

INSPECTION REPORT

ST EDWARD'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lees

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105720

Headteacher: Mr C D Saul

Reporting inspector: Miss K Manning
20267

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th September 2001

Inspection number: 196410

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rowland Way
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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Canon E Dolan

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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20267	K Manning	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage. Information and communication technology. Art and design.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? How well are pupils taught?
12511	L Buller	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
25509	J Clarke	Team inspector	English. Music. Special educational needs.	
22881	G Halliday	Team inspector	Science. Geography. History. Equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11510	K Oglesby	Team inspector	Mathematics. Design and technology. Physical education.	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Edward's is a large voluntary aided primary school, which serves the local and wider Roman Catholic community. All of the pupils speak English as their first language and only a very small number are from ethnic minority families. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the proportion who have special educational needs. Seventy-one pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs because they have learning, physical or emotional difficulties. Of these, two pupils have statements of special needs. The school has a nursery and 30 children attend either full-time or part-time depending on their circumstances. When they start in nursery their experiences vary greatly, but most have the skills and knowledge that are expected of three-year-olds. Children leave the nursery when they are four and join one of the reception classes. At present there are 267 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6; making this a popular school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. The head teacher is leading and managing the school well and receives capable support from the deputy head teacher, staff and governors. The quality of teaching is good and this enables the pupils to do well. Many pupils enter school with attainment that is typical for their age. By the age of 11, they attain above average standards in English, mathematics and art. Standards could be higher in science, but despite this the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school's programme for promoting pupils' personal development is excellent and this leads to good attitudes, behaviour, relationships and independence as pupils grow older.
- Pupils reach high standards in English, mathematics and art.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress.
- Pupils benefit from the very good relationships between the school and parents, the community and the parish.

What could be improved

- Although satisfactory, standards in science could be higher.
- The way that teachers assess and record what pupils can do in subjects other than English and mathematics.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997 and has made good progress since then. The previous key issues have all been tackled effectively and further developments have taken place in areas such as literacy and numeracy. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is now very good. There has been heavy investment in establishing a computer suite and in increasing resources for design and technology. Training has increased teachers' knowledge where it was previously weak. The curriculum for both information and communication technology and design and technology has been broadened and now meets statutory requirements. All of this has helped raise standards in both subjects. Governors dealt with the issues of health and safety swiftly and the school now provides good care for its pupils. Strong leadership and a determination to succeed put the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	B	B	C	well above average A
mathematics	C	B	B	C	above average B
science	C	C	C	E	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

In the National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds last year, the school's performance was above average in English and mathematics and average in science when compared with all schools nationally. When compared with schools with a similar level of pupils eligible for free school meals its performance was average in English and mathematics but well below average in science. For this reason, the school has since targeted science as a key area for development. The school's results are rising at a broadly similar rate to the national average and in the last two years it has either matched or exceeded the targets it has set for raising standards in English and mathematics. Standards are as high as they could be in all subjects except science.

Children start school with levels of attainment that are typical for their age. They get a good start in the foundation stage and by the time they leave the reception classes most children have achieved the early learning goals and are working towards the first levels of the National Curriculum. This good progress is maintained throughout the school and 11-year-olds achieve high standards in English, mathematics and art. Standards have risen in information and communication technology and design and technology and are now in line with what is expected for seven and 11-year-olds. In all other subjects, most seven and 11-year-olds achieve standards that are typical for their age and the brightest pupils achieve beyond this. It is only in science that the brightest pupils do not always achieve their full potential. This is a key area for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the extra help they are given and they achieve as well as they can, even though this is sometimes below what is expected for their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school, are ready to work, keen to respond to challenges and willing to celebrate the achievement of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in lessons and when they are out of the classroom. They have a good understanding of what is right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is good. They are independent and willing to take on responsibility. The relationships between pupils and adults are good and pupils are friendly towards one another.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance levels are well above the national average for primary schools.

The school's programme for promoting pupils' personal development is excellent and is one of the reasons why attitudes and behaviour are so good. Another reason why pupils respond so well is that the warm Catholic nature of the school pervades all of its work and encourages pupils to be considerate and respectful of others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and 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.

Teaching is good overall. National initiatives and training have helped improve the teaching in information and communication technology and design and technology and this in turn has helped raise standards in both of these subjects. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is mostly good and helps pupils achieve high standards in English and mathematics. The methods used to teach pupils are effective and help them acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate. Good management of pupils ensures that they try hard to please their teachers and have positive attitudes towards learning. A particular strength of the teaching is the use made of the time and talents of support staff, classroom assistants and volunteer helpers. This is a crucial factor in why the school is so successful in its provision for pupils with special educational needs. All pupils benefit from the extra attention and help. Teachers ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and get a good deal from the school. Those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve the levels of which they are capable. Teachers are good at assessing what pupils know on a day-to-day basis. However, they do not have systems for assessing or recording what pupils can do in most subjects and consequently are not able to use this information to plan work. This has been identified by subject co-ordinators as a key area for the development of teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is enriched by many visits and by visitors to the school who work with pupils and act as a stimulus for learning. Art and literature play an important part in the curriculum and broaden pupils' experiences. Children in the foundation stage have a good curriculum. All pupils are included and have equal access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school ensures that all pupils with special educational needs get the help they need to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. An excellent programme, developed by the school, helps promote pupils' personal and spiritual development and adds an extra dimension to their work. The school's provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils and take good care of them when they are in school. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress in English and mathematics. In other subjects they either do not exist or are not used as effectively.

