

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY'S R C PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dukinfield

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106240

Headteacher: Mrs P Blake

Reporting inspector: Mrs Heather Evans
21374

Dates of inspection: 21 – 23 January 2002

Inspection number: 196333

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cheetham Hill Road
Dukinfield
Tameside
Greater Manchester

Postcode: SK16 5LD

Telephone number: 0161 368 4824

Fax number: 0161 368 4824

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend J O O'Doherty

Date of previous inspection: 30/06/97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21374	H Evans	Registered inspector	Art and Design Physical Education Foundation Stage English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9146	M Brennand	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?
31175	A Allison	Team inspector	Science Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21910	G Longton	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Music	How well is the school led and managed?
12060	P Peaker	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology History Equal Opportunities Special Educational Needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services

Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

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	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	17
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	23
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	25
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	26
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	30
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	31
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's school is an average sized Roman Catholic Primary School in the town of Dukinfield in Tameside. Many pupils travel some distance to attend the school. There are 201 pupils on roll including 27 in the Reception class. The number entitled to free school meals is average for primary schools. Forty- five pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. Some of these have been brought to the school by parents because of the schools reputation for helping pupils with difficulties to succeed. Of these pupils two have statements of special educational need. The chief difficulties are linked to language and to emotional or behavioural problems. At the time of the inspection there were two pupils in the school learning English as an additional language who were difficult to identify. There is no Nursery but on entry to the Reception class the school's process of assessment shows that whilst there is a spread of prior attainment and previous experiences, overall attainment is similar to that expected of children of the same age nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. When pupils are 11, Pupils achieve standards that are close to or above those found in most schools nationally. In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1-6 pupils learn well. Pupils of all ages have very good attitudes to school and are proud to attend. The pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their work. Pupils are very sure about what is expected of them and there are very few occasions when pupils misbehave during lessons or when playing. The quality of teaching is predominantly good and a significant proportion is very good. After some difficulties in the previous year pupils across the school now make good progress in the majority of lessons. The staff have worked hard to increase the challenge for pupils of all ages and abilities and the work is carefully matched to earlier achievements, is regularly challenging and is assessed well. The work planned for pupils has been strengthened and now fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The teaching is good; teachers and support staff assist the pupils to work and learn well. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and knows where there is room for further improvement. There has been a systematic review of provision since the time of the previous inspection and this has resulted in a number of well thought-out beneficial changes. Even allowing for a dip in standards in mathematics in 2001 that is already being reversed, the standard of work since 1997 has been maintained at a level close to the average in schools nationally. The school is managed very effectively and overall it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is predominantly good and the quality of work of the support staff is good.
- The overall provision for children in the Reception class is good.
- Standards in English by the age of 11 are above those in most schools nationally.
- Pupils' behaviour, attitudes to school and relationships are very good.
- The provision for pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- There is good provision for extra-curricular activities.
- The use of cross-curricular links and the review of learning to inform planning are good.
- The school has very effective links with parents.
- The leadership of the headteacher and the support of the key staff are very good.

What could be improved

- The school recognises the need to lift standards in mathematics and science to those already attained in English.
- The outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage needs to be completed.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in July 1997 the school has addressed all of the identified areas with great success. The development of the school's planned programme of work has been completed. The school has been successful in implementing the new National Strategies in Literacy and Numeracy and has set in place the changes in the provision for children in the Reception class. The very well equipped computer suite and shared work amongst the staff has enabled teachers to lift attainment levels in information and communication technology for pupils across the school to one that matches those found in most schools for pupils of the same age. The improvements to the accommodation have created more space for this new development as well as improved library facilities. Planning for teaching and work in the classroom is monitored regularly by the headteacher and subject leaders. The results of the scrutinised work and lesson observations are used constructively to raise performance across the school. The school is constantly reviewing and revising its practice and has established a strong and capable management team where governors and subject leaders all play important parts. As a result the overall improvement since the last inspection has been good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	B	B	B
Mathematics	D	C	E	E
Science	E	A	D	D

Key

Well above average A

above average B

Average C

Below average D

Well below average E

Standards in English for pupils at the age of 11 in 2001 were above those nationally and above those in similar schools. In mathematics standards were adversely affected by the admission in the spring of 2001 of three pupils with severe learning problems who responded better in English to the school's strategies than in other subjects. As a result fewer pupils attained the expected level or above. When adjusted to allow for these incoming pupils, attainment levels were close to the national average but with a lower proportion of pupils attaining higher levels. Overall they were well below average when compared with other similar schools. Science was similarly affected. Although every child attained the expected level again too few reached the higher standard. Overall the school has made progress over the past five years at the same rate as in all schools nationally. In the Foundation Stage children in the Reception class are progressing well and the majority are on course to attain the nationally expected levels in all of the areas of learning. In tests and assessments in 2001 for pupils in Year 2 attainment in reading and writing was above the national average and matched the national average in mathematics. Teacher assessment indicated that attainment in science was well below the expected level nationally. When set against similar schools attainment in reading and writing was above average and attainment matched other schools in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs achieve at the same rate as the other pupils in their class. During the inspection it was clear that the school had identified weaknesses in its strategies and had begun to remedy them. In lessons observed pupils in all classes are now working at a level very well matched to their prior attainment and are working as hard as can be expected. As a result, across the school the inspection team judged that in all subjects but especially in English, mathematics and science standards are now at least at the nationally expected level and some pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6 are already exceeding these levels. The school has agreed challenging targets for itself for 2002, which inspection evidence indicates that it is on course to achieve.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school; they want to attend and treat the building and the learning resources with care and respect.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good because pupils are managed very well and they have a clear understanding of the system of rewards and sanctions of the behaviour policy. There have been no exclusions during this academic year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good; pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the beliefs and values of others. Most pupils are beginning to show very good personal initiative and take increasing responsibility for managing their own work in most subjects.
Attendance	Attendance is good and is above the national average. Unauthorised absence is low. Pupils arrive on time and lessons start promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection and in lessons observed was never less than satisfactory and was good or better in nine out of every ten lessons. The percentage of very good lessons has increased from nine per cent to 20 per cent because planning has been made thorough and assessment and evaluation has enabled good practice to be shared and incorporated into every teacher's strategies for helping pupils to learn. As a result learning is generally good in lessons across the curriculum. The teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics is good. This is a direct result of training to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies and in turn this has also had a positive effect on teaching in other subjects. The school meets the needs of its pupils very well. The planning of teaching and support for those pupils with special educational needs or those learning English as an additional language is good and enables them to learn at a similar rate to that of other pupils in their class. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. The extra provision through clubs, visits and visitors to the school is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for all of the pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are identified early and good support is given.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school provides effectively for the two pupils who are learning English as an additional language. They are fully included in all of the school's activities and they learn well.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is well organised and pupils' personal skills are very well developed. There is excellent provision for pupils' spiritual development and the school provides very well for the moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very effectively for all its pupils through all its policies as seen in practice. The policy and procedures for Child Protection are good. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and information gathered is used well to promote learning.

Parents are pleased with the links with the school and share in an effective partnership with the teachers. Policies and plans of intended work are reviewed regularly and there are no longer any significant curricular weaknesses.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent. The deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and all the key staff support her very well. Through hard work and dedication, together they have been successful in creating a very effective school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	All the governors, led by a committed and competent chairman, are fulfilling their responsibilities well. Their understanding of the finances of the school and their support for the curriculum is based on good experience, knowledge and understanding.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has clear, effective and practical procedures for evaluating its performance. Governors have a very clear understanding of where strengths are found and a realistic view of areas for development and how to address them.
The strategic use of resources	The school's planned use of personnel and practical resources is very good. Resources for teaching and learning are good. They are used very well throughout the school.

The management of the school is well organised and is very effective. Teachers and governors have a shared vision for success and continued improvement. There are sufficient suitably experienced and qualified teachers who are supported by a number of well-trained, skilled learning support assistants. The improved accommodation enables the full curriculum to be taught successfully and learning opportunities for children at the Foundation Stage, whilst needing some improvement outside, are generally good. Resources are good and are regularly reviewed by the subject leaders. Financial management is good and the governing body has a very effective understanding of setting the budget against the plans contained in the comprehensive school development plan. Governors and teachers regularly review the evidence of the effect of spending on standards. The school has a strong understanding of looking for good value when buying materials or appointing and deploying personnel.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and are expected to work hard. • Their children do their best and make good progress. • They consider the teaching to be good. • They like the approachability of all of the teaching and support staff. • They value the very effective management of the headteacher. • They like the close links between the school, the parish and home. • They are pleased that their children develop a mature attitude to work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although they greatly value the work of those teachers filling the teaching vacancy, parents would welcome a permanent appointment for the vacant post. This is to enable the highly valued additional supportive work that these teachers often undertake in the school to be resumed.

As well as reviewing the responses in the parents' questionnaires and the information gathered at the pre-inspection meeting members of the inspection team talked with many parents. The parents did not make any criticism of the quality of learning that their children enjoyed. The team agrees with the parents about the many positive aspects of the school. Along with the teaching staff, the governors and the parents the inspectors would like to see the teaching vacancy filled.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Children start school in the Reception class in the September of the school year in which they will be five. This is called the Foundation Stage of education. Many of the children have had some experience in a number of local nurseries or in pre-school play groups before starting at the school although a few come straight from home. Children under the age of five in the Reception class work in the nationally recommended six areas of learning. On entry there is a spread of attainment but assessments carried out by the teachers show that for the majority of children their attainment on entry is similar to that usually found for children of the same age nationally. The overall attainment level varies from year to year depending on the number of children with recognised special educational needs. At the time of the inspection most children displayed well-developed personal and social skills. They are eager to learn and they play and work with their peers in a positive and profitable way that enables them to make good progress. There is a very good range of stimulating activities provided for children to develop skills in creativity such as painting and listening to and making music. Children develop well physically and enjoy making models with construction toys and demonstrate a range of skills on the computers. Most of the children in the present Reception class are confident independent learners and are already close to achieving the expected levels. Except for a tiny minority they are well prepared for the work of the National Curriculum. At the time of the last inspection this part of the school was considered to be satisfactory. It is now good and this is beginning to raise the aspirations of teachers and parents for the future.

- 2 By the age of seven pupils' standards in English, as shown in the national tests in 2001, were above the national averages in reading and writing. Standards in reading and writing were also above those in similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in English is being maintained at this above average level and many pupils are making good progress towards higher than the expected levels. Overall attainment levels in reading, writing and in speaking and listening are above those found in most schools nationally. The inspection evidence indicates that the structured work in matched ability groups, as well as the additional support aimed at lifting the attainments of pupils who are likely to attain only a low level 2, is proving to be a positive and successful way forward. For the last four years, overall standards have varied slightly between the different groups, depending on the differing numbers of pupils with special educational needs, but overall, the trend over time is that standards of attainment in English have been above those in most schools nationally.

- 3 Pupils aged seven to 11 extend the skills established in Years 1 and 2. The results of the tests in 2001 indicate that by the age of 11 standards overall in English are above the expected level for pupils nationally and are above those in schools with a similar social context. The percentage of pupils attaining at a level above that expected for pupils at the age of 11 is well above the national average. Pupils listen carefully and are developing good strategies for explaining their views and sustaining a well-reasoned argument. They enjoy the literacy hour and the majority read fluently and accurately. Pupils are beginning to develop personal styles in their handwriting. They write in an imaginative way when creating stories and produce concise reports that get to the heart of the matter when writing factually. The use of punctuation to enliven their text is good and pupils check their edited work carefully to eliminate spelling mistakes.

- 4 In mathematics at the end of Year 2, in the tests in 2001, the numbers of pupils attaining the expected standard was close to both the national average and the standard attained in similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that work undertaken in class is setting the majority of pupils on course to attain standards that are close to those in most schools nationally by the time that they are seven. Pupils know about and understand the manipulation of numbers up to and beyond 100 with increasing confidence. They calculate the change one needs from 50p or £1, when undertaking shopping tasks, using multiplication, addition and subtraction with growing accuracy and most pupils record their work carefully and readily explain the process for their calculations. This work is supported well by practical activities. They explain their reasons to the class sometimes seeking new ways to surprise their teachers. Pupils are learning that the process of repeated addition helps them to check simple multiplication.
- 5 In mathematics at the end of Year 6 the results of statutory tests in 2001 were disappointing. Following two years when standards rose there was significant slippage and the national and comparative scores fell to a level that was well below the national average and few pupils attained higher than expected level. Standards achieved in national and voluntary tests, maintained over the past three years, have varied depending on the group of pupils being tested but at the end of the key stage they have been rising since 1998. The school has analysed the results and investigated the cause of the decline. One telling factor is the inclusion in the class of three pupils who were accepted by the school in the spring and summer terms in 2001 at the request of the local education authority. Each of these pupils had severe learning and behavioural problems and was making little or no progress in their local schools at the time. When the data relating to these pupils is removed from the school's totals and the results are recalculated then the overall scores are close to the national average. A second factor was the long-term sickness of a teacher in the school who required support when in school and cover when absent. This resulted in some of the work for the booster classes in Year 6 being adversely affected. These problems have now been resolved. Inspection evidence indicates that in mathematics pupils at the age of 11 are now working at an overall level that is close to that expected for pupils of the same age nationally.
- 6 The process now in place for extending the learning opportunities for those pupils capable of higher attainment is also working well. A significant group of pupils in the large Year 6 class is already working at the expected level although the well above average number of pupils with special educational needs still presents a challenge to the management of the school, which they are ready to accept.
- 7 Both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been incorporated successfully into the work of the school. Individual pupils are working well towards meeting their own targets and at this stage in the academic year the school is well on course to meet the very challenging targets it has set for itself. Since the last inspection the overall standards of attainment have been close to the national average and have risen at a similar rate to those in most schools nationally.
- 8 Levels of attainment in science as indicated by teacher assessment at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were well below those expected for the percentage of pupils to attain the expected at level 2 in all aspects of the subject. These do not match the above average standards in English and the standards attained in mathematics. The school has therefore begun a review of its assessment strategies, as pupils in Year 3 have

no difficulty in coping with the demands of the work expected for that year group. Inspection evidence indicates that for the present group of pupils in Year 2 attainment is close to the level expected for pupils of the same age nationally. With increased challenge and an even closer match of work to ability more of the higher-attaining pupils might well reach a standard that is above the expected level. Teachers are concentrating on work to improve the pupils' experiences and are providing a rich range of opportunities for practical experiences for experimentation and investigation in the classroom and in the environment. This work is proving to be beneficial in maintaining standards and raising expectations for success further. This is being attained despite the above average number of pupils in the group with considerable learning difficulties.

