it well in graph form.
145. By the age of eleven, pupils save, retrieve and print using a range of programs and use the correct subject-specific language. When they use word processing, pupils successfully change font style, size and colour and combine pictures with the text. Many are able to switch between different programs easily. In one very good lesson seen, pupils worked in groups to prepare a multi-media presentation. Working in pairs and supporting each other well they moved easily between three programs, used CD-ROMs and digital cameras, and imported sounds to add information. At the end of the session, pupils evaluated their work and were delighted with the quality of their presentations. They could explain clearly the processes they had been through and were clear about their audience. In discussion with Year 6 pupils they explain how they use the Internet and the way e-mail is used. They are confident in collecting and displaying data and they can explain clearly the processes they use.
146. Overall teaching is good. In the Year 1/2 classes teaching is generally satisfactory and in Years 3 to 6 it is good with some very good lessons. In the best lessons, teachers are competent and knowledgeable. They have high levels of expectation both of work and behaviour and their lessons are exciting and challenging. Pupils have great confidence in the teaching and are inspired to have confidence in their own ability. Teachers are quickly on hand if pupils have a problem and support them well with careful questioning. When pupils work in pairs they often support each other by reminding each other of the processes or giving each other encouragement. In lessons seen teachers were adequate to the task but occasionally they were unsure of new applications and this slowed down the work in the class. Consequently, pupils made less progress. Training funded by the government is ongoing and teachers are at different stages of ICT confidence and expertise. However, the rolling programme of training has meant that teachers are far more confident in using computers in their classrooms with pupils. They make satisfactory use of computer programs to support and enrich pupils' learning in some subjects. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 prepare very attractive topic work in history on the Romans and use CD-ROMs to collect information. Year 6 pupils confidently use the Internet to find information about mountain ranges in geography and pupils in Years 5 and 6 use computers to make a series of high quality multi-media presentations in English.

147. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory overall, with many good features. The subject curriculum plan is comprehensive in setting out what needs to be done. However, it lacks precision in terms of the expected outcomes for the school and pupils' progress, and of how these will be measured. Assessments have been recorded by checklist but the school is moving to a more comprehensive assessment system, which will enable teachers to track pupils' progress more successfully, and to target areas that need development more precisely. Resources are satisfactory and used well. Hardware is modern and functions well. Software titles, which support pupils' learning in other subjects, are increasing, although there is a need for this to develop further.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Italian

148. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve good standards in early language learning. Although it was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection, other evidence, including the teacher's planning and discussions with pupils, supports this judgement. Italian is taught to all pupils in Years 3 to 6 and it forms an important part of the school's curriculum. Pupils listen attentively to discriminate sounds and to develop accurate pronunciation. They make good use of their understanding of the English language in learning a foreign language. Once they have been introduced to Italian in Year 3, pupils respond with developing ability to questions and instructions couched in familiar language. Most pupils show confidence in speaking, and reproduce precisely what they have heard.
149. The quality of teaching observed in a Year 3/ 4 lesson was very good. The teacher has very good knowledge of how pupils learn a foreign language. Her excellent knowledge of the subject allows her to employ a mainly oral approach and to present pupils with a clear model of spoken Italian. The lesson seen was interesting, very well planned and fun. The teacher used a wide range of inspiring teaching strategies including repetitive songs such as 'Come Ti Chiami', number cards to 10, and pictures, to hold pupils' attention and to consolidate their learning. All opportunities for teaching were grasped and the very brisk pace was a special feature of the lesson. Pupils responded very well and there was a high level of interest throughout the lesson. They enjoy interacting with the teacher and with each other. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak EAL are provided with full and equal access in lessons. The very good relationships that exist between all members of the school community promote confidence in speaking, and pupils readily contribute in lessons.
150. Italian is a valuable part of the school's provision. It is very worthwhile in itself and prepares pupils well for their next stage of education. It also contributes to extending pupils' cultural horizons and further develops their awareness of the structure and potential of language.

MUSIC

151. Music is a strength of the curriculum. Standards of attainment are above levels expected for pupils aged seven, and well above those expected for pupils aged eleven. Pupils benefit significantly from the excellent knowledge and planning of the subject specialist, who teaches music to all classes.
152. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Of the four lessons observed, teaching was very good in three and good in one. Guided by this high quality teaching, most pupils in the Year 1/2 classes sing in tune and with expression, and perform rhythmically simple parts requiring a small range of notes. Pupils' good

reading skills benefit them greatly as they read the words of songs and hymns on overhead projectors and in books. By the end of Year 2, pupils are experienced in playing both tuned and untuned instruments and can define the difference between them. A Year 2 pupil said of an untuned instrument that "It could play the rhythm but not the tune." This good use of appropriate vocabulary shows how well the subject contributes to pupils' literacy skills. The teacher makes very good use of her very considerable expertise in playing a range of instruments to show pupils how pitch, dynamics, duration, tempo, timbre and texture can be combined and structured expressively. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of what is required as they use a range of tuned and untuned instruments to rehearse and perform with others. In a Year 1/2 lesson, pupils made very good progress in composing skills and demonstrated good control and accuracy in accompanying a piece of music played by the teacher on the violin. Pupils appraise their compositions effectively to improve their performances.