The school has very good relationships with parents. Most parents have an extremely positive view of the school and many provide valuable help in class. The quality of information that parents receive about the school and its curriculum is very good. Parents provide the right sort of support for their children at home by listening to them read and supervising the homework set for them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed by the head teacher, with the good support of the deputy head teacher, staff and governors. Subject leaders carry out their roles effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and supports the school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has carefully analysed the results of previous tests and assessments and has taken positive action to tackle the issues arising from this evaluation. Everyone has a good idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the resources available. Grants have been used wisely to provide classroom assistants and additional support for pupils with special educational needs.

The school has a good level of staffing. Non-teaching staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs. The school's accommodation is satisfactory and the high quality of displays make it a very attractive place for pupils to learn. The quality of learning resources is satisfactory. The school considers the pros and cons of all spending decisions and actively applies the principles of best value to all of its work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They believe that their children behave well in school. • Parents think that most of the teaching is good. • They are glad that their children are expected to work hard and do their best. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of parents feel that they do not get enough information about how their children are doing. • Some parents would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Parents overwhelmingly support the school and are very appreciative of what it achieves for their children. The inspection team agrees with the very positive views expressed by the parents, and judges the school's partnership with parents to be one of its strengths. The quality of information shared with parents is very good. The only weakness is that some comments in annual reports are too general to let parents know what their children can do. The school provides an appropriate range of after-school sports and activities, though these are aimed at junior pupils only.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 When children join the nursery, they have a wide range of experiences, though the attainments of most children are typical of what is expected for their age. They make good progress during their time in the foundation stage and by the time they leave the reception class, standards in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and skills in creative development are above what is expected for their age. In physical development, children have achieved many of the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class. Good teaching in classes from Year 1 to Year 6 ensures that, by the time they leave the school, most children have done as well as they could and achieved the levels of which they are capable in all subjects. With the exception of science, standards are as high as they should be.

2 In speaking and listening, in which pupils' attainment on entry was about the same as in most other local schools, pupils make good progress as a result of the many opportunities provided by teachers. By the age of seven, pupils speak clearly when answering questions and talking about their work. They listen attentively to stories and to one another. By the time they are in Year 6, standards are above average and pupils are very confident when taking part in discussions. They talk and listen with assurance in a wide range of contexts.

3 In reading, standards are high throughout the school. Good teaching ensures that pupils do as well as they can. They get a good start in the foundation stage so that in the national tests in 2000 most seven-year-olds reached the level expected for their age and far more than in other schools achieved a higher level. It was a similar picture with writing; more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected and higher levels. Pupils maintain this good progress throughout the school and in national tests in English, the proportion of 11-year-olds who reached the level expected for their age was greater than in most other schools, as was the number of pupils who achieved a higher level. Last year, the school exceeded the target it had set for raising standards and once again pupils have done particularly well with reading.

4 Standards in mathematics have been maintained since the last inspection. This is because numeracy skills are being taught well. The results of national tests in mathematics in 2000 showed that fewer seven-year-olds than in most other schools reached the level expected for their age but more achieved a higher level. Teachers responded quickly to the results of these tests for seven-year-olds. They analysed tests in order to identify gaps in teaching and learning and more time was given to mental mathematics. As a result, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected level increased significantly in the last year. Eleven-year-olds performed well in national tests in 2000. The proportion who reached the expected level was far greater than in most schools and more achieved a higher level. Teachers are also pleased with the results of 2001; the school has matched the target it set for raising standards.

5 Standards in science have been maintained at the same satisfactory level as at the time of the previous inspection. However, they could be higher and this is one of the areas identified by the school as in need of improvement. The results of national tests in 2000 showed that fewer seven-year-olds reached the level expected for their age, though the proportion who achieved a higher level was greater than in most other schools. Teachers analysed tests and found that the reason for this was that pupils were not good enough at

investigative and experimental science. In the following year, more time was devoted to practical science. This did not work as hoped and scientific enquiry is still the weakest area of pupils' learning. In junior classes, standards are not as high as they could be because the most able pupils are not being sufficiently challenged by their work. The results of national tests in 2000 showed that, while the proportion of pupils who reached the expected level was greater than in most other schools, fewer pupils achieved the higher level. Once again, the school was quick to look for reasons and as a result greater emphasis was given to understanding scientific facts and knowledge in Year 6 last year. This helped increase the proportion of pupils who achieved a higher level in national tests in 2001 but has not solved the issue of the most able pupils not being challenged to achieve as well as they could.

6 Seven-year-olds in St Edward's Primary did better than those in similar schools in national tests in reading, as well as others in writing and not so well in mathematics. The performance of 11-year-olds matched that of pupils in similar schools in English and mathematics but fell below this in science. Over the last five years, there has been little difference in the performance of boys and girls except that 11-year-old girls have consistently done better than boys in English tests. The school's results are improving at a similar rate to the national picture.

7 In art and design, standards have been maintained at the same high level. Pupils make good progress so that standards are generally higher than those expected for seven and 11-year-olds and better than those seen in most schools.

8 The previous inspection indicated that standards in information and communication technology were below expectations for seven and 11-year-olds. There is no doubt that the school has improved standards in information and communication technology since then. This is the result of better teaching and increased resources, which have ensured that standards are now typical of seven and 11-year-olds.

9 In design and technology, seven-year-olds reach the levels expected for their age, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. However, standards have improved in junior classes and 11-year-olds now also reach the levels expected for their age. The improved standards are a result of better teaching and a wider curriculum.