- 9 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know a great deal about living things and life processes and with the support of the teachers they conduct interesting experiments about the environment. Work to investigate the properties of materials has been linked very successfully with work in mathematics, design and technology and information and communication technology related to data processing. Pupils rigorously question all things presented to them as facts and are beginning to apply established knowledge to new learning in experiments. They are confident when making predictions and are sure that even when wrong, their ideas will be considered and that they will be helped to discover the truth. They are developing good skills in thinking of searching questions to pose when examining new materials and confidently write and answer these as part of the recording process.
- 10 In science, the results of tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 again slipped for the same reasons as explained in mathematics. In fact although every pupil, including those with special educational needs attained at least level 4, because too few attained level 5 the scores were less encouraging when compared with similar schools the overall score slipped from being well above average to below average. Inspection evidence indicates that this was a dip that reflected a difficult year with staffing problems within the school. There is no evidence of a long-term slip in attitudes, teaching or curricular weakness. At the present time pupils are working at a level that shows them to be well on course to reverse the decline of the previous year. The school has embarked on a more thorough and regular assessment process that is already proving to be beneficial in highlighting strengths and identifying areas needing further work. Pupils in classes in Years 3 to 6 have good recall of work undertaken previously and are able to explain about solids, gases and liquids and explain how gases and liquids can change shape to fit any containers. Pupils build well on work in electricity begun in younger classes and construct circuits confidently, including bells, lights and buzzers. They explain very clearly what they are doing and know how to solve problems if the circuit is faulty. Pupils readily relate learning in one lesson to work planned and undertaken at the next stage. When they record their work in diagrams or on charts it is always presented well. They are good at interpreting recorded results from graphs and tables and pupils are encouraged to devise their own strategies for recording and evaluating results most frequently by accessing results stored in a data base and spreadsheet on the net-worked computers.
- 11 Throughout the school the overall attainment levels in information and communication technology meet national requirements for pupils at seven and 11. This is a great improvement since the time of the last inspection. Some pupils have access to personal computers at home and for these pupils attainment is invariably well above the expected level. Pupils use their skills in information and communication technology readily and confidently to support other subjects across the curriculum. All pupils readily access menus and load and retrieve their personal work from stored

files very well. Pupils love to show how well they access data stored from other enquiries, an increasing number quickly manipulate spreadsheets to access stored information and older pupils are beginning to import pictures. The majority of pupils, in classes across the school, make good progress towards their agreed personal targets in a purposeful way.

- 12 The amount, quality and range of work in all other subjects are most frequently either as good or better than that described at the time of the previous report. Attainment levels in history and design and technology, physical education, art and design, geography and music meet national requirements for pupils by the age of seven. By the age of 11, attainments in art and design, geography, history music, design and technology match the level expected for pupils of the same age nationally. Attainment levels in physical education are above average. This is similar to the attainments found at the time of the last inspection. Now that all of the subjects are fully covered there is less time for history and geography where attainment levels are no longer better than average as was the judgement of the previous team before the implementation of all of the recent changes to the work within schools. In all subjects pupils benefit from the shared expertise of the teaching and support staff who maintain a fully rounded programme of work alongside the national initiatives in literacy and numeracy.
- 13 Pupils of all abilities are expected to work hard. Average and above average-attaining pupils learn very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs also learn very effectively. They make good progress in relation to their abilities. Individual education plans are thorough and are helpful in enabling teachers and learning support assistants to provide work and lessons that support this progress. Pupils with special educational needs generally have good attitudes to their learning and they work with concentration. There are only two pupils in the school who are learning English as an additional language. Both of these pupils are supported well in school, work well using English and make good progress. During the inspection they were so well integrated and so fully involved that it was very difficult to identify them as they worked with their peers. These pupils do not form a significant group and comments that cause them to be identified will not feature in other parts of the report. No differences were observed overall in the learning, attainment or progress of any of these groups and, although the balance in some years leans heavily towards one or other gender, no significant difference was observed in the learning and progress of boys and girls.
- 14 Teachers place great demands on themselves and on all pupils. Since the last inspection all of the programmes of work have been reviewed and learning in classes is purposeful and relevant to the needs of groups and individuals. The staff have skilfully incorporated the skills learned in English and mathematics into other subjects. This has resulted in good descriptive and factual writing to support work in history and geography topics. The use of information and communication technology to extend pupils' work in mathematics and to record and process data in science is well-organised. Meeting the needs of all the pupils and the need to work to raise average standards of attainment to a level that is above expectations is part of the staffs' commitment to the school. Progress over time is demonstrated to be at a good level as seen in lessons and in the work in books and other collected evidence. Overall the standards of literacy and numeracy by the time pupils leave the school are now set to be at the national average for most pupils and above the national average for a significant group of pupils capable of higher attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 15 Attitudes, behaviour and personal development were reported as strengths in 1997 when the school was previously inspected and these strengths have been maintained and improved upon. Children in the Foundation Stage in the Reception class, have made a settled and secure start to school. They respond well to adults who provide good support for their development. Parents confirm that their children like school. Pupils in all years have very good attitudes to the school and their work and learning. They show a pride in their school as demonstrated for example by the 'fliers' that they produced to encourage other parents to enrol their children at St. Mary's. They show high levels of enthusiasm both in lessons and for the activities that the school provides for them. The pupils' enthusiasm for football, netball, athletics, summer gardening and the after-school club is particularly strong.
- 16 In lessons pupils listen carefully and work hard to complete the work that is planned for them. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. In the majority of lessons behaviour was seen to be either good or very good. This very good behaviour allows teachers to concentrate on teaching and results in good learning. The inspection team was particularly impressed by how friendly and polite pupils are. This has much to do with the positive way in which behaviour is managed, with pupils having high levels of self-esteem. In addition staff provide good examples of how pupils should relate to one another. Pupils follow their good example and confidently act in a manner that shows that they have thought through the effect of their behaviour on others. The school is calm and orderly and the environment is one in which learning flourishes.
- 17 Pupils have very clear views on what constitutes good and bad behaviour and they value the consistent way in which rewards and sanctions are applied. Interviews with parents confirmed that the way in which school handles incidents of bullying is very good and that as a result these incidents are rare. Although two pupils were excluded for a short period last year in the present academic year there have been no exclusions.
- 18 Pupils show a very good appreciation of the effect that their actions have on others in a variety of different ways. Their development is well demonstrated in assemblies where the entire school shares and celebrates in the success or emotions of others. They are very well developed in 'circle time', when whole classes sit quietly discussing issues that relate to feelings and emotions and where they learn from one another. Another example of pupils' learning in this way is through the use of the 'family groups' that are made up of pupils from all classes with each group led by older pupils from Year 6. An example of this use of groups to explore feelings was when a child in Year 5 explained how he felt that some of his classmates had let him down, by their behaviour in a lesson. Within nearly all lessons pupils demonstrate very good levels of respect for one another. They take care to listen to answers and to share equipment in group work. Outside lessons pupils were observed holding doors open for each other and sharing responsibilities in the family group assembly. Last year the pupils in Year 6, who won the award at the achievement assembly, used the monetary prize to buy books for the benefit of the whole school.
- 19 Pupils demonstrate individual and group initiative and responsibility very well. Older pupils accept responsibility for managing the Tuck Shop, opening windows in classrooms, carrying out the morning and afternoon bell duty, helping to support the dinner staff in the infant playground and willingly collect equipment at the end of play. Their self-esteem is such that they have the confidence and initiative to raise concerns. Pupils have very good relationships with one another and with their teachers they converse well together across the age groups. In lessons they were

regularly observed helping one another and whenever possible showed good initiative managing their own with only minimal prompting. This was seen to very good effect in art and in information and communication technology.

- 20 Attendance at 95.3% to the end of July 2001 is good and is above the national average. The majority of pupils arrive on time. Punctuality has been improved by the introduction of the planned 'calm beginnings' with which the school starts every day.
- 21 This system has created for pupils a calm spiritual beginning with which they prepare for work. Within this time of prayer and reflection pupils share their personal faith and beliefs and demonstrate an awareness of the beliefs of others. They show a tremendous sensitivity compassion and concern for the sufferings of others as demonstrated during the inspection by their spontaneous request to help children across the world who had lost family members and all of their possessions following the eruption of a volcano. Each day pupils share in singing for joy about the harmony of nature and their love of God. The powerfulness of this daily celebration of faith and community lifts the school out of the ordinary and is at the centre of all of its activities.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 22 Overall teaching is good and there are examples of very good teaching in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in other classes across the school. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science teaching is good. Teaching was observed in 41 lessons or parts of lessons during the inspection. In all of the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory. In the 41 lessons observed, just 3 were judged to be only satisfactory, more than 7 out of ten were good and a further 2 in every ten were judged to be very good. Lessons at the Foundation Stage for children in the reception class were never less than good and many were very good. In the reception class all of the staff have a good understanding of the needs of young children and of the best ways in which to help them learn. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school has improved since the time of the last inspection. The work of the subject leaders together with the skills and dedication of all the teaching staff have had a very beneficial effect on the overall quality of teaching.
- 23 The school has introduced the National strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy successfully and this has had a positive effect on the overall quality of teaching because the structure and organisation of work is now consistent in all classes. The training in planning and evaluating work, undertaken in the preparation for the new initiatives, has had a positive impact on the planning and evaluation processes in other subjects. Very few weaknesses in teaching remain; these tend to be extending the introduction of lessons for too long so leaving insufficient time for pupils to complete the allotted work. In a very few instances the planned work lacked variety and although work is planned to match the needs of individuals the opportunities for those pupils capable of reaching higher levels are sometimes too limited. Pupils learn well from the teacher's instruction and guidance in all lessons and are keen to explain clearly and knowledgeably what they are doing to any adult or pupil willing to listen.
- 24 Teachers' secure subject knowledge forms the firm foundation for assisting pupils' learning. All teachers have a good understanding of what needs to be taught in literacy and numeracy and as a result they are able to help pupils to develop the required skills effectively. Literacy and numeracy lessons are well structured in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant national strategies. Following the introductory session, pupils work collaboratively or independently within matched attainment groups in most lessons. Teachers almost always select methods well

fitted to the purpose for teaching the whole class, using for example, the whiteboard, a 100 or 1000 square or a big book with large text and clear pictures for class work with a shared text. When supporting individual groups specifically selected resources are chosen for groups and individuals to enable matched work. Written tasks are tailored to the pupils needs. Across the school basic skills are taught well. Pupils and the teacher engage in detailed discussion and conversation with questioning on both sides that extends pupils' thinking and promotes their learning. Some pupils tend to accept the first answer that they spot but are systematically being trained to investigate resources and examine results carefully, searching out minute details and all possible relevant information. This was seen to very good effect in a history lesson where pupils questioned visitors to the lesson about their experiences as evacuees during the Second World War. Pupils enjoy being 'history detectives' or 'science sleuths'. Teachers work well to make good links between subjects. They use the skills learned in English to improve writing in history for example as pupils list and organise their ideas about the problems besetting Henry VIII and his wives. Work in mathematics and information and communication technology is incorporated into other subjects such as science, or design and technology to good effect.