153. By the end of Year 6, pupils sing with clear diction, pitch control and a sense of both phrase and musical expression. In class lessons and in large groupings, such as assemblies and hymn practices, they sing unison songs with a very good awareness of other performers. The quality of pupils' singing of hymns such as 'Sing to the Lord all the World' adds a very valuable dimension to their spiritual development. They are able to harmonise skilfully with controlled phrasing, and synchronise their voices to good effect to produce a very good standard of choral singing. The teacher continues to give due consideration to teaching the correct musical terms such as 'tempo', 'pitch', 'dynamics', 'structure', 'timbre' and 'texture'. In this respect, the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. The subject also makes a strong contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, as well as their literacy skills, as they listen to and evaluate, either orally or through writing, music from different eras and cultures. A good example of this was seen where pupils listened to, evaluated and sang a Hebrew song in honour of the Jewish New Year. Pupils in Year 6 read graphic notation confidently and understand note values, such as crotchets, quavers and minims. They are given a good knowledge of famous composers and study their work to gain ideas for their own compositions. Detailed planning shows that at all stages in a composition task, pupils are encouraged to evaluate and seek to improve their work.
154. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy music and get great pleasure from singing together. The standard of behaviour and attitudes in lessons are always very good and all pupils have the opportunity to learn in a peaceful, happy learning environment. The school ensures that boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds play a full part in lessons and in extra-curricular activities such as recorder clubs and choir. These opportunities and events such as singing with local schools, including a special school, do much to promote pupils' social development. Regular opportunities for school performances allow pupils to celebrate their attainment in the subject with parents and friends of the school. There is a good range of tuned and untuned instruments and pupils treat these with respect. The music room is a very good resource and is well used for lessons and extra-curricular music. Assessment procedures are good and are well used to inform the planning of lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and above those expected for pupils at the end of Year 6. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of attainment and are provided with a good curriculum, which meets national requirements and pupils' needs.

156. Lessons in games, dance and gymnastics were observed during the inspection. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 attend swimming lessons at the local pool. Records show that they make good progress in swimming and that the majority of pupils exceed the national expectation by the end of Year 6. This is because of the high quality specialist teaching they receive as well as the effective support they get from accompanying teachers. The school arranges residential trips for Year 5 and 6 pupils, which provide them with opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities. Staff and governors who accompany pupils to swimming and residential trips report that they are true ambassadors for their school, and that their impeccable behaviour strongly supports their learning. This was also the case in all lessons observed during the inspection.
157. The quality of teaching and learning in the Year 1/2 classes is satisfactory. Of the three lessons seen, teaching was good in one and satisfactory in two. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and plan their lessons with clear learning intentions. Lessons begin with good warm-up sessions but are not always sufficiently well structured to keep pupils warm or to allow enough time for pupils to explore, practise and improve their skills. This happens when pupils spend too much time queuing to use apparatus, and where class teachers fail to consider teaching strategies and methods to ensure that pupils enjoy their lessons while, at the same time, improving their skills and physical fitness. This was not so in a good lesson where pupils were developing effective jumping skills on the floor. The pace of teaching and learning was good and pupils were well motivated to work hard. They enjoyed the lesson and improved their jumping skills and physical fitness.
158. The quality of teaching seen in Years 3 to 6 was very good. The good standards achieved by pupils indicate that teaching is good over time, and that pupils make good progress in these classes. Of the five lessons seen, teaching was excellent in one, very good in two, and good in two. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and plan their lessons to include a good range of teaching strategies. All lessons begin with good warm-up sessions, which prepare pupils well for the activities ahead. Pupils show a good understanding of the need to warm up and to cool down, and of the effects of exercise on the body. Lessons are well structured so that pupils can explore, practise and improve their skills at the level of which they are capable. An excellent example of this was seen in a Year 5/6 games lesson where pupils were developing good skills of defence, attack, invasion, receiving and passing, when playing New Image Rugby. The headteacher ensured that pupils worked hard, enjoyed the lesson and refined their skills. In this, as in all other lessons in this key stage, teachers ensure that pupils work hard, behave well and appreciate each other's efforts. As a result, pupils work happily and safely together and gain the maximum physical benefits in lessons. Another very good example of enjoyment in learning supported by high quality teaching was seen in a Years 5 and 6 dance lesson. Boys and girls at all levels of ability worked together with enthusiasm to improve their group 'Rock 'n' Roll' performances. As a result of this high quality teaching in the upper juniors, pupils, by the end of Year 6, choose, combine and apply skills, techniques and ideas appropriately and with accuracy, demonstrating precision, control and fluency.
159. A good range of extra-curricular sport such as Gaelic football, soccer, cricket, gymnastics and 'Fit Kids' enriches the curriculum and adds to pupils' enjoyment. Opportunities to take part in inter-school competitions in, for example, swimming, rugby, football, and fun runs, further enhance the curriculum and provide well for pupils' social development. The school ensures that all pupils are fully included in

lessons and in extra-curricular activities. The subject is well led and managed by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She monitors teachers' plans, but now needs time to monitor teaching so as to ensure consistency of practice across the key stages. There is a good range of resources and these are well used. The accommodation allows the subject to be taught effectively. The recently resurfaced playground provides a safe learning environment.