10 In all other subjects, standards match the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. In history, pupils know about the topics they study and the lives of major historical figures by the time they leave the school. In geography, pupils have a sound understanding of the local area and the countries they study. In both subjects they are beginning to develop skills of researching facts from books and other sources. Pupils achieve sound standards in music and physical development. Those who attend after-school sports clubs or have extra tuition to help them play musical instruments, benefit from the extra time they have to practise their skills.

11 The majority of pupils on the special needs register have learning difficulties and as a result they attain below the levels expected for their age. However, the very good support these pupils receive, from teachers and classroom assistants, ensures that they do as well as they can. The proof of this is in the way that several pupils reached the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, despite their special educational needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 Pupils' attitudes to school are as good as they were during the previous inspection. Their enthusiasm for school is apparent in their high levels of attendance and in the interest they show in lessons and activities. This is one of the reasons why pupils learn at a good rate.

13 Children in the foundation stage enjoy coming to school. They have very good relationships with their teachers and other adults. As a result they are happy, confident and ready to learn. They behave well and are developing good levels of independence. Children in the nursery already know their class routines and what is expected of them. For example, they understand that in order to be safe they need to follow the rules when using wheeled toys. In Years 1 to 6, when their teachers' expectations are high and pupils are clear about what they have to do, they are eager to take part and work hard. In a very good English lesson in Year 6, pupils' enthusiasm for learning resulted in their demonstrating high levels of self-confidence as they asked questions and discussed a play by Shakespeare. A feature of the positive attitudes of pupils is that they are willing to celebrate the achievements of others. For example, children in the foundation stage clap spontaneously when other children are praised and pupils in Year 6 were glowing in their praise of the artistic efforts of their classmates.

14 Very good support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they also have very positive attitudes to learning. They respond well to the extra help given by teachers, classroom assistants and support staff. As a result they play a full part in lessons and are just as keen as other pupils to get on and do well.

15 The school has been successful in maintaining the same good standards of behaviour that it had at the time of the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school behave well in class. They settle quickly, listen attentively and do as they are told without fuss. Those who have special educational needs related to behavioural problems are helped to play a full part in lessons and they respond by following instructions. The school's programme for promoting pupils' personal development is excellent and is one of the reasons why attitudes and behaviour are so good. Another reason why pupils respond so well is that the warm Catholic nature of the school pervades all of its work and encourages pupils to be considerate and respectful of others. There were no exclusions during the last school year.

16 Pupils' personal development remains good. From the time they start nursery, pupils are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for themselves, others and their school. This builds as they move through the school and when pupils reach Year 6 they are proud to take on a range of duties, such as being *house captains* and looking after the school library. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and together with the partnership between home and school, they form the basis of pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils are generally positive in lessons. They work together amicably and share equipment sensibly. Pupils are aware of the results of their actions upon others and are confident to discuss their feelings about a variety of issues. This was evident when a pupil in Year 6 talked eloquently from the point of view of people who had been shipwrecked and were confronted with moral decisions.

17 Levels of attendance are very good and have risen to well above the national average since the time of the previous inspection report. Unauthorised absence is well below national levels. This is as a result of the good relationship between home and school, and parents being clear about the importance of informing school when their children are absent.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18 Teaching is good, with a significant proportion of very good lessons in the foundation stage and in junior classes. Literacy is taught well, which is one of the reasons why pupils achieve high standards in reading. Most of the teaching of numeracy is good and helps pupils do well in mathematics tests. Teaching in other subjects is never less than satisfactory and is often good. The teaching of information and communication technology and design and technology has improved since the previous inspection and is helping to raise standards throughout the school. This is a result of national initiatives and in-service training.

19 Throughout the school, teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In the foundation stage the emphasis is on the development of speaking and listening skills and widening children's mathematical knowledge. In reception classes, children are given daily opportunities for reading, writing and using numbers. All of this has a good effect on pupils' self-confidence and is one of the reasons why most have achieved many of the early skills by the time they leave reception classes. Throughout the school, teachers use the National Literacy Strategy to ensure that spelling, punctuation and handwriting are given due attention and that pupils are taught the sounds of letters and use this knowledge to read and write. For example, in a very good lesson, the teacher pointed out stage instructions and punctuation, such as exclamation marks in a play script and this helped pupils in Year 3 read their parts with good expression. In numeracy lessons, pupils are taught the basic skills of number during mental mathematics sessions. For example, in a good lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 practised counting forwards and backwards in multiples of 100, ten and five. Each day pupils are given time to practise their skills and use them to solve problems.

20 The methods used to teach other subjects are effective. There is a good balance between time for the whole class to engage in discussions and answer questions and time for pupils to practise and consolidate what they have learned. A good feature of the teaching throughout the school is that teachers use the final minutes of most lessons to go over what has been learned and pull together the main points of the lessons. This helps pupils to know how well they are learning and is a significant feature in why pupils' are so keen to achieve their best. Teachers also make good use of homework to further support and increase pupils' learning. Right from the foundation stage pupils are expected to read at home and as they get older pupils are given more frequent and difficult homework in English, mathematics and in researching other subjects.

21 Throughout the school, teachers try hard to ensure that all pupils in the class are included in lessons and have equal opportunities to make progress. They do this by matching pupils' work to their different abilities and needs. This works well for pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers are less successful at pitching work in science at the right level for the most able pupils.