- 25 Across the school, teachers' personal enthusiasm and suitably high expectations are encouraging pupils to learn well and develop their skills across a range of subjects especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The drive for higher levels of attainment is an important part of every lesson. This is especially true in mathematics and science, where last year, although the percentage of pupils attaining level 4 went up the overall comparative scores fell because fewer pupils attained the higher level. Throughout the school teachers are sure of the purpose of all planned activities and explain them carefully to pupils. In the lessons observed, the teachers' knowledge, planning, control, organisation and management of pupils were good. Teachers' expectations are getting higher in response to pupils' improving attainment levels and work is usually challenging for pupils at all levels of attainment. It is because of the consistently interesting and effective teaching that they now enjoy that most pupils are now on course to improve on the standards of attainment in all subjects by the end of this academic year.
- 26 At the end of lessons teachers check whether the objectives discussed at the start have all been accomplished. This focuses the pupils' thinking and attention on what they are doing and why. Pupils of all ages and levels of attainment benefit from reflecting on the purpose of the lesson and this review enables them to be sure of what they have learned and how it fits into the pattern of their work in other lessons. This checking process was seen to good effect in one history lesson when the pupils and the teacher packed a suitcase ready for a child to be evacuated in 1940. Pupils then accepted or rejected items on offer because they were either unsuitable or were not available at that time. The discussion that ensued established the pupils' understanding of how the evacuee children prepared for the trauma and adventure of leaving their homes and their parents.
- 27 Teachers increasingly work together in preparation for the teaching of new and familiar work and this collaboration is undertaken effectively. Planning is particularly impressive in English, mathematics and science but is also seen in all other subjects, where it is clear and is obviously well structured. Since the last inspection teachers have developed and have begun to implement good procedures for assessing the progress that pupils make both on a day-to-day basis and at the end of units of study. The information gathered is used after lessons each day in order to help to organise and develop the next stage of the learning programme. All written work is marked

clearly and regularly, to an agreed standard, and this scheme for marking is proving to be a useful way of monitoring work and assessing pupils' progress. Teachers use the marking process very well in classes between Years 3 and 6. The written comments shared by the teacher and pupil enable the pupil to develop good personal review strategies. The marking of work in the classes for younger children is equally thorough although the commentary is more frequently oral rather than written because teachers talk to their pupils as they mark work beside them, pointing out good features and how to do better next time. Pupils derive great value from this individual interaction with the teacher.

- 28 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is never less than good in the Foundation Stage and in all classes across the school. Teachers' planning takes account of the specific needs of individual pupils in the way that they are grouped and supported, particularly in subjects where understanding of literacy or numeracy strategies are required. The work provided in class for pupils with special educational needs is well matched to their needs and this helps them to make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans. There is good liaison between class teachers and learning support assistants, the latter having a very clear understanding of the work they will do with the targeted pupils. The learning support assistants know the pupils well and are skilful in providing not only support and encouragement but allowing pupils to try hard for themselves as far as possible. In all subjects but especially in literacy lessons meet the requirements of pupils' individual education plans very effectively.
- 29 The established pattern for setting homework is working well. Work completed is marked carefully if it is written work or else it is used in lessons at the start of the next week if it is a finding out activity. At the Foundation Stage and in classes in Years 1 and 2 pupils also learn words and number bonds and parents share willingly in these activities that make reading and writing easier for everyone. One little boy who had a pack of more than 40 words that he knew refused to read his book until he had shown how many words he knew and admitted that he liked reading words without pictures so that he could read stories without getting stuck. He also knew many sounds and could build up unfamiliar words. All pupils regularly take reading scheme and library books home and parents record what they have read and sometimes make other comments in the reading diaries.
- 30 The overall improvement in the quality of teaching since the time of the last inspection has been brought about by a shared commitment to put the needs of the pupils first. This has also been achieved by the teachers' ability to adopt the identified elements of good practice observed within the school into their own performance. Teachers demand the very best from pupils that each one can offer. They have a positive result to their expectations because they never offer other than their own best to the pupils.

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

- 31 A good quality, interesting and stimulating curriculum is provided for all pupils from different backgrounds and with different levels of prior attainment from the Reception class upwards. All subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal and social education are provided, although religious education was not inspected as part of this inspection. All subjects have an appropriate time allocation with the exception of science, which is lower than that now found in most schools. The school is looking to increase this time as the standards attained in 2001 were

less good than in previous years. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils make the same good progress, as do others.

- 32 Children in the Reception class work towards the nationally expected Early Learning Goals, (work that sets out what children of average ability are expected to achieve by the end of the school year). The school has very effective plans that organise the necessary work into pleasurable activities that promote and extend learning effectively. This planned work covers all of the required areas of learning such as literacy and communication, mathematics, creative and physical development and all other elements that help to develop the whole child.
- 33 Planning for pupils in Years 1-6 is good. The most recent national guidance is used as the basis for planning and adapted to provide programmes of work that ensure pupils' learning is organised systematically in organised steps. A whole school approach is providing consistency and ensuring there is full coverage of National Curriculum requirements. Planning carefully identifies what pupils are expected to learn, understand and do both over the term and in lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established and standards are improving. Resources for information and communication technology, identified as an area for improvement in the previous report, are good although the Internet access is very new. Information and communication technology is a rapidly developing area in the school and pupils are given good opportunities to develop their skills and to use these skills to support other subjects. In a Year 2 information and communication technology lesson some pupils were learning how to use a digital microscope to support learning in science. In all subjects pupils are given the opportunity to develop their skills of speaking and listening. In a Year 6 science lesson the teacher rightly insisted on structured sentences, using the appropriate technical vocabulary when answering challenging questions. Numeracy skills are also consolidated and are used to foster learning in subjects such as science, history and geography. Teaching and learning are supported well by the provision of appropriate homework.
- 34 There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The recommendations of the Code of Practice are met successfully. Support is usually within the classroom so those pupils are able to follow the same curriculum as the rest of the class. Some pupils are withdrawn for small group specialist teaching for the development of literacy skills according to need. Individual education plans refer to specific targets for each pupil and these are reviewed and revised accordingly. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is effective in enabling them to make good progress towards achieving their targets. All pupils with special educational needs have the same opportunities to take part in every aspect of school life. The school has identified a few pupils who are considered to be particularly gifted in some subjects. Within the new system these pupils are given additional or different work to extend their opportunities such as seen in art, mathematics and sporting activities during the inspection.
- 35 Very good provision is made for personal, social and health education and citizenship. This aspect of pupils' education permeates the whole curriculum. Within this provision the 'family group' weekly assembly provides valuable experiences and challenges that strongly support personal and social education. There is a suitable sex education policy and provision for the education about the misuse of drugs. Much is done to broaden pupils' experiences within the parish as well as beyond the community in which they live. Visits are arranged to places of interest to support the work planned for pupils. These visits include well-planned residential experiences for

older pupils in Years 5 and 6. There are also visits from people with specialist knowledge and expertise, such as a group from the National Ballet company. These visits and visitors are all used well to supporting charities such as the Shrewsbury Children's Society. Such initiatives help to foster pupils' personal and social education.

- 36 The school has strong links with the parish community. This community makes a good contribution to learning within the school. For example parishioners regularly come in to school to share books with pupils and to listen to them read. These volunteers include men because it was felt that boys needed examples of men who enjoyed reading for pleasure in order to foster an interest in books and reading. This is another example of how the school strives to meet the needs of all pupils.
- 37 The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Most but not all clubs are for pupils in Years 3-6. In addition to a range of sporting activities there are music opportunities, including the chance to learn an instrument, drama and gardening. Pupils are expected to demonstrate their commitment to their chosen extra-curricular activities. For example, the pupils participating in a 'short tennis' club, for which the school buys in a person with expertise to run the club, have a membership card that has to be signed to say they have attended the session. The 'Resurrection Rock' concert performed in the church made a positive contribution to the parish and was recognised as being spiritually uplifting.
- 38 The school has good links with partner institutions, notably a neighbouring special school and the secondary schools to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 6.
- 39 Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good overall. The school has maintained the overall standards identified in the previous report. However, the provision has improved because provision for social development is now very good and the provision for spiritual development is now of a very high order indeed.
- 40 Collective worship was not inspected as part of this inspection. However, evidence from visits to the whole school morning prayers that start each day demonstrated very clearly that provision for pupils' spiritual development is at the forefront of the school's aims. The morning prayers were uplifting for all present and laid the foundations for a positive approach to the day ahead. Within lessons pupils have the opportunity to understand human feelings and to explore values and beliefs. In a Year 6 science lesson the introductory activity – testing what happens when a pound coin and a small ball of tightly rolled paper are dropped simultaneously from the same height – generated amazement among the pupils. At the end of an art lesson Year 2 pupils explained their actions and gave reasons for their choices and decisions and in turn appraised and celebrated the work of others in a way that was very impressive for pupils of this age. There are many eye-catching, interesting and attractive displays of work around the school that cause pupils to stop, look and think about the meaning that they convey.
- 41 Provision for moral development is very good. Teachers provide very good examples for pupils in how to work together. The management of behaviour is consistent across the school and follows the school's behaviour and caring codes. Classroom rules are negotiated in each class at the beginning of the school year and displayed for all to see. As a result routines are very well established in all classes. This is helping pupils to control their own behaviour and understand what is right and wrong.

The school has the Catholic faith at the heart of all that it promotes but is rigorous in helping pupils to understand the moral codes of different traditions and groups within the community. Adults promote models of approved moral codes and behaviour through their choices of passages of literature, discussions about issues in the news and their work in history and geography when pupils are encouraged to question whether what they see and read fits with what they believe to be right.

- 42 Social development is promoted very well. The youngest children in the Reception class learn how to take turns, how to share equipment and the importance of good behaviour in the confined space of the classroom. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop social skills. Different activities in classrooms give pupils opportunities to work in pairs, in groups and independently. For example, when a class wins an award for consistently good behaviour at dinnertime they discuss how the prize money should be spent and come to an agreement amongst themselves. Social awareness is also fostered very well by the close links with the adjacent special school. From visits to this school by small groups of pupils, for example to join with them to make cakes and by helping the special school pupils to wash their hands, pupils begin to realise how difficult it is to work at even simple tasks when you are physically challenged. Wider issues are covered through a variety of initiatives, for example the 'Crucial Crew' day that teaches pupils about the emergency services and helps them to understand how to respond to different situations they may face.
- 43 Provision for cultural development is very good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about their own and other communities through visits to places of interest such as to the Portland Basin. Pupils are taught about the development of their own culture through their studies in history. In a celebration assembly two girls demonstrated Irish folk dancing that they learn at a local club. Their skill captivated all the other pupils and the applause at the end was spontaneous. Multicultural awareness is developed through work in geography, music and art as well as by studying some of the main religions of the world. The music played as pupils entered and left morning prayers was by Joaquin Rodrigo, the blind Spanish composer. Books in the school reflect a diversity of cultures. A display about special people – the theme for the week – showed men and women from different cultural backgrounds around the world in their own countries and in a wide range of occupations. Over the year pupils share in work relating to festivals and celebrations such as Diwali or Eid from world religions and celebrate with other local Christians events such as the processions of witness each year at Pentecost.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 44 The school cares for its pupils very well. Arrangements for child protection are good. The headteacher is the designated responsible person and she is ably supported by the class teacher in Year 2. This means that with two fully trained people cover is ensured should either be away. Both have received the appropriate training and knowledge of their role amongst the staff is good. Arrangements for health and safety are also good. The school's health and safety policy is comprehensive, assigning responsibilities to named individuals. A member of the governing body carries out termly audits on the premises and staff from the local education authority are also very supportive having recently carried out a very detailed health and safety check on all aspects. Work has been begun on formally documenting the risk assessments and this needs to be maintained to ensure that all items are always thoroughly assessed and recorded. This will then enable the school to note the progress made in remedying any recorded issues. Records of fire drills are up to date, as is the training provided for first aiders. The school is well supported by a very diligent caretaker who

carries out small repairs and, in conjunction with his assistant, keeps the building in excellent condition.

- 45 The support and guidance given to pupils is very good. The pastoral support programme, allied to the weekly pastoral meetings ensures that those pupils who need support receive it. The school is also responsive to requests from the local education authority and parents to admit and work with pupils with special educational needs. The school's readiness to accept children who find attending school regularly difficult or who have a history of exclusion from other schools and of helping them to fit in and do well, demonstrates that it is supportive and welcoming to those who had previously considered themselves to be friendless.
- 46 Since the last inspection the arrangements for monitoring attendance remain good. Registers are completed according to statutory requirements and being computerised, they allow for the quick recognition of trends in absences. The introduction of the 'calm beginnings' start to the school day requires pupils to arrive at 8.50am. Pupils and staff then share a time of prayer and reflection that creates a feeling for the day that promotes work and learning. This system is valued so highly that pupils want to be involved and as a result has improved both time keeping and attendance. Registers are then marked and returned to the administrative staff to follow up any absence. The school always requires written confirmation of all absences. It is because of the diligent way in which it follows this up absence that the levels of attendance are above the national average. There are good links with the education welfare officer who follows up those absences on which the school's efforts have failed to have the desired effect.
- 47 Systems for monitoring behaviour are very good, being based on the consistent application of both the discipline policy and the anti-bullying policy. This effectiveness is demonstrated by the overwhelmingly very good behaviour displayed by pupils. Policies are regularly reviewed and updated with input from pupils taken into account. The emphasis on teachers' consistent management of behaviour helps to ensure that pupils' self-esteem is maintained. However where sanctions are required these are applied and pupils are very much aware and accepting of them. Procedures for monitoring incidents of bullying, racism and sexism are very good and every instance is recorded in the significant events log. Such incidents are rare but when they occur they are dealt with immediately by the headteacher. Both the bullied child and the bully are seen and both sets of parents are informed of the action to be taken. The weekly pastoral care meetings are another important means of sharing information about pupils and they make a significant contribution to ensuring that children are well cared for.
- 48 The school's methods of checking pupils' progress over time, have been a recent focus for staff development and strategies have been revised and improved. There are now effective practical strategies for monitoring the academic performance of pupils. Trends are analysed over years and good use is made of the information to help the setting of school targets linked to the national requirement. This process is used to identify areas for improvement. An additional process is being implemented using a data handling program on the computer This system enables realistic decisions to be made about where help needs to be targeted. It is already working very well for English and mathematics although data for science is not yet part of the system.
- 49 The school makes good use of past National Curriculum test papers to assess pupils' progress and to inform learning needs. Work is set for groups and individuals and

using this marked work, annotated by teachers, levels of attainment are agreed by staff. This is done to best effect in English, mathematics and is now being implemented increasingly in science. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are informed about what they need to achieve in order to attain the expected levels and the higher levels of attainment. In the Reception class a recognised assessment process is used to identify children's prior attainment. This helps teachers to plan individual and group work in order to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to succeed in reaching or exceeding the levels expected by the end of the year.

- 50 Teachers all have full and appropriate guidance on how to check and record pupils' performance. There is a brief review of what pupils' have learned after lessons each day in order to ensure a good match of work and to help in the revision of the next stage of the planning. Pupils are rewarded in a wide range of ways for outstanding effort, good work or progress. Pupils delight in being mentioned in the celebration assembly for their efforts in writing, mathematics, sporting achievements or for behaving responsibly or meeting challenges with effort especially when the work proved to be difficult. The pupils' individual records of achievement show a clear picture of the progress of each pupil through the school. Teachers use sensitive observation and the results of their systematic checking to identify any pupils who have a particular gift or talent in any subject. When identified additional and more challenging activities are being provided.
- 51 There are good procedures for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. The provision is good and pupils make good progress. The school gives consistent support to those pupils in the development of their skills. All pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school. Within classes, work is planned which caters for their special needs. Learning support assistants are well informed and work alongside pupils in the classrooms promoting self-esteem and learning most effectively.
- 52 The arrangements for reviewing pupils' personal development are good. The weekly pastoral care meetings are used to share information and parents aid this process by being very open and supportive. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, developing mutual trust to which pupils respond well. Teachers also make themselves available to parents at the end of the day and these informal meetings allow for further information to be passed on. A formal assessment of personal development is reported in the Annual Report to Parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 53 Those parents who spoke to members of the inspection team consider that the school is very good. At the pre-inspection meeting and in the responses to the questionnaire there were only one or two adverse comments about the school. Parents state that they find the headteacher and her staff very welcoming and they are confident that any concerns which they raise are listened to and acted upon. Parents' are particularly pleased that the school expects their children to work hard, that their children like the school, that the behaviour is good and that the school is well led and managed.
- 54 The school has very effective links with parents. This process begins before children start their education with a very informative pre-school induction programme for every parent and child. The headteacher or the Reception class teacher visit the home of every pupil to introduce themselves and this is followed by a new admission visit to the school the term before arrival. Both the headteacher and all her staff put a lot of

effort into making parents feel comfortable in the school. Through regular, informative newsletters and sometimes more formal letters parents learn about coming events, plans for topics within the curriculum and follow the successes of classes, individuals and groups. Where the school is aware that the parents find reading large amounts of small print difficult they contact parents personally and explain what is happening so that all parents have an opportunity to be included. In the autumn term there is also an information letter explaining the planned programme of work for each year group.

- 55 The effect of the parents' involvement in and support for the work of the school is good and helps projects to be accomplished more rapidly. There are currently six parents and grandparents who offer support: listening to pupils read, organising and assisting with the coaching of the football teams and providing support for the annual musical production. The parents' support for the wildlife gardening project is essential in order to complete the work within the planned schedule. There is no formal parents association but the very close and productive links with the parish ensure that parental support for events, including fund raising, is very good. In the recent past the funds raised have been used to contribute to the payment for the new building extension. to purchase the new stage and to subsidise school visits, which enhance the children's life at school. The trip to see a Shakespearean performance at the puppet theatre is an example of this. There are now two evenings each year for parents and teachers to discuss pupils' learning and progress at which the attendance is around 95 per cent. As well as these formal meetings there are many informal opportunities for parents to meet either with the classteacher or with the headteacher should a need arise.
- 56 Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed about the progress of their children. They are involved in discussing their children's Individual education plans at regular intervals and encouraged to provide additional support at home.
- 57 The quality of information provided by the school is good. The School Prospectus is pleasingly presented and meets statutory requirements. Parents praised the quality of the annual reports on their child's progress. They are good in that it is clear that they relate to the child in question and that they give an indication of the level of knowledge and understanding. Where targets are set they are useful and the school should ensure that all the reports contain such targets to enable all pupils and parents to work towards rectifying any identified areas of weakness. The Governors' Annual Report to parents makes too little comment on the arrangements for the admission of physically handicapped pupils and adults and the steps taken to prevent such pupils being treated less favourably than others. As the school has easy access there is only a passing comment about the facilities that are provided to assist access to the school by disabled adults and pupils. The school has identified this omission and already has strategies in place to address this issue in the next report.
- 58 The contribution of parents to their children's learning at home is good. There is a Home-School Agreement but the school has difficulty in getting all parents to sign and return it as many believe that a formal agreement about what they do willingly is not really necessary. There is a clear homework policy, which is revised each year, about which parents are well informed. Pupils also have reading diaries, and where parents comment this information is valued. Families support their children and the school well. Evening workshops for parents where staff explain the pattern of work in English have been run in the past and there has been a recent request for a similar event about mathematics. This is already planned and will be offered to parents before the

end of this academic year.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 59 The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management. She is setting very high expectations and continually driving the school forward. She is instrumental in maintaining a supportive environment in which staff and pupils feel secure and valued. This is particularly emphasised in the 'calm beginning' short act of worship, which takes place in the hall each day, for all pupils as they enter the school straight from the playground. The calm, reflective and prayerful atmosphere created at this time is very special and unique to the school. It sets the whole tone of the school day and has a significant influence on the attainment, behaviour and the happy atmosphere created within the school. She is well supported by the very committed and knowledgeable chair of governors, the deputy headteacher and the school's senior management team together with the entire teaching and support staff.
- 60 The role of the deputy headteacher has been purposefully extended since the previous inspection and he has profited from the opportunity to undertake an increasing management role, which includes organising many extra-curricular events, supporting colleagues and planning residential visits. In this time he has trained to deputise very effectively for the headteacher in her absence. This is a tremendous improvement from the last inspection when he was diffident about his talents and was then slow to take initiative. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together. They have clearly defined roles and use their respective skills to motivate pupils and strive for higher standards. As a team the adults who share responsibility for management are very successful in promoting an environment where pupils work hard, enjoy very good relationships, and show respect for peers and staff. They know what is happening in classrooms. Teaching, learning and care is at the heart of all they do. All staff and governors are firmly committed to the school's aims, that include an emphasis on personal as well as academic development. An analysis of the returns from the parents' questionnaires show that 93 per cent of parents are completely satisfied that the school is well led and managed, a view that was strongly endorsed at the parents' meeting itself.
- 61 A key strength of the school is that the headteacher encourages staff to seek continual improvement by reflecting critically on what they do. The organisation of the subjects taught has been thoroughly audited and improved as a result of important national initiatives and as part of the process begun before the last inspection. This work has been completed very successfully. The quality of curriculum planning is an improvement when compared with the findings of the previous inspection. The headteacher and the various subject leaders have accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and standards, and have used their findings to guide organisation. This improvement is also reflected in the lessons observed and in the analysis of pupils' work. In English, and mathematics teaching is supported and critically observed by senior staff, subject leaders and some governors, the planning of intended work is checked and pupils' results are recorded, analysed and evaluated. This information is used effectively to inform the priorities for development and targets are set for improvement. For example the results of the national tests in mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were rather disappointing. As a result of careful checking, plans were made to improve the mathematics curriculum and methods of teaching. The quality of this review was good and its findings gave clear pointers as to how the school might improve. There is strong evidence to support the view of the school that pupils' attainment has already been raised sufficiently to anticipate a significant improvement in results in the next round of

testing.

- 62 The school is successful in meeting its published aims which are reflected in all policies and which help to make this a most successful community. There are appropriate systems in place for the quality and relevance of development planning for teachers. Alongside this strategies are in place so enable teachers to track the progress of pupils in all subjects and to maintain a record of the skills taught and learned. Collections of marked work are regularly reviewed and updated to help teachers and pupils to attain the best possible levels of attainment. The arrangements for the induction of new teachers are satisfactory. There have been no new teachers recently and therefore although the plans and structure of support for new members of staff are clear and the named monitor for new teachers shows good skills when helping colleagues they have not been in use for more than two years. The school uses the special strengths of all of its teachers to support and influence the others. Those members of staff who have additional responsibilities are working to complete delegated tasks appropriate to the school's improvement priorities. Teachers are skilled at identifying what it is that they have to do. Subject leaders develop their designated areas of responsibility well. With the senior management team and members of the local education authorities support and advice team they maintain regular checks as to the effectiveness of teachers' work in the classroom in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. They support other teachers by sharing best practice to help them improve. They lead training to increase subject knowledge and order and allocate resources and plan for improvement.
- 63 The governing body includes members with a valuable range of expertise. The governors are committed to ensuring highest quality education for all pupils and they work closely with the headteacher to achieve the school's aims. Governors know and understand their roles clearly and maintain a successful approach to meeting their responsibilities. Under the leadership of the headteacher and the chair of governors the governing body has been successful in supporting the school very effectively in addressing all of the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. The proceedings of the governing body are efficiently conducted and committees are well organised and meet regularly. There is a very positive relationship between the governors and the school. Teachers are welcomed at governors' meetings when reports are presented relating to their special areas of subject responsibility. Governors have full confidence in the headteacher but expect her to be accountable. Overall, governors have a very good working knowledge of the school and this directly informs their decision-making. The governing body is fulfilling all of its statutory requirements. The governors are considered by the staff to be friends and advisers who they trust. They appreciate their interest and assistance as well as their specialist support and advice.
- 64 The school improvement plan and its linked action plans for the academic year 2001 to 2002 is highly relevant to curricular and organisational needs, especially in, numeracy and science. This is now a comprehensive working document that tracks progress towards agreed targets and indicates changes when test results or national and local initiatives make the original plan less suitable. The inclusion of revised plans for mathematics and science was imperative and the work was undertaken very thoroughly.
- 65 The school is staffed by a good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers who are effectively deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum and to support pupils with special educational needs. However the school has recently found

difficulty in appointing a suitable teacher to a vacant post in Year 1. At present this post is filled very effectively, on a job-share basis, by two teachers who know the school well and who regularly work in classes as short-term supply teachers or work with groups who are capable of reaching higher attainment. All teachers have high levels of professionalism, dedication and commitment. The staff works closely together. Teachers plan their work conscientiously, sharing experience and expertise. Experienced teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils who have special educational needs. There are established arrangements for staff development, guided by the school development plan. Lunchtime supervisors provide a high standard of care at midday and know the pupils well. The caretaker ensures a high standard of cleanliness at all times. Administrative support is very effective and efficient. The school secretary and administrative secretary make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school, discharging a wide and diverse range of responsibilities.

- 66 The management of special educational needs is good. There is effective and caring provision. The teacher who leads this work has developed clear and manageable procedures for early identification of need most effectively. There are good guidelines for the deployment and effective use of the learning support assistants who work well with teaching staff and have a strong and positive effect on pupils' learning. The policy is to be revised in line with the new national guidelines for pupils with special educational needs. Resources for special educational needs are good and are being improved gradually year by year.
- 67 The school's arrangements for financial management and control are good. The secretary and the headteacher work well together with the budget officer to ensure that the budget is tightly controlled so that the requirements of the governing body are met and that money is available for the improvements detailed in the school's plan for development. The school manages with great skill the allocation for planned expenditure and for improvement having paid the mandatory salaries and allowances. The governing body monitors expenditure from the statements provided by the financial advisor of the local education authority. The grants the school receives for supporting pupils with special educational needs are used well to provide extra help for these pupils and this is well organised. The school has a policy of inclusion for all pupils and the funding allocated for the provision for children with special educational needs is supplemented from the main budget. Plans to provide the same good quality of care for those pupils capable of higher attainment have been considered and the school is committed to support these needs.
- 68 The accommodation and grounds provide a spacious, bright and varied environment for learning. Some of the reserves in the budget were spent as the school's share of funding for the improvements to the accommodation. The extension and modifications have provided better facilities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and have enabled the staff to create the room for the computer suite and to extend the library facilities. There are good facilities for teaching all of the programmes of study contained in the National Curriculum and for a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. There are plentiful areas for displays of pupils' work, which are used well to celebrate pupils' achievements and to create focal points for discussion and appreciation. The new extension to the building fits in well with the architectural design and access to all areas for pupils with special educational needs is improving. The wildlife garden provides a very good resource teaching and learning science. Plans have been approved and money set aside to further develop this area as an added resource for several other subjects.