22 A further strength of the teaching is the way that teachers manage pupils. Their success is built on the very good relationships that all staff have with pupils and the school's programme for promoting pupils' personal development. Because teachers treat pupils with respect and are concerned about their well-being, pupils respond by trying hard to please their teachers. Those pupils who have problems behaving well are dealt with firmly but sensitively, so that the disruption to lessons is always minimal. A good example of this was seen in a reception class. When one child had trouble joining in the lesson, the class teacher arranged for him to have some time with a classroom assistant. Her calm manner in dealing with the situation meant that the rest of the class followed her example and continued with their discussion quietly. The use of additional adults to support group

work is very effective, particularly when pupils work in small groups or when adults provide individual pupils with the help they need to move forward.

23 Teachers are good at questioning pupils to assess what they know and can do. Skilful questioning enables all staff to ensure that pupils are on the right track in their learning and allows them to use questions to help pupils build on their prior learning and help them to understand. For example, in a good lesson on information and communication technology, the teacher in a Year 6 class knew exactly when to ask a probing question and when to leave pupils to try things for themselves.

24 The co-ordinators for subjects other than English and mathematics have identified the need to develop more useful systems of recording assessment and using the results of this to plan pupils' work. At present some subjects, such as information and communication technology, have embryonic systems while others, such as art have nothing in place. Though this has not prevented pupils from achieving the levels expected for their age, teachers recognise that if they are to set the right level of work for the most able pupils then they need to have hard evidence of what they can do.

25 Throughout the school, teachers are very good at using the time and talents of support staff, classroom assistants and volunteer helpers to promote pupils' learning. This was evident in the many lessons where small groups of pupils benefited from having an adult to help them if they got stuck and to give them first-hand experiences of the subject. For example, children in infant classes were enthralled when a visitor brought in a selection of toys from the past. They could hardly wait to have a go and by the end of the lesson had learned a lot about the sorts of toys that their grandparents might have played with. One of the main reasons why pupils with special educational needs achieve at a good rate is because of the extra help they get from support staff and classroom assistants. Meticulous planning by teachers, which ensures that each pupil works towards realistic, step-by-step targets, results in this aspect of the school's work being one of the things it does well.

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

26 The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and is because of the way teachers now use suitable guidelines to help them plan work in information and communication technology and design and technology.

27 A real strength of the school is the curriculum for personal, social and health education, which is excellent. The school places great emphasis on this in a Catholic context. This has helped to maintain the way pupils behave, their attitudes to learning and how they relate to one another. Every class has time in the week when they discuss issues of life that are relevant to their age and maturity. Pupils are given the opportunity to give their opinions and think about the impact of their actions on others. They are taught about the misuse of drugs, sex education and how to have a healthy lifestyle. The whole package has been very carefully and thoughtfully worked out and pupils enjoy these lessons and behave maturely.

28 The school's curriculum ensures that most pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential. Part of the ethos of the school is that that pupils from different backgrounds and with different abilities are included in all of the school's activities and get the same good deal from the school. The provision for pupils with special educational

needs has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. Teachers ensure that the work planned for pupils with special educational needs matches their ability and, as a result, they learn at a good rate. However, an issue for the school is that teachers do not always provide the same opportunities for the most able pupils to learn well in science. This prevents them from doing as well as they could.

29 The school provides an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities. The emphasis, however, is on sporting activities, with only a small amount of other clubs and activities available. While all clubs and sports are popular they are only available to pupils in junior classes.

30 The school's very good links with the community have been maintained since the previous inspection and contribute well to pupils' learning. For instance, the very close links with the parish Roman Catholic Church results in a good response from large numbers of adult volunteers to teach pupils at regular catechist meetings. Links with the local secondary and other primary schools are satisfactory and serve to increase pupils' learning. For instance, older pupils get specialist football coaching at a local secondary school; this helps improve their skills and also smoothes the way for the transfer from Year 6 to Year 7.

31 The pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted in the school. The Mission statement *I have come that you may have life and have it to the full* (St John 10.10) underpins all the life and work of the school. The pivotal and highly regarded influence of the parish priest is felt not only within the parish community but also in the close community of the school. The strong spiritual guidance he gives throughout the community is felt by all. Pupils explore their thoughts and feelings during class and school assemblies through prayer and reflection. There are also occasions in the busy schedule of life at school for the pupils to gather their thoughts and pray. There are opportunities in lessons where pupils have a chance to talk about their own feelings. Throughout the school there are foci of worship and religious texts, which encourage the pupils to be reflective. The pupils are pleased to talk about their work and their likes and dislikes. For example, pupils in Year 6 talked about being in their last year in school. They smiled as they spoke of how they had looked forward to being in the last year in school and then moving on to the high school; but that now this feeling was not quite so urgent and desirable.

32 Moral development is very well promoted throughout the school. The school policy is to educate the whole child, to enable them to take their place as reasonable and responsible citizens. The school ethos is one of self-discipline, responsibility, tolerance, kindness and the spirit of true friendship. This clearly sets the pupils a clear framework in which the whole school works. All members of staff apply this Christian approach consistently throughout the school. This means that pupils are very clear about the expectations of all staff. The secure relationships within the school provide a firm basis for the development of a clear moral understanding. Pupils are taught right from wrong, with the very youngest children in the school having a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

33 Pupils' social development is promoted very well and is one of the things that most pleases parents. Social values are well promoted by adults throughout the school and pupils are encouraged to care and take responsibility for others. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities such as distributing materials in lessons, organising chairs and equipment for school assemblies and tidying up at the end of lessons. All of the pupils in Year 6 have some responsibility for the running of the school. Teachers also encourage pupils to examine problems in the wider world context. For example, everyone felt the impact of the race riots in Oldham and the terrorist attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre

in America. These were times when the school came together to reflect and pray for others. The school successfully promotes an atmosphere in which pupils are able to discuss important questions and concerns. There are many contributions from visitors such as the local priest and members of the local community who work with pupils. The inclusion of pupils with statements of their special educational need supports the pupils' social development and promotes very positive attitudes to pupils who have special needs.