- 69 Overall the range and quality of resources are good. The recently completed computer suite is used very well and provides pupils with good opportunities to develop information and communication technology skills. The school makes good use of this facility and pupils use it throughout the day to support their learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 were thrilled to end their literacy lesson by producing their poems in colour in the computer suite. As result standards of attainment have been raised significantly in information and communication technology since the last inspection to a level that matches that expected for pupils of the same age nationally. These improvements have been made and maintained over time despite the school having to wait until the last group for their share of the available grants. There is only a small selection of outdoor play equipment for the children in the Reception class. The governors are presently organising the refurbishment of the Foundation Stage play area and adequate funds have been provided in the school improvement plan to complete this development.
- 70 The drive, enthusiasm and clear-sightedness of the headteacher and chair of governors, who work very closely together, has meant that the school has made good progress since the last inspection. Effective systems for moving the school forward have been established and the dip in attainment in mathematics and science 2001 is being reversed. The school is in a very good position to go on to improve further. Taking into account the overall good teaching, the very good attitudes and relationships between all the people involved in the school and the very good behaviour of pupils set against the available financial resources, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 71 In order to build on the existing good practice, improve the school and further raise the standards the governors, headteacher and staff should follow the targets and priorities that are set out in the school improvement plan and the linked subject specific action plans.
- (1) complete the planned strategies to raise standards in mathematics that are already producing positive results;
paragraphs: 5, 61, 64, 95, 97, 101, 102
 - (2) review the allocation of time for the teaching of science and continue the planned strategies designed to raise attainment , particularly those for higher attaining pupils;
paragraphs: 8, 10, 31, 49, 64, 103, 109
 - (3) seek the help and support of the relevant authorities to ensure that all of the listed plans for enhancement of provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage are fully implemented;
paragraphs: 69, 82

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		8	30	3	0	0	0
Percentage		20	73	7	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. With 41 lessons observed each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	201
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.6

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
		2001	16	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	12	12	14
	Total	27	27	29
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	90 (86)	90 (91)	97 (95)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	14
	Girls	12	14	11
	Total	27	29	25
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	90 (91)	97 (91)	83 (91)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	15	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	10	15
	Girls	12	9	14
	Total	23	19	29
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	79 (78)	66 (75)	100 (97)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	13
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	23	22	25
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	79 (69)	76 (72)	86 (94)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	28.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	358,425
Total expenditure	372,509
Expenditure per pupil	1,854
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,340
Balance carried forward to next year	12,256

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	127
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	37	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	47	7	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	43	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	52	3	2	3
The teaching is good.	53	38	3	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	37	8	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	25	3	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	50	3	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	65	28	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	37	3	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	50	7	2	22

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

72. At the time of the previous inspection the work with children under five was considered to be satisfactory. It is now good and the changes in planning and teaching strategies since September together with the new equipment are helping children to improve their levels of attainment very well.
73. There is no nursery and children join the Foundation Stage in the Reception class in the September of the year in which they will be five. The school's checks to investigate where children are up to in their experiences and learning soon after they start in the autumn term indicate that overall the children's attainment on entry varies depending on the proportion of children with special educational needs. Assessment indicates that overall, for this year's intake, it is about average. The school follows a programme of work that covers the six nationally recommended areas of learning and works systematically towards the levels of attainment expected by the end of the Reception class year. As children achieve the expected levels for pupils at the end of the Foundation Stage, staff begin to introduce elements of the National Curriculum into the work planned for the class in a gradual way.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

74. Attainment in personal, social and emotional development is above average for most children by the end of the reception class year with the children mixing and socialising well. On entry, whilst some come straight from home many of the children have already had some experiences in a number of local nurseries or play groups. Most of the children are able to work together well, share resources and are beginning to learn and understand the need to take turns and listen to one another. They are eager to explore new situations and are keen to share their experiences with others. For example, a group of children were observed playing a dice game, taking turns, without adult intervention and this group was more than willing to show what they were doing and how their activity worked. This half-term children were using the Three Bears House for role-play. Boys and girls all enjoyed measuring ingredients to make porridge, wearing the bear costumes and acting out what the bears might say to the sleeping Goldilocks when they find her. They do this well and delight in adding more inventive sentences to the script that they have devised. When painting or working at the water tray children were all very involved and experimented with colour or investigated what happened when boats were loaded with sinking or floating objects. The children behave well in all situations, work co-operatively, and concentrate and persevere with their learning during work and play activities. A lesson in personal, social and emotional education enabled pupils to learn how a group functions: developing the idea of waiting for others to finish speaking and listening to their views. In this session the children sat quietly until it was their turn to speak. When their turn came round they spoke clearly with good sentence structure. The teacher and the learning support assistant create a businesslike atmosphere where each child feels that they are special. There are high expectations of behaviour and the children want to please the adults who are teaching them.
75. Teaching in this area of work is very good. The work planned is organised effectively and the teacher and her assistant arrange many opportunities for children to extend their experiences and develop ways of learning through play and building effective

relationships with one another.

Communication Language and Literacy

76. The children's attainment in this area is about average on entry and except for those identified as having special educational needs is well on course to be above average by the end of the reception class year. They are becoming confident, articulate talkers and respond well to the teacher's and classroom assistant's questions. Throughout all lessons they are encouraged to develop their vocabulary and listen carefully. For example, when talking about his work, one child said "Look at my writing, I am writing this especially for baby bear.' From conversations with staff, a review of monitoring reports and through talking with pupils in the present Year 1 class this is an improvement since the past year or so when there were problems in this part of the school. All children enjoy books, take great pleasure in handling them and in taking care of them. The youngest children are able to talk about the book they are reading and predict what might happen, while other children are beginning to recognise up to 20 initial letter sounds and can demonstrate how sounds are blended as parts of words. The focus blends during the inspection were 'sh' and 'ch'. About a third recognise up to 25 key words, whilst a small minority read fluently at an appropriate level. At least 12 children were eager to talk in detail about their books and retell their favourite stories. Every child was willing to talk about their preferred book or story although some needed a quiet space and some encouragement, as might be expected. Most of the children in the class recognise and are willing to attempt to write their own name with little or no help and with a high level of success. A small but growing group of children are starting to write confidently and spell some key words correctly with increasing accuracy. Some children are already confident when writing short sentences and others are willing to have a go at this work. They like to use punctuation, especially exclamation marks. Punctuation is frequently included in their work but understandably it is not always in the correct places. Pencil control is almost always at least satisfactory and for about half of the class it is good. The letter formation of the most experienced and confident children is well formed and legible although some still write their most of their letters from the bottom and are still learning the correct ways of forming letters.
77. The quality of the teaching is imaginative, thorough and good. An appropriate range of activities including speaking and listening, writing and reading is provided. The planning is clear and takes into account what the children know and can do. The enthusiasm of the teacher for stories, promoting good listening skills and for books helps to foster positive attitudes towards literacy and encourages the children to make good progress. The effective use of the skilled classroom assistant ensures that all pupils receive effective additional support. Both the teacher and the assistant use questioning effectively to help children extend their knowledge and increase their language skills.

Mathematical development

78. By the age of five the children's attainment in this area is average. All children recognise numbers to five and many to ten, 20 and beyond and most sequence them correctly. They use and understand 'more' or 'less than' when counting to 10. During the inspection they showed great enthusiasm for learning and showing their understanding of terms such as 'next to', 'beside', 'below' and 'above'. They confidently name two-dimensional shapes such as 'circle', 'square', 'rectangle' and 'triangle' and explain why and how they differ very well. The newly introduced shape, the hexagon, was soon a favourite word that children introduced into their

conversations whenever possible. These shapes are used successfully to create interesting pictures. Children are good at making continuing patterns using sticks and by threading beads. Work scrutiny and a review of work undertaken by pupils in Year 1 shows by the end of their year in the reception class a high proportion of children count accurately in tens to 100, count in twos and undertake simple addition and subtraction sums up to ten with a high degree of accuracy. They clearly understand and use appropriate vocabulary such as 'taller', 'shorter', 'lighter', 'heavier' and know which words to use in conversations about their work. The children enjoy the tasks set and eagerly join in the class sessions because they delight in showing adults how good they are. They work well, sharing resources and helping each other. They are interested and make good progress.

79. The teaching is good and a series of appropriate activities catch the interest of the children and ensure a positive attitude towards mathematics. The effect of the good pace and well-planned activities all add to the children's good rate of progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Children's attainment in this area is average. They demonstrate some knowledge of the seeds that will grow into flowers and vegetables and that they will need water and sunshine to make them grow strong. Scientific knowledge about pouring and building is gained by play in the sand and water trays. Children also enjoy experimenting with water and have created a display that reminds them of all the words they know about water such as 'pour', 'splash', 'drip', and 'flood'. They have dry and wet sand and water available every day and understand taking turns to ensure that they comply with the class safety rules. Children describe very well the joy of making boats that float and of sinking them by piling on heavy objects. The range of activities available for the children gives them a good range of opportunities to find things out for themselves and they are always ready to explain what they are doing. The children learn well from the opportunities on offer and share the resources in a very friendly way. Children have an understanding of times past and what school was like when their grandparents were children. They have each created a personal time-line that shows how they have changed physically and lists some of the important things that they remember in their lives. They know about how people live in other parts of the world as some have visited places in Europe and America and readily share their photographs. Children have good knowledge and understanding of their Christian faith and join in with other pupils in the school for festivals that celebrate other faiths and traditions. During the three days of the inspection little work was in evidence in the reception class and this will be inspected in the near future as part of the section 23 inspection by the diocese. Children enjoy using the computer in the classroom to paint and to label their work as well as for games involving colours, words, shapes and numbers. They are confident as they demonstrate that the mouse is easier to control than the arrow keys.

81. The quality of teaching is good and well-planned lessons show a deep understanding of how young children learn and what they need to do to enable learning to take place. The range of activities and topics covered ensure the children have wide experiences and develop a good understanding of the world around them.

Physical development

82. The children's attainment in this area is at least as good as that found in most classes for children at the end of the Foundation Stage. They use scissors and many

can cut carefully and accurately keeping to the lines. Most hold pencils and crayons correctly and have good control, being able to write their names and other words with ease. In outdoor play they run around taking care and finding spaces without bumping into each other. When joining in a dance lesson in the hall children follow the music and work well alone as individuals dancing to their own imaginative thoughts and as a group following the teacher's directions. The space for safe play with large apparatus has a rather muddy grassed area and a small hard surface where children can exercise safely. There is also a covered area that enables children to work and play outside in all weathers. The school has allocated money in the school development plan to improve this area to reduce the grass, which gets very wet, and to extend the hard surface so that the wheeled toys can be used more freely. As part of this plan a need for more climbing equipment is identified.

83. The quality of teaching is good. The choice of music and the time allowed for activity followed by simple discussion and reflection enables the teacher to watch and offer encouragement and support. The teacher uses good movements and shapes demonstrated by some children to show others how they might extend their own performance. The skilled support provided for those children with behavioural difficulties makes it possible for everyone to enjoy the work and enables learning and progress to be good.

Creative development

84. By the end of the Foundation Stage children's attainment in this area is set to be average and to meet requirements completely. Children use shapes to make pictures and carefully spread the glue on the paper. They know the names of the shapes well and often accompany their work by talking through what they are doing quietly amongst themselves. Children know the names of some of the percussion instruments and play them sensibly, explaining whether they are hit, scraped or shaken. They appreciate the difference between loud and soft sounds and how to play the instruments. The children experiment with bubbles to make some attractive pictures, and have painted enthusiastically about the story of the Three Bears and Goldilocks. Much of their work is displayed on the wall and they like to show adults and other children what they have done. The children enjoy the creative activities and are delighted when it is time for singing with other classes in the hall. They are enthusiastic about music and join in, knowing a range of nursery rhymes, which they say and sing well.
85. Teaching is effective because the teacher's planning and her understanding of the needs of young children and how they learn means that the choice of activities both for art, design and technology and music match their needs and abilities. Throughout the day a range of learning opportunities is made available to the children so that they grow in confidence to use paints and other media and to enjoy music of all types. Pupils with special educational needs, who are all taught alongside others in the class, make equally good progress.

ENGLISH

86. Standards in English and pupils' learning and progress are good and exceed the national expectations for pupils at seven and 11. In the national tests in 2001, pupils' performance in reading at seven was above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools. Their performance in writing was close to the national average and above average when compared with similar schools. In the same tests for 11-year-olds in 2001, pupils' performance was above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools. Standards at the last

inspection were beginning to show an improvement, particularly in Year 6. This improvement has been maintained and pupils make good progress throughout the school. The improvement in standards is as a direct result of the good quality of teaching seen in all classes and the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, which is providing very effective continuity and enabling pupils to make good progress.