34 Provision for cultural education is very good. Throughout the school there are positive images of people from a wide range of different cultures. In one display in the central area of the school, the pupils are reminded that in Oldham there is a wide range of people from many different cultural origins. This helps pupils' understanding that they are part of a wider world community and prepares them for life in a multicultural society. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to study a range of artists and their works. News items and newspaper clippings are prominently displayed to broaden pupils' knowledge of recent happenings and worldwide issues. These news items are discussed in class and all pupils are able to voice their opinions on a wide range of topics. The range of educational visits is good and includes different cultural experiences. The pupils study a wide range of ancient civilisations and gain a good understanding of the life and time of these people.

35 The school has maintained and built on the strong base at the time of the previous inspection and has further improved the provision for the pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36 The quality of care and support pupils receive in school has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Everyone has worked hard to ensure that the gaps highlighted in the previous report have been tackled. As a result, arrangements for first-aid and dealing with sick children are now very good. Action has also been taken to improve the surface of the playground and to ensure the safety of pupils during physical education lessons in the school hall. Health and safety procedures, including risk assessments, are well established and form the basis of setting priorities for the repairs and maintenance of the school building and grounds. Procedures for child protection are in place and the high level of understanding and experience of the member of staff with designated responsibility for this area of the school's work ensures their effectiveness. The school monitors and promotes attendance well. As a result, attendance has been maintained at the same high level since the time of the last inspection.

37 Good behaviour is promoted through the Roman Catholic ethos of the school and through the excellent programme for promoting pupils' personal development. Teachers throughout the school manage behaviour well. They have a positive approach, and set good examples to pupils through their own behaviour and relationships. Their standards are clear and consistent, so that pupils know what to expect. Rewards and sanctions are fair, and pupils understand the systems. Teachers monitor and assess pupils' personal development through the scheme *In the Beginning* and in an informal way through their day-to-day interactions with pupils. This works well; teachers know when pupils are unwell or upset and pupils know who to go to if they need help or advice.

38 The school has good procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do in English and mathematics. In these subjects, teachers use standardised and national tests to check and record pupils' progress. These are then used to set realistic targets for individual pupils and to predict how well pupils will achieve in the next year. Teachers also use the results of tests, and their own assessments, to identify whether pupils need extra help and if they are learning at a fast enough rate. These procedures, and the good use

teachers make of them, are significant factors in why standards in English and mathematics are high. In science, teachers have similar systems but do not make such good use of test results to plan work that is challenging for the most able pupils. Co-ordinators of other subjects have rightly identified assessment as a priority for development and set this as a target for improvement in the coming year. In some subjects, such as art and design and music, there are no agreed systems for assessing or recording what pupils can do. In other subjects, such as information and communication technology, co-ordinators have developed systems but they are still at an early stage of being implemented or are being tried for the first time. However, the readiness of staff to move forward on this key issue puts the school in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary to improve this aspect of its work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39 A strength of the school is the partnership with parents. This is a factor in pupils' very good attitudes to learning. As at the time of the previous inspection, parents have very positive views of the school and feel that it does a good job for their children. Most believe that their children are happy in school and that they are expected to work hard. They feel that their children make good progress because teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. Inspection findings support the positive views held by parents.

40 Some parents have expressed concern about the extra-curricular activities available. Inspection findings are that there is a satisfactory amount of after-school and lunchtime clubs and that these are popular with pupils. However, as with many schools, most of the activities are aimed at older pupils and those in infant classes have to wait their turn.

41 A significant number of parents expressed concern that the school does not provide them with enough information about how well their children are doing. Inspection findings are that parents have no need to be worried, because the quality of information provided by the school is very good. Governors ensure that the prospectus is of good quality and provides plenty of useful information regarding school routines. It is revised each year in order to ensure that the information it contains is up to date. Teachers provide parents with information about the topics their children will be covering during the term, and together with the homework set, this provides a clear starting point for parents who want to help their children at home. For example, children's reading diaries are a good means of communication between parents and teachers. They let parents know where pupils are stuck and the extent of entries by parents show that many have played a significant part in their children's success with reading.

42 Reports to parents on their children's progress form part of each pupil's record of achievement, which also include examples of the pupils' work. These provide parents with good quality information regarding the progress made by pupils in English, mathematics and science but are limited in the information they provide for other subjects. For example, the statement *Steven enjoys working on the computer* does not inform parents of the progress made by their child in information and communication technology.

43 Parents' contribution to the work of the school and to their children's education is very good. Several parents help out in classrooms, they are well briefed by teachers and as a result make a significant contribution to learning. For example, because they were fascinated by the weaving skills of one parent, a group of infant pupils become engrossed in their own attempts at paper weaving. The school, parents and members of the parish work well together to raise additional funds for the school and to create a caring family atmosphere in which pupils are effectively taught to value learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44 The headteacher continues to provide good leadership for the work of the school. Very definite ideas of how the school needs to develop have ensured that the key issues raised in the previous inspection have all been tackled successfully. With the strong support of the deputy head teacher the school has moved forward at a good rate and has the capacity to maintain high standards in English and mathematics and raise standards in other subjects. The shared vision of the head teacher, staff, governors and parents ensures that the Roman Catholic ethos of the school is apparent in everything it does. The way that teachers manage the personal and social development of pupils is one of the strengths of the school and it ensures that all pupils have an equal chance to gain the best from their school days.

45 Staff with leadership and managerial roles have a good understanding of their responsibilities and contribute to the effective management of the school. Subject co-ordinators provide informal advice for colleagues and more formal training in their subjects. As a result, there is a strong sense of shared purpose and teamwork in the school, which is evident in the support teachers give to one another and their willingness to work hard to continue to raise standards. In addition, subject co-ordinators now monitor the curriculum more rigorously than they did at the time of the previous inspection. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching in information and communication technology and design and technology and has helped raise standards in both subjects. Co-ordinators analyse the results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science and are involved in consultations about setting targets and identifying gaps in teaching or learning. In some subjects, co-ordinators have not yet begun to monitor the quality of teaching in a systematic way and this is seen as a priority for development. Co-ordinators have also identified the need to agree and implement systems for assessment in those subjects where they do not already exist. In a number of subjects the procedures for assessment and recording have not been in place long enough to help teachers with their planning. This results in pupils of all abilities being set similar work in a small number of lessons.

46 Governors support the life and work of the school well. Members of the governing body have continued to increase their involvement with the school since the previous inspection. They are fully involved in determining policy and in monitoring the curriculum and have looked carefully at how well the school has met the goals of the action plan drawn up after the last inspection. There are trained governors for literacy and numeracy and governors work in close partnership with the head teacher to manage spending.

47 The headteacher and governors have a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. An efficient system for planning and evaluating realistic and achievable targets for development has enabled them to identify the same issues for development as this report has done. A particular strength of the school's planning for improvement is that the cost of achieving each goal is planned carefully. In this way governors and the senior management team try hard to ensure that money is used wisely and efficiently. Governors are responsible for setting goals for the work of the headteacher and are involved in setting realistic targets for raising standards in English and mathematics in National Curriculum tests.

48 Financial planning and control have been maintained since the last inspection and remain good. Governors examine and discuss budget proposals before approving and setting the final budget. They work with the headteacher to make regular checks on

spending. At the same time, the headteacher and school secretary exercise good control of the budget within the limits agreed by governors. Through the conscientious work of the school's secretary, financial administration is efficient and unobtrusive. Administrative systems are computerised and the secretary demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the school's systems. All points raised for improvement at the last audit have been acted upon. Governors ensure that all additional funding is used for its intended purpose and make particularly good use of money to support pupils with special educational needs. For example, their decision to use money to provide additional classroom assistants and support staff is one of the reasons why the school's provision for these pupils is so very good.

49 There is a good match between the numbers, experience and qualifications of teachers and education support staff and the needs of the planned curriculum. Good procedures are in place to introduce new teachers to the school, so that pupils' learning is not disturbed. A staff handbook provides new teachers with valuable information about the school's routines and procedures and they are given additional support and help from teachers who act as a mentor. The head teacher ensures that all staff have the chance to improve their teaching through training and a system of performance management. The head teacher and advisers from the local education authority observe teachers at work and, following meetings with the head teacher, all staff have their own targets for professional development. This established system of management puts the school in a good position to maintain and improve many of the qualities seen during the inspection.

50 The school's accommodation is suitable for the effective teaching of the curriculum. Improvements have been made since the previous inspection. There is now a suite of computers, which is used throughout the day. This has helped raise standards in information and communication technology and in other subjects, where the school's good use of new technology is supporting pupils' learning. Although children in the reception classes do not have a separate play area, this issue has been identified by governors and is to be remedied in the coming term.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 Governors, head teacher and staff should;

(1) Raise standards in science by;

- a. Ensuring that pupils are given many opportunities to experiment and investigate in science.
- b. Using the findings of standardised tests and teachers' assessments to pitch work at the right level for the most able pupils.
- c. Planning activities that build on what pupils already know.

(Paragraphs 91 - 99 of the main report)

(2) Make more effective use of assessment and recording by:

- a. Developing and agreeing on procedures for assessment in subjects where they do not already exist.
- b. Continuing to trial procedures in subjects where this has already begun.
- c. Using assessment to plan work that is pitched at the right level for pupils of all abilities.
- d. Extending the good systems for tracking progress currently used in English and mathematics to other subjects.

(Paragraphs 38, 89, 96, 104, 109, 121, 127, 133 of the main report)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	26	24	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	46	42	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents almost 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)	30	267
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	69

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	15	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	17
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	33	33	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (91)	92 (89)	89 (84)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	15	15	14
	Total	33	33	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (89)	92 (86)	89 (86)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	22	19	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	20
	Girls	16	16	18
	Total	35	35	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (77)	85 (80)	93 (83)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	17	16	18
	Total	36	35	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (74)	85 (69)	93 (69)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	221
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	80.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	562471
Total expenditure	558934
Expenditure per pupil	1854
Balance brought forward from previous year	32461
Balance carried forward to next year	35998

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	297
Number of questionnaires returned	117

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	42	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	44	8	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	50	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	51	9	1	4
The teaching is good.	50	42	5	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	44	22	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	28	9	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	37	3	3	1
The school works closely with parents.	44	37	13	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	56	32	5	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	38	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	36	18	3	20

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

52 In St Edward's, the foundation stage is the time that children spend in the nursery and reception class. Children start nursery in the September after their third birthday and transfer to reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection 27 of the children in the foundation stage were aged three, 38 were aged four and there were six five-year-olds. The school's assessments show that when children start in the nursery, their experiences and knowledge vary widely but that on the whole they are typical for their age.

53 The quality of teaching in the foundation stage has been maintained since the previous inspection and continues to be mostly good. Teachers are careful to match the work and activities to the different ages and abilities of children in the nursery and reception classes. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are given all the help they need to do well. In this way the school ensures that, right from the start, all children are included and have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to make progress.