87. The majority of pupils who are seven and 11 exceed the expected level in their speaking and listening. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Their responses show that they have a clear understanding of what they have heard. They respect the views of others and listen courteously. In a shared reading session about Greek gods, the teacher's good questioning gave pupils in Year 5 the opportunities to draw out the key features of the story. Pupils talk confidently about the books they are reading. Their listening skills are developed well and they can sustain their attention for a long time. Pupils in Year 3 listened well and gained much information from watching a video recording in a history lesson in which they also used their note-taking skills. They recounted confidently the knowledge they had gained. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils explored vocabulary choices; those pupils capable of higher attainment spoke with assurance and lower attaining pupils also shared their work confidently.
88. By the time they are seven pupils have good reading skills. Those with special educational needs make good progress through the many opportunities they have to consolidate their sight vocabulary and their skills of building words using letter sounds. A lively approach to the teaching of sounding out and building words gained pupils' attention in Year 1 and advanced their knowledge of how letters are joined to create new sounds, such as 'c' and 'h' to make 'ch' at the beginning of words. These pupils enjoyed the element of fun that the teacher introduced with her puppet. They use pictures to support the text and contextual clues to build up unfamiliar words. Most pupils have an understanding of how non-fiction differs from fiction. Pupils in Year 2 can use contents and index pages confidently. Pupils read with understanding and pay attention to punctuation. They take their reading books from the schemes used by the school and their library books home regularly and are supported very well by their parents.
89. Throughout the Years 3–6, pupils read avidly for information and pleasure. They read with good understanding because teachers are careful to explore with them both surface and hidden meaning in what they read. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher's skilful questions enabled pupils to appreciate the devices a writer uses to write at different levels. Pupils are able to read at speed for information. They use these skills well in other areas of learning. For example, pupils in Year 5, having read about the problems, which beset Henry the eighth, approached well the challenging task of identifying possible solutions. Inspection evidence shows that at the age of 11 pupils' reading is above the standard expected nationally. These pupils read independently, fluently and with good expression. When asked about their choice of reading, they clearly state their preferences for favourite books and authors. Pupils are competent at finding information in non-fiction books but only pupils in Year 6 have an understanding of the library classification system. Year 6 pupils regularly use reference books to find information to support their class debates and have mastered the skills of skimming and scanning a text. In their reading, pupils reflect the positive attitudes fostered by the school.
90. At the ages of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in writing is above that expected and better than found in most schools nationally. By Year 2, the writing skills of many

pupils are developing well. Pupils are neat writers whose spelling is better than expected for their age because of the good emphasis that the teachers place on spelling and their own skills at sounding out words. They have a good grasp of punctuation and use their knowledge accurately in their writing. They have a good knowledge of how to write for different purposes because they apply their writing skills in other subjects. They show a good understanding of how to write instructions, which serves them well in design and technology. Higher attainers show a flair for language, retelling at length fairy stories with correct punctuation and demonstrating enthusiasm as a writer. All pupils achieve well because of the demanding teaching and the good support given to pupils with special educational needs. By Year 6, pupils have been well-taught about the different styles and purposes of writing. They use dictionaries and the thesaurus effectively to make precise word choices. From their wide reading, they have experience of the style and structure used by published writers and are able to imitate this to provide convincing stories and accounts of their own. They have, by this time, developed well their story structure. Settings are described and characters are created. Their writing is lively with well-chosen phrases and adventurous vocabulary such as 'dazzling, dangerous dimension' to describe the trajectory of a firework. Punctuation, even in complex sentences, is usually accurate. Through a sharp focus on language, pupils develop a flair for words that brings considerable persuasive power to their writing. They use well-structured arguments with supporting evidence and statistics as they take a position and justify it in writing about controversial issues such as 'Is it right for parents to smack their children?' The poetry writing of some pupils shows an impressive control of structure and vocabulary.

91. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in both Year 1 and 2 and in Years 3-6. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well-planned and well-organised with teachers following the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. In their planning, teachers are particularly careful to provide work that is suited to the needs of all pupils with, for example, higher-attaining pupils being given extension activities when necessary. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to listen to stories and various forms of instruction. They make good use of intonation in their voices, as well as humour, to help maintain pupils' interest. They provide opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills through good use of questions and discussion. Teachers provide a wide range of writing activities for their pupils both in English and in subjects such as history and geography. They mark pupils' work diligently, often reminding pupils of the need to introduce more dramatic vocabulary or structure in their writing. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the opportunities provided in all aspects of the subject and they all, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Good relationships are developed between teachers and pupils. Teachers and classroom assistants provide effective support and guidance during lessons. This secure background support ensures that pupils remain on task. Lessons are usually brisk in pace. Pupils' attitudes to English are good and sometimes very good and this greatly enhances the progress they make. They behave very well and work enthusiastically.
92. The school's planned programme of work is the National Literacy Strategy. The various aspects of work are comprehensively covered. Literacy skills are well-developed, not only in English, but in other subjects particularly history. The acquisition of reading and writing skills has a high priority in the school and enables pupils to achieve good standards. There is effective use of information and communication technology in English, which helps pupils to develop their word processing skills and supports their spelling and research skills with regular use of

specific programs.

93. The teacher with responsibility for English has an enthusiastic approach to her role and provides good support and advice to her colleagues. Through studying teachers' planning, she is aware of the work that is being covered throughout the school and has opportunities to look at pupils' work. Although English is not viewed as a priority subject for monitoring this year some time is made available for the subject leader to watch other teachers lessons and to offer help either formally or more usually informally as required. A good range of procedures is in place to enable teachers to check pupils' progress in lessons and their learning over time through tests and specially structured work. The information that is recorded is used effectively to identify pupils' current attainment, the progress they make and helps the planning of appropriate future work. Resources are generally good and are used well to improve standards of work. The school's recently refurbished library enhances pupils' access to attractively presented information and good reading books. The guided selection of books encourages pupils to extend their knowledge of poetry and fiction from many traditions and so effectively develops their cultural and spiritual awareness of the world outside the environment of their school.

MATHEMATICS

94. The overall judgement in mathematics at the time of the inspection is that standards in classes from Year 1 to Year 6 are on course for pupils to attain the nationally expected level by the end of the academic year in 2002. In the National Curriculum tests in mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2001, pupils attained standards, which matched the national average and the average of pupils in similar schools.
95. At the end of Year 6 in 2001 in the National Curriculum tests in mathematics, pupils attained results, which were well below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. The proportion of the school's pupils attaining the national expectation of level 4 was well below the national average and the proportion attaining the higher level 5 was also well below the national average. This lowered the overall average. This is explained by a number of factors. One important element of the difference in attainment levels between English and mathematics is that the workshop for parents about the National Literacy Strategy was so successful that the difficulties in staffing in 2000-2001 had a lesser effect than it did in mathematics. A second reason was the high number of pupils in the year group with special educational needs and, more importantly, the number of pupils with well below average attainment who joined the school in the months immediately before the tests took place. When recalculated, omitting the results of the three pupils who joined the group in the spring and summer terms, one of whom had attended 17 other schools by the age of ten, the scores are then very close to the national average. A third reason was that some of the planned booster classes were hampered by the headteacher and some support staff needing to cover for a sick colleague.
96. The school carefully analysed the results and prepared a very detailed action plan to address the problems. This has been very effective in increasing the speed of pupils' mental calculations and improving their ability to tackle written problems confidently and logically. The inspection evidence indicates that the pupils are now well on course to attain higher levels overall in the next round of tests because of the action taken.
97. An analysis of pupils' work in different year groups shows that attainment is normally at or above the expected level. The effect of the newly introduced strategies within

the structured initiative introduced this year is that already an increased number of pupils are performing ahead of the expected level. The school now places greater emphasis on pupils of all prior attainment learning to investigate problems and then to apply the knowledge they have and their practical arithmetic skills to solve the presented problem. Pupils are secure in their use of number and in their use of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of all lessons are effective in increasing pupils' confidence, speed and accuracy in number calculations. Pupils have good skills in solving mathematical problems that are expressed in words. This is because they are introduced to these kinds of problems early and are given regular opportunities to practise them. For example pupils in Year 2 have many regular and stringent experiences working with money to purchase items and get the correct change. By the time they reach Year 6 pupils are working with much higher numbers and solving far more complex problems. In a lesson observed in Year 6 pupils were solving problems. For example, rolls of insulation costing £5.49 per roll have a 20 per cent reduction from the price in the sale. Pupils are learning to calculate how much it would cost for three rolls? In Year 5, pupils pretended to be travel agents, helping customers and calculating the cost of holidays for a family of four in America, Egypt and Italy flying from three different United Kingdom airports. Pupils' competence in other areas of the subject such as shape, space and measure is satisfactory. The school has concentrated more on measuring this year and this area of mathematics is improving. Pupils' good grasp of mathematical concepts is reinforced well by opportunities that are given to practise different elements of mathematics in subjects such as design and technology. Pupils in Year 2 make bags for their Barnaby Bears and in Year 6 they make excellent hats linked to their work on the Victorians as well as investigating time lines in their history projects. In geography and science pupils use their mathematical skills to good effect working with co-ordinates to find positions on maps, and construct a variety of graphs to show results in experiments in their science lessons.

98. Throughout the school, pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics because of the enthusiasm of their teachers and the stimulating and interesting way that work is presented. As a result they work hard with a good level of interest and concentration. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good and pupils support each other very well in their learning. In one lesson in Year 5, pupils applauded spontaneously when one of their number provided a particularly good answer. Some pupils show initiative in suggesting ways to tackle problems. As a direct result of the way in which adults encourage them, pupils are not afraid to "have a go" and are not worried that they might be wrong. Pupils with different experience, confidence and varying levels of prior attainment are often given different levels of work so that they have the right level of challenge. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs who are very well supported by teachers and classroom assistants, make good progress in their learning.
99. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and in half of lessons seen it was very good. It is because of the thorough planning and consistent challenge that lessons meet the needs of pupils very well and result in well-organised and systematic learning with new experiences being provided to extend skills and develop pupils thinking and understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and use the National Numeracy Strategy confidently to raise attainment. Lessons move at a brisk pace and present a good level of challenge. Teaching methods, include probing questioning that draws on pupils' previous learning, checks their existing knowledge and understanding and extends their thinking. The skills of the teachers ensure that learning is at least satisfactory and

usually good. This means that pupils are highly motivated to concentrate in order to meet the challenge. For example pupils in Year 4 were challenged to change two-dimensional shapes into three-dimensional shapes and further work on this was set for homework which pupils looked forward to with enthusiasm. In a very good lesson in Year 6, all pupils were included in successful learning because the teacher ensured that all pupils understood the purpose of the lesson, checked on their understanding during the lesson and then her final question was, "have we achieved our learning objectives?" In this way pupils were encouraged to evaluate their own learning. The teacher had excellent strategies to include lower-attaining pupils by always ensuring that they understood how problems were being solved. The support of the classroom-learning assistant was particularly effective in this lesson. The skilful management of the lesson reinforced the knowledge and understanding of all pupils very effectively. Pupils are encouraged to check their completed work either independently or with a friend. Sometimes they use calculators or work on computers to see if their first answers are correct.

100. Marking is always at least satisfactory and in many classes it is good. Pupils' work is marked regularly and thoroughly and there is good analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Good work is celebrated and useful suggestions are made for further improvement. As a result of this assessment through marking the evidence in pupils' books shows that pupils are making good progress, learning well and are gaining in confidence over time.
101. The curriculum provides a wide range of learning opportunities and all elements of the National Curriculum are covered. Weekly, half-termly and termly planning shows that good opportunities are taken to reinforce pupils' understanding by referring back to previous work. The school makes good use of information from assessments, including the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, and the optional tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. This information is used to identify any areas of weakness so that future teaching and learning can address them. In mathematics the school has been particularly effective in this during the present academic year.
102. The management of the subject is very good. The teacher with responsibility for the subject monitors attainment and progress thoroughly. She has readily accepted the opportunity to observe lessons and check the quality of teaching and takes action to support colleagues in tackling any areas of concern. The link governor takes a very keen interest in the subject and because she has special knowledge and skill in the subject gives valuable support to the school. Teaching in mathematics is now at an impressively secure level and teachers encourage pupils to use skills learned in information and communication technology to support work and learning in mathematics. As a result and because of the high commitment and skills of the teachers pupils learning is equally good because there are checks and new steps built in by the teachers at every stage and for each part of the planned programme of teaching and learning. Homework is set on a regular basis and carefully checked when pupils return it to school. The school is in a strong position to move forward with this increasing level of improvement.

SCIENCE

103. Inspection findings are that standards of attainment of pupils by the ages of seven and 11 match the nationally expected standards.. This is similar to the findings of the previous report. However, the results of the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2001 indicate that the school's performance was below that expected nationally when compared with all schools, with similar schools and with schools with similar prior

attainment at the age of 7. This is explained by the lower percentage of pupils who attained the higher level, 5 in the tests. All pupils in 2001 attained the nationally expected level 4 or better, including those pupils with special educational needs who were admitted to the school during Year 6. Raising standards in science was not seen to be a problem in 2000 and science was not given high priority status in the school development plan until a revised action plan was immediately prepared following the lower percentage of higher level results in 2001.

104. The percentage of seven-year-olds who attained the nationally expected Level 2 or above in 2001 following teacher assessments (83 per cent) was well below that attained by pupils in all other schools and when compared with similar schools. This is explained by the difference in the year groups and by the percentage of pupils who attained the higher Level 3. Standards of attainment in science are rising in line with the national trend. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
105. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils achieve well as they move up the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they are given by the teachers and by the learning support assistants. For example, in a challenging Year 6 class the support provided during the practical activity enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress in both their knowledge and understanding and in their ability to predict.
106. By the end of Year 2 standards are at the nationally expected level as seen in the books of pupils at the start of the present Year 3 class. Pupils have made good progress in their knowledge and understanding and in their investigation skills. They observe carefully to compare the similarities and differences in the faces of their peers. They are beginning to use appropriate scientific vocabulary. They know the different parts of the body and identify these by drawing labelled diagrams. Through their study of healthy foods they know which foods are important for the body. They sort materials according whether they stretch or not or whether they are hard or soft. They are skilled in relating different materials and their properties to different uses in commercial or daily life. They investigate different plant habitats around the school such as under trees, on a wall and on the field.
107. By the end of Year 6 pupils know many more facts about the human body and how to keep healthy. They develop their knowledge and understanding of a fair test by investigating, for example, what happens when salt or baking powder dissolves and record their findings on a graph. They formulate hypotheses, carry out the investigation and draw conclusions based on careful observation and measurement. After studying solids, liquids and gases they consolidate their knowledge and understanding by producing a pamphlet about gases for younger pupils. When they revisit a topic they extend their knowledge and understanding. For example they have made links about the effect of eating healthy foods to achieving a pattern of healthy living by learning about the use and misuse of drugs. The use of graphs supports learning in mathematics, as does the measuring and recording temperatures accurately and the use of stopwatches to measure time accurately in hundredths of a second. Literacy is supported by recording using labelled drawings, in charts and by concept maps, for example after investigating what happens when washing powder is added to vinegar. The school uses information and communication technology well to support learning in science through the use of video recordings and CD ROMS. Also, in an information and communication technology lesson, pupils in Year 2 were learning how to use a digital microscope linked to a computer to foster future learning in science. Later this term it is planned that pupils throughout the school will have increased facilities to use a search engine to research science topics.