54 During their time in the nursery and the reception class, children make good progress in everything they do. They are on course to reach the standards expected by the time they leave the reception class. A significant number will exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world and begin to work on the first levels of the National Curriculum. In physical and creative development, children's steady progress makes it likely that they will achieve the standards that are typical for their age.

Personal, social and emotional development

55 Good teaching ensures that, during their time in the foundation stage, children develop confidence and independence. From the nursery onwards they are expected to get what they need for a task and put equipment and toys away at the end of the session. As a result, children in the nursery quickly get into the routine of tidy-away time and respond enthusiastically to getting the job done. This was very evident when the teacher played some lively Caribbean music and children were asked to complete the task before the music ended.

56 One of the strengths of the teaching in this area is that teachers promote personal development in everything they do. Teachers help children to understand the difference between right and wrong through stories and discussions and in the example they set of always listening to what children have to say. Teachers expect children to be friendly to one another at all times and are very clear about the rules of sharing and waiting their turn. Most children respond by being well-mannered and patient. For example, children working with a classroom assistant waited patiently while one boy needed several attempts at making a colour darker by mixing it with another colour.

57 The adults in the foundation stage provide good role models for children. They are calm and organised and treat children with respect and courtesy. This leads to warm and trusting relationships and helps the children to behave in a friendly manner to one another. As a result, children are caring and help one another with coats and hats or by showing the way to the washbasins.

Communication, language and literacy

58 When they start reception class, most children have the language and literacy skills that are expected for their age. Good teaching ensures that by the end of the reception year, children have achieved many of the early skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing and attainment is above average.

59 In the nursery, staff promote the development of language in everything children do. The teacher, nursery nurse and other adults never miss an opportunity to engage children in conversation about their work or themselves. They use technical language to widen children's vocabulary. For example, when a small group of children in the nursery told the rest of the class about their baking the teacher asked them to say what ingredients they used. Later one of the children remembered the word when other adults asked the same question.

60 In the reception classes, teachers have adapted the format of the National Literacy Strategy to suit the needs children in the foundation stage. Each day, children are given opportunities to read books, listen to stories and write. Children enjoy reading and looking at books. They talk about their favourite stories and know the names of characters in the books they read in school. When asked, children are very keen to show off their knowledge of letter sounds. By the end of the reception class children use this knowledge to help them read and write words they find difficult. It is the many opportunities for writing and the smooth transition from copying what the teacher has written to having a go at writing for themselves that enable the brightest children to write several sentences and short stories by the time they leave the reception class. This gives them a good start for their work on the National Curriculum.

Mathematical development

61 This area of learning is also taught well and by the end of the reception year nearly all children have exceeded the early learning goals and are working towards the first level of the National Curriculum.

62 One of the main reasons for this is that teachers use mathematics in everyday activities. This means that children practise their counting, adding and taking away many times each day and have no difficulty in working out how many cartons of milk are needed or how many more pieces of jigsaw they have to find. Children quickly learn to add and take away as they sing songs and rhymes. The good progress they make ensures that many record their mathematics as sums by the end of the reception year.

63 Teachers ensure that children learn about number, pattern and shape through practical activities such as sorting objects into sets, counting and playing games. This helps children make good progress in understanding numbers and concepts such as adding and taking away. Teachers also encourage children to record their mathematics; in the nursery they do this as pictures and then, as they get older, as sums with symbols for addition, subtraction and equals. Most children can work out sums to ten by the time they leave reception classes and brighter children use much bigger numbers and can easily work things out in their head.

64 Staff constantly reinforce children's understanding of mathematical language by asking questions such as '*is that full now?*' and, '*Which one is on top of the shelf?*' Children respond by using the same language in their descriptions and quickly learn to use the right terms of measurement and position.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65 Teaching is good and helps children develop many of the basic skills that help them make sense of the world. By the time they leave the reception classes most children's knowledge and understanding of the world are above average for their age.

66 Teachers ensure that children use computers regularly and that they know how to use tape machines when they want to listen to a story. Consequently, children move the cursor on the computer with the control needed to operate programs. Children quickly learn to do this easily and settle down to listen to stories or play computer games. Staff ensure that children learn about important events in the church calendar and their own life; for example, Christmas and baptism.

67 Teachers help children learn about their neighbourhood and families through looking at pictures and photographs. For example, children in one of the reception classes were very interested to see photographs of their teacher's mother and of the grandparents of other children. This and first-hand experiences provided by the accounts of visitors help children gain an awareness of the past. Teachers also ensure that children learn about their school and its locality through looking at pictures and going out and about on walks to nearby shops. In this way children see that there are different types of houses and buildings in the area and draw and paint maps that include features such as roads and shops. Once again, teachers make good use of visitors, such as the local fire brigade to promote children's' learning.

68 One of the strengths of teaching in this area of learning is that children are encouraged to find things out for themselves and to ask why things happen. This was evident in a good science-based activity, when children in the nursery baked chocolate-chip cookies and explored the way that materials change. Children laughed when they found that the mixture in the bowl changed colour when the chocolate powder was added and were thrilled to see and taste the final crispy cookies.

Physical development

69 Good teaching helps children gain a sense of co-ordination and balance in their play and movement and to master the skills of handling small tools such as paintbrushes, pencils and scissors in their work. By the end of the reception year children have achieved many of the early learning goals.