108. Teaching is consistently good in all classes. This is an improvement since the previous report. All teaching is based on the very secure knowledge and understanding of the teachers and derives from a well-structured set of plans that set out exactly what pupils are expected to learn in each class. These plans are based on the latest national guidance and adapted in conjunction with commercial schemes that ensure that each year they build on work completed earlier. This leads to good planning that clearly identifies what it is that pupils will know or be able to do by the end of the lesson. For example, a Year 4 lesson investigating friction included 'To explain conclusions in terms of the roughness or smoothness of the surface.' In these lessons teachers make clear to pupils the aims of the lessons. They use time towards the end of the lesson to assess learning and to ensure that pupils know what they have learned, such as in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were investigating how air resistance slows down moving objects. Lessons are well organised and very well managed. The school's strong commitment to equal opportunities ensures that every pupil is included in, for example, questioning. Learning support assistants are used well to support the learning of all pupils, but particularly those with special educational needs. Teaching methods include effective questioning that draws on pupils' previous learning and extends their thinking. The skills of the teachers ensure that learning is at least satisfactory and usually good. In the best lessons teachers also motivate pupils by capturing their immediate attention. In a Year 6 class pupils were asked to predict what would happen if a pound coin and a small, tightly rolled ball of paper were released at the same time from the same height. The subsequent demonstration captured the imagination of all pupils and they were keen to carry out further investigations that involved making paper spinners and parachutes. The enthusiasm with which pupils worked co-operatively in their groups in response to the challenge and the high level of concentration and application had a positive effect on their learning during the lesson. Although pupils worked together well collaboratively in pairs or groups much of the work was heavily directed by the adults in the class and very few opportunities for independent learning were seen. Overall the attitudes to science are good and the behaviour of pupils is very good and the relationships between pupils and pupils and all staff are very good.
109. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily by the subject leader, who has good personal knowledge and a clear view of the aims and priorities for science in the school. Test results and teachers' own assessments of attainment are carefully analysed to identify any weaknesses in pupils' learning and subsequent planning takes account of this. However, this information is not yet used sufficiently well to track carefully the progress of individual pupils nor to set targets for individual pupils or small groups. The school recognises this and is preparing to add findings from the analysis of available results to a computer program that has already proved useful for mathematics and English. The school is far more aware of the progress of pupils than it was at the time of the previous report and is alert to the need to review how it teaches science across the school. All work is marked, often with encouraging comments. However, very frequently these comments refer more to presentation than to learning in science. Through the marking process teachers rarely set targets for subsequent learning that will help to raise attainment. The subject leader monitors planning and completed work. The headteacher and representatives of the local education advisory team have made observations of teaching in classes for younger and older pupils. As a result their suggestions about the timing and content of lessons have caused a greater emphasis to be placed on pupils investigating topics and applying knowledge and skills learned in one aspect of work to others. Learning is celebrated and reinforced by attractive displays of work. These remind pupils about what they know and encourage them to have a positive attitude towards science.

110. Homework is used satisfactorily to reinforce learning. Resources, particularly for the use of information and communication technology to support learning, are better than at the time of the previous inspection and are good. The school is able to make good use of the grounds and educational visits, for example to the seaside and to science museums, to support learning and this helps to promote interest and raise attainment. The percentage of time allocated to the teaching of science is lower than in most schools. The school is aware of this and is considering how changes in the time allocation for teaching science across the school might assist staff in raising the attainment of pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

111. Standards at seven and 11 have been maintained since the previous inspection. Whilst there are individual examples of work that are better than average in some classes overall the level attained is close to that expected for pupils of the same ages nationally. By the time pupils are seven attainment levels overall are similar to those normally expected for pupils of this age. Throughout school, pupils make satisfactory progress in the acquisition of skills and in their understanding of art as a way of expressing their feelings about line, shape and form. Pupils learn about how to interpret images in the natural world as shown in work using leaves, seeds and fruits. All pupils work well together including those with special educational needs. The work seen across the school shows good coverage of the range of two-dimensional media and techniques. During the inspection there was also good evidence of three-dimensional work as pupils in Year 5 designed and planned large banners following a theme suggested initially by their study in history of the Bayeux Tapestry.
112. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have a variety of experiences working in two and three dimensions. Observational drawings are begun in Year 1 when pupils are encouraged to look closely at themselves and the world around them. Pupils have opportunity to experiment with the effects made by pens, pencils and pastels on a range of papers. Pupils show good control of drawing implements. The standard of the finished products is good. Pupils' work is valued and is mounted carefully and displayed with pride. The work of well-known artists is used in all age groups as a starting point. In Year 2 pupils make decisions about which materials they will use selecting from fabrics, textiles, paper and card and incorporating work using pastels and decorative stitching into their final collaborative collage. Pupils in the Year 2 class also create very pleasing paintings using a painting program on the computer. In discussion pupils created the image of trees blowing in the wind and one said that the sun through the trees created patterns and shadows on the ground that made him want to skip and jump.
113. In Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to develop their skills and extend their knowledge and understanding. In the class for pupils in Years 4 and 5 pupils have experimented with painting in the style of George Seurat, Monet, Manet and Van Gogh and enjoyed discussing which method or technique they prefer. Those selecting the pointillism style of Seurat had enjoyed creating pictures with dots because, they said, they found drawing difficult. Good standards of observational drawing were seen displayed around the school. Observational drawing was a particular focus in Year 6 where pupils were concentrating on building a sense of movement into two-dimensional drawings. They selected and used materials well to suggest for example explosive or smooth movements. Pupils were able to reflect on and evaluate their own work, looking for ways to improve. The pupils' observational drawings of various objects showed good attention to detail and the confident use of pencil line and shading to

represent accurately what they saw. Pupils observe lines, colour and detail such as the tracery of veins on the underside of a leaf and the shadows formed as clouds blew across a stormy sky. Art from different countries and times is used to help pupils to understand their own and other cultures. Using the Internet, some pupils have begun to research well-known artists and write passages in appreciation of favourite artists and their paintings. They record their personal responses to artists' work.

114. The teaching observed in the lessons seen was good. It was well planned with clear learning objectives and effective use was made of questioning to promote these. Techniques were well taught. In addition, the interest and confidence shown by all teachers encouraged pupils to perform well and they made good progress. Pupils were encouraged to extend their activities as additional challenges to improve their drawing techniques were added at each review point and planned additional and more difficult work enabled more talented artists to increase the scope of the set tasks.
115. In lessons, pupils were always interested and involved in their work, showing good concentration. Pupils of all ages and abilities were keen to experiment and develop their own ideas. Their positive attitudes had a beneficial effect on their learning and on the progress they made.
116. Art and design is led and managed efficiently, at present by the headteacher, as it is proving difficult to fill the permanent post. The plan of intended work meets National Curriculum requirements and enables teachers to ensure that skills are developed. The assessment procedures are simple but effective and relate to the accomplishment of planned skills and techniques that are developed through the school building on earlier attainments. The subject leader monitors provision by evaluating teachers' planning and keeps a check on standards by examining pupils' finished work. In her capacity as headteacher the present subject leader monitors colleagues in their classrooms sometimes working alongside groups of pupils. There is a suitable range of good quality tools, materials and objects to use as stimuli, and this makes a good contribution to pupils' attainment. Art and design makes a very good contribution to pupils' social development as they work and plan together. The contributions that the subject makes to pupils' spiritual and cultural development are difficult to separate. Pupils' amazement of how colours react differently in light, the patterns made by shapes and sunlight, a growing appreciation of nature in pictures and the study of the work of great artists from cultures other than local or even western are an intrinsic part of the work of the school. Work from all year groups is presented in displays around the school. The school works hard to celebrate pupils' achievements as well as using work to create an attractive and stimulating environment for learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. During the inspection it was possible to observe only one lesson in design and technology due to the organisation of the timetable. Judgements are supported by a careful analysis of pupil's work, displays around the school, photographs, retained samples of work, careful scrutiny of the teachers' planning and talking to staff and pupils. Standards at seven and 11 are similar to those at the previous inspection. Overall the level attained at both ages is close to that expected for pupils of the same ages nationally.
118. In Year 1 pupils enjoyed making pop-up cards for Christmas and have also produced attractive puppets on sticks that work well. In the Year 2 class pupils were keen to

show the bags they had designed and made for 'Barnaby Bear'. They could explain how they measured the materials carefully and decided on the best method to fix them together. In Year 3 pupils paid particular attention to measuring as they designed and made photo frames. Pupils had produced a wide variety of frames to suit all sizes and explained exactly how they had evaluated the different designs throughout the making process. They were very clear that measurements had to be accurate in order to get the correct angles at each corner. The pupils in the Year 4 class had examined samples of muesli to determine which variety gave the best value for money. These examples show that teachers make effective links with work in mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 had completed their history research about the Victorians before designing both English and French hats that were worn in that period. Their designs were very detailed with excellent diagrams, which were all carefully labelled to give clear directions to the manufacturer. Pupils' achievements are suitably rewarded with praise and certificates. In the special Monday assembly arranged effectively by the deputy headteacher, pupils in Year 6 paraded around the hall modelling the hats that they had made. The children from the Reception class showed the towers they had constructed and were also included in the show of successful work. All pupils received spontaneous applause for their efforts.

119. In the observed lesson in Year 5, which was the first of a series aimed at designing and making their own musical instruments, pupils enjoyed discussing the project and many showed high levels of understanding, realising the difficulties of translating two-dimensional photographs into three-dimensional models. At first the whole class brainstormed their ideas on the board before experimenting with a wide variety of different materials which they thought might be useful in the final construction of their musical instruments. They also investigated five different marking tools to see which would be the best to use in their constructions. Pupils reviewed past work in their design and technology planning books to see what they could learn from previous experiences.
120. The teaching in the lesson was good. The lively and knowledgeable teacher had captured the pupils' imagination in a very effective way by distributing one particular resource and an activity sheet entitled 'FANTASTIC FINISHES'. Pupils thought this was great fun and were keen to begin work immediately. Towards the end of the lesson the pupils gathered to discuss their findings, all were willing to help each other so that only the best ideas would be used in the design and construction of the musical instruments in the coming weeks.
121. All the pupils interviewed said that they enjoy design and technology lessons because teachers make them interesting. The school has made arrangements for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to visit the special school next door to join pupils there who were making cakes as part of their design and technology curriculum. Two pupils in Year 1 were observed in this activity which is arranged on a rota basis so that all pupils can be included in this lesson over the year. They were delighted with the experience and returned to their class bringing examples of their shared endeavour. This is a very valuable link and pupils from both schools are reported to benefit from the experience. Those pupils who find difficulty in reading and formal writing state that they enjoy making designs and gaining practical making experiences.
122. The school's planned programme of work for the subject allows progression in designing and making skills as pupils move through the school. The range of activities and the obvious relevance to the pupils' experiences is good. Resources are satisfactory. The teacher in charge of the subject has a special interest in the subject. She offers help and support to all teachers and creates a very happy

atmosphere in her own class during design and technology lessons. Assessment is in the early stages of development but it is linked to the school's overall system for recording work accomplished and listing skills. It fits well with the published suggestions that match the programme of planned work.

GEOGRAPHY

123. The school teaches a mixed humanities programme with geography and history, interchanging each term. As a result there were no opportunities to observe the teaching of geography during the inspection. Judgements are based on a range of collected evidence that include discussions with pupils and an analysis of work in books and on display as well as careful scrutiny of teachers' planning and assessment files. This evidence indicates that standards of attainment match the standards expected of children at the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has maintained the standards identified in the previous report for pupils in Year 2. The standards of attainment in Year 6 are lower than those identified in the previous report. This is because curriculum requirements following national guidance since the previous inspection mean that the school is unable to allocate the same amount of time to teaching this subject.
124. By the age of seven pupils have an appropriate understanding of place, where they live and where they have visited. They know about important features of buildings because they have undertaken a study of the different architectural styles of their homes. They extend their knowledge and understanding of the world by identifying places on a map of the British Isles and on a map of the world visited by a soft toy (Barnaby Bear) taken on holidays by staff, pupils or friends. During the inspection the bear was in South Africa and pupils were looking forward to seeing his 'passport' because they knew it was to be stamped when crossing the border into Swaziland. By the end of Year 2 pupils also compare their home area with other locations such as an island home. By the age of 11 pupils compare and contrast Dukinfield with many different localities including London, Llandudno, Edale and a village in India. They know the main features of rivers through studying the river Severn and the local river Tame and link this with learning about the water supply. They extend their knowledge of maps by drawing maps of the local area and identifying features using a key that includes ordnance survey symbols. This learning is promoted through visits, visitors and the use of secondary sources such as books, maps, aerial and other photographs. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support learning. Video recordings and CD ROMS are available for a number of topics. The facility to research using a search engine has only just been made available to pupils. The many pupils who already use the Internet at home with obvious skill, evidenced by the work that they bring into school will be able to share their skills with the rest of the class. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 indicated that they are interested in the subject and enjoy in particular the practical activities and visits to places of educational interest. Progress and achievement is satisfactory.
125. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement about teaching. However, the policy, plans about what is to be taught in each year, indicates that the teaching follows the latest national guidance and ensures that work is undertaken in a practical ordered way. This is an improvement since the previous report. There are satisfactory strategies in place to record the attainment of all pupils and this process of checking how well pupils are doing is being developed further. All work is marked carefully but this does not always include comments that will take pupils' knowledge and understanding forward. There was some evidence of tasks matched to the differing levels of attainment of pupils. In most classes all pupils were completing the

same work initially although some were provided with interesting extension tasks when they finished before the others. The presentation of work follows the school's pattern established in English and is always at least satisfactory and is frequently good for most pupils.

126. The subject is managed and led well. The subject leader has a clearly defined role and attends regular training courses. Other staff members regularly benefit from this training through formal feedback at staff meetings and by working together with the new ideas. As a result the confidence of the staff has improved and planning for teaching and learning is now better. This has a positive effect on attainment. Through geography the pupils are involved with learning about the traditions and cultures of children in other lands such as a village in India. This helps them to understand more about the ways of life and the culture of other people. There is an annual audit of the subject's needs and a budget for the year is agreed with the headteacher. As a result resources have improved and are now good. This has improved the learning opportunities for the pupils by ensuring that resources match the topics required by the National Curriculum. The work in this subject is enriched by visits. The subject leader monitors planning to ensure that the pupils are taught the essential geography skills together with teaching that fosters knowledge and understanding. The school has plans to enable the subject leader to observe other teachers lessons so that the school might identify the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of a subject. These plans are listed in the school improvement plan but are not expected to take the place of subjects that have been given higher priority.

HISTORY

127. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe lessons in Years 3 to 6. Judgements are based on the lessons seen, evidence from pupils' previous work and discussions with pupils and teachers. Attainment at ages seven and 11 is as expected for pupils in both of these age groups. For seven-year-old pupils, the standards identified at the last inspection have been maintained. For those aged 11, standards were higher than average on that occasion. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. Since the new initiatives have been implemented there is less time available on the timetable for history as it rotates with geography each term.
128. Pupils at the age of seven have a satisfactory understanding of the passage of time. They can talk about how the past was different in terms of transport and leisure. They know that there is a variety of ways of learning about the past. One boy volunteered that 'archaeologists dig things up'. They have just started to study Florence Nightingale and know that she nursed soldiers in a war that pre-dated the First World War. They had a good recollection of the reason why Armistice Day is commemorated. A boy spoke of the 'eleventh day of the eleventh month'. They know that the two-minute silence is in memory of the dead soldiers. They knew that they had died in a war that was to give people freedom. They spoke with some confidence and listened well to each other.
129. By the age of 11, the pupils show a keen interest in the subject. They enjoy being a 'history detective' and show in their written work the ability to collate information from more than one source. They have studied examples of Victorian architecture in the neighbourhood, formulating questions and demonstrating a sense of enquiry in their search for answers. In Year 5, pupils study the Tudor dynasty. There are good links made with literacy as pupils record factual information in diaries, read for information and write at some length what they find out. Year 4 pupils, studying Britain after 1939,

experienced a sense of moral outrage at children being evacuated to strangers. In Year 3, pupils showed that they could select relevant information from a video resource on the lifestyles of the Celts and the Romans. Their note taking made a good contribution to developing their skills in literacy and their confidence as speakers when they shared their findings.

130. The teaching in the lessons seen was good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make good use of a range of interesting resources to give pupils many opportunities to come to informed judgements. Two visitors to Year 4, who had been evacuated to the countryside during the Second World War, helped pupils develop their enquiry skills. Pupils' questioning was well-organised and their speech and sentence structure good. Their behaviour, manners and politeness to the visitors were very good. Learning support assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs ensuring that they make good progress in relation to the rest of the class and to their prior learning.
131. The subject is managed well, at present by the headteacher. A portfolio of pupils' work is maintained to help teachers assess standards. She is keen that writing activities in many aspects of the subject should make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' writing skills. This is clearly happening in some classes. The work in history has a positive effect on pupils' cultural development through the study of aspects of both their own culture and the culture and traditions of others.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

132. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory across the school because pupils had too little access to computers. The raising of attainment and ensuring that all elements of the National Curriculum programme of study were adequately resourced and taught were key issues in the last inspection report. The school has been successful in addressing these issues. There is now a dedicated computer suite. Teachers are using this facility very effectively for the development of pupils' computer skills. Consequently, standards of attainment at seven and 11 match the national expectations for pupils of their age groups. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well and the school is in a strong position to raise standards still further. Whilst the computer suite has only just been connected to the Internet a few machines in school had this facility in the past and many pupils have regular access through their personal computers at home.
133. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils are using computers confidently. They use them for a variety of purposes. They use word processing to write sentences and add text to pictures. They use line tools to draw objects and fill with colour. Pupils in Year 2 had the opportunity to explore a complicated commercial program. They made decisions about what to put in the microscope viewer, what magnification to choose, to 'photo' and print. They showed amazement at what the equipment and software enabled them to do. This confident approach to information and communication technology continues into Years 3-6. Pupils in Year 3 were observed enthusiastically composing a piece of music, selecting sounds from the computer. They knew how to save their final composition on their disk. Pupils in Year 5, add information to a database, can explain how they arrive at a particular 'window' using appropriate language, for example 'Scroll across'. They check errors carefully and competently make changes. By Year 6, pupils can explain the use of formula to solve a set of graded problems linked to data handling and mathematics.

134. Teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan well-structured series of lessons that build systematically on skills and applications used previously. Instructions are clear, the pace is brisk and expectations are high. Teachers encourage pupils to be independent and to use their initiative. The size of group is such that they are well able to support those who need more help. On occasions, pupils receive help from learning support assistants. They give clear explanations, use questions well, support the successful completion of tasks and enable pupils to make good progress in lessons. Pupils have good attitudes to their work, which facilitates learning. They can work well individually at the computer and when there are two, they co-operate in a very friendly way. By Year 6, pupils show great enterprise and demonstrate confidence in developing their work. Independent learning and use of personal initiative is encouraged and expected.
135. Leadership is good. The teacher with responsibility for information and communication technology works hard to support her colleagues. Action planning is detailed and focused. Software is carefully selected to support pupils' learning. Pupils have only just gained access to the Internet and the youngest pupils have still to be given training in its use. Although the school was waiting for the connection for the networked machines in the new computer suite there was already limited access in the Year 5 and 6 classrooms. The new facility in the computer suite means that pupils will be well protected through the use of a filtering system that prevents access to unsuitable material.

MUSIC

136. It was only possible to observe one music lesson due to the arrangement of the timetables and the relatively short duration of the inspection. It is not possible to make a judgement on attainment or teaching on the evidence of observing only one lesson but judgements are supported by careful scrutiny of teachers' planning, talking to pupils and staff, attending assemblies and looking at video recordings of past performances. The programmes of study of the National Curriculum are met and the school's planned programme of work now in place results in the systematic development of knowledge, understanding and skills.
137. Whole school singing in assemblies is very good. Sometimes it is led by a teacher on the piano and sometimes by members of staff playing guitars. Pupils sing tunefully and pay good attention to rhythm and dynamics. The style of singing reflects the meaning of what is being sung. Pupils in Year 6, sitting on the back row, are particularly good singers and give a very good lead to other pupils in the school. As pupils enter and leave assemblies they listen to music of different styles and cultures, which is introduced very effectively by the headteacher. This develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of famous composers and introduces them to music from different countries in the world and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
138. Pupils in Year 3 were keen to discuss their music lesson about Peter and the Wolf. They could talk about their feelings for the music and one boy could relate all the animals represented in the story, giving a good imitation of the type of music depicting each animal. All the pupils said they liked music and looked forward to the special events such as the school pantomimes and the performance of the musical Resurrection Rock, held in the church when music had been the focal point of the school's activity.
139. In the lesson observed in Year 1, pupils enthusiastically sang rhymes while passing a

bag round as they sat in a circle. The pupil holding the bag when the music stopped chose a percussion instrument. The majority of pupils know the names of all the instruments and play them well, keeping in time with the beat or pulse. In the second half of the lesson pupils linked their music to movement, matching their movements to the beat of the music and differentiating between loud and soft and quick and slow tunes. There are still a few pupils in this class who tend to get rather excited as they work to complete their activities. Several of them find it very hard to concentrate for any length of time. In this lesson the teaching was good. The teacher had good control of the pupils and provided exciting activities, which kept the interest and attention of most of the pupils. She has excellent subject knowledge and as the teacher responsible for music throughout the school she provides help and support to all staff if required.

140. Pupils in Year 3 combined their information and technology lesson in the computer suite with their interest in composing music. Pupils chose four musical phrases stored in the computer and arranged them to compose their tune. They enjoyed listening to the tunes on the earphones. Pupils recorded their finished composition on their personal diskette to take home for parents to watch and listen to.
141. There is music tuition for pupils provided by an independent company if parents request it. One six-year-old boy played his cornet very well considering he had only been learning to play the instrument for a few months. Another pupil is learning the flute. Any pupils identified as having a particular talent for music are encouraged to take every opportunity to develop it to the highest level possible. If required the school manages to arrange financial help from other sources. In order to support any child who shows talent.
142. Resources are good and they are stored well and are easily available to the staff and pupils. Music in many forms makes a very valuable contribution to excellent spirituality in the school. The procedures in place for checking pupils' skills, learning and progress are at an early stage of development. These procedures follow the school's agreed policy. The subject leader monitors provision by evaluating teachers' planning and she keeps an effective check on standards by being part of most celebrations of success. Most lessons are shared with the music subject leader who encourages colleagues in their work and as a music specialist checks that work is carried out as described in the planned pattern of work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. In physical education, pupils of all levels of prior attainment learn well and make good progress. By the time pupils are seven their attainment matches that of pupils of a similar age nationally but by the time they are 11 the standard of their physical skills is above average and is better than that expected for pupils of the same age. This is an improvement on the findings in the last report where pupils' progress was described as that expected of them at both seven and 11.
144. By the time they are seven, pupils increase their physical strength by balancing and carefully controlling their movements in a confined space. They demonstrate that they can move safely in different directions and stop quickly on a command from the teacher. Pupils develop confidence, co-operative skills and spatial awareness as they find imaginative ways to move. By watching the performance of others, they learn to evaluate what they are doing and improve their own efforts.
145. By the time they are 11, pupils have refined the ways in which they can move in a

confined space. They understand how to put movements together into a sequence. Gradually, they develop sequences to a high standard and can perform these, involving the use of large apparatus such as agility tables, benches and mats. Pupils evaluate their own performances by comparing what they do with demonstrations given by other members of the class. In all classes, pupils have a good understanding of safety and how to move apparatus with care. They appreciate the importance of warming-up and cooling-down when exercising. Pupils are involved in other sporting activities such as football, netball, cross-country running, rounders, cricket and athletics at appropriate times of the year. This term pupils in Year 4 enjoy swimming lessons. Earlier in the year pupils in Year 5 and 6 had swimming lessons. Those pupils who left Year 6 in 2001 who had spent more than a year in the school were all able to swim at least 25 metres. This year any pupil in Year 6 who has not reached this expected level will have additional opportunities to gain the expected level before the end of the summer term.

146. Pupils in Year 5 share in a residential visit most years and sometimes make one-day visits to Conway in North Wales where they take part in climbing and other outdoor activities and have opportunities to work in teams, solving problems that present physical challenges.
147. Pupils enjoy their lessons and all of those observed tried hard to achieve and perform well. Pupils' behaviour is very good and for this reason learning in lessons is always good because no time is wasted on management issues. Pupils are willing to learn from one another and are happy to give demonstrations of their skills. Pupils are conscious of safety when moving around in the hall and on the hard and grassed surfaces outside. They realise the importance of listening to and following the teachers' instructions promptly.
148. The quality of teaching and learning is almost always good. The school is part of a local group that buy in skilled specialist coaches to assist or lead the teaching of football, short tennis and other outdoor activities and generally improve pupils ability to use space well and help them to develop ball skills. Lessons are carefully planned to build on what pupils know and can do. The good range of resources is well organised and used effectively. Lessons move at a brisk pace and little time is wasted. The sports coaches and the teachers have good subject expertise. When necessary, some give appropriate demonstrations and handle pupils' responses very effectively. This gives the pupils a clear idea of performance techniques. Relationships with pupils are good and this enables the teachers and the coaches to manage their classes easily and effectively. All lessons provide opportunities for pupils to extend their health and fitness. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Skills developed are recorded and the programme is reviewed regularly in order to extend learned skills and identify areas for further work.
149. The subject leader has clear objectives for the subject and has developed the curriculum well, with planning based, in part, on national guidelines. He is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. He supports colleagues well and takes every opportunity to promote the subject within the school. Sometimes he works with other teachers to encourage them and to help to develop their skills. As a member of the senior management team observing lessons is part of his role but whenever possible he is involved in the lesson. He also observes all of the paid coaches regularly and again is often involved in their coaching sessions. Extra-curricular activities in sport are an important feature of the school and the subject leader co-ordinates the programme for this work. A small group of parents and friends of the school assist him and other teachers and support assistants very ably in the extra-curricular work.

These volunteers help with training, supervision and transport to other venues. The school's general commitment to a spirit of fair play and teamwork in games and outdoor activities, means that physical education makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and moral development. The school recently won a local football tournament that lifted the morale of all the school as they shared the success of their team.