70 Teachers ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to engage in physical activities, both indoors and when playing outside. As a result, children are robust and lively. Children in the nursery enjoy climbing, jumping and playing on wheeled toys as they let off steam at playtime. Although they do not yet have a separate, outside play area, children in reception classes have regular opportunities to use the hall for dancing, games and gymnastics.

71 Children are given good opportunities to practise skills such as cutting, gluing and holding paintbrushes, pens and pencils. Consequently, by the time they leave the reception class, most use scissors confidently and cut around difficult shapes. Because staff in the nursery show children how to hold a pencil and paintbrush and spend time finding out which hand each child prefers to use, children are generally confident with writing tools when they start in the reception class. They continue to make good progress in reception classes so that by the end of the reception year, their handwriting is of good quality.

Creative development

72 Teaching is good and by the time they leave the reception classes, children exceed many of the skills expected for their age. Children have opportunities to undertake a suitable range of art and design activities, such as painting, collage and pattern making, and to engage in imaginative play in which they take on different roles. They enjoy experimenting with materials and different media. For instance, children in a reception class were excited at thinning paint with water so that they could create designs by blowing it through a straw.

73 Teachers encourage children to paint, draw and be creative in making models and pictures. Children in the nursery learn to recognise colours as they experiment with paint. Older children are taught how to mix paint to get a wider range of colours. Children create imaginative pictures and the portraits they draw of themselves and other people contain greater detail as they get older. Children's work is valued and there are attractive displays of children's' paintings and models in classes and shared areas.

74 Staff ensure that children have frequent opportunities to experiment with the sounds made by musical instruments. In the nursery and reception classes, children learn to hold percussion instruments properly and to beat out a simple rhythm. Because the teacher reminds them of the names of instruments they are able to identify tambourines, drums, triangles and wood blocks. In all classes, children learn to sing a wide range of songs and rhymes and enjoy joining in with the actions even if they do not know all of the words.

ENGLISH

75 Standards are well above average by the age of seven and above average by the age of 11. There has been a significant improvement in the standards achieved at the age of seven since the last inspection and the above average standards at the age of eleven have been maintained.

76 Throughout the school, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to speak and listen. In infant classes, pupils listen to stories and talk to the rest of the class. As a result, seven-year-olds are confident when answering questions and talking about their work. In junior classes, teachers widen the range of opportunities to include more formal situations such as assemblies and class debates. For example, in the Year 6 class, one pupil took on the role of Viola from Shakespeare's play Twelfth Night and answered her classmates' questions about her feelings at being shipwrecked.

77 Teachers are particularly successful at teaching reading. Training and national initiatives such as the National Literacy Strategy have helped improve the quality of teaching and the support given to pupils who need extra help. Teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of reading. Pupils are taught to use the sounds of letters to help them make sense of unfamiliar words and to look at pictures for clues. As a result, seven-year-olds read fluently and accurately. When they make a mistake they are generally able to rectify it by looking at the sense of the whole sentence and making a sensible guess. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils show a clear understanding of the text and the underlying themes of the books they read. They discuss their preferences and explain the reasoning behind their choices.

78 From the foundation stage onwards, pupils are encouraged to read at home and the contribution made by parents is a significant factor in why pupils do so well. The reading diaries of pupils show that most are keen readers and when asked they talk enthusiastically

about their favourite authors and books. While younger pupils are happy to chuckle over the antics of characters, older pupils talk knowledgeably about different genres and what attracts them to poetry and plays.

79 Teachers make very good use of the school library, which further encourages pupils to read. The library is constantly in use as small groups of pupils are helped to change their books by classroom assistants or other helpers. Older pupils are very familiar with the library organization and know how to locate books alphabetically and by using the recognized Dewey system.

80 The teaching of writing has improved since the previous inspection and is now also good. As a response to disappointing results in national tests, teachers have increased the amount of time and the emphasis given to writing and handwriting. Raising standards in writing is a key feature of literacy lessons in all classes. In infant classes, pupils are taught to use simple punctuation and older pupils learn to use more complex grammar. This is paying dividends. By the age of seven, the most able pupils know when and how to use question and speech marks and identify different elements of text. For example, they know which parts are direct speech and which is the voice of the narrator. By the time they are in Year 6, average and higher attaining pupils have a thorough understanding of English grammar and their spelling is generally accurate. The extra attention given to handwriting has led to improvements in the presentation of work in all subjects. The only gap in teaching is that pupils in infant classes are not taught to join their letters and this prevents them from achieving a higher level in national tests. The co-ordinator has identified this as an area for review and teachers have begun to remedy the situation.

81 A good feature of the teaching, which leads to high standards, is that teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to read and write in other subjects. For example, in an information and communication technology lesson pupils in Years 1 and 2 improved their word processing skills by typing in a piece of text in which capital letters and full stops had to be included in the right place in the text. During this lesson pupils improved their computer and grammar skills at the same time. In addition, teachers ensure that the tasks set for pupils are interesting. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and concentrate wholeheartedly on their work. This was evident in a lesson when pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class wrote excerpts for inclusion in a travel brochure and tried hard to make their writing persuasive enough to encourage people to visit the places they had chosen. Pupils read to research and find things out in many subjects. Sometimes this is from books, magazines, journals and newspapers, at other times pupils use sources such as CD ROMs and the Internet.

82 Teachers make very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are careful to match the work for these pupils to their individual needs and targets. This helps pupils learn at their own pace and ensures that they achieve as well as they can. Whenever possible these pupils work in smaller groups, often led by a classroom assistant, support teacher or volunteer helper. The extra attention they get helps raise their confidence in speaking and listening and helps them make good progress with reading and writing. For example, pupils in a junior class were pleased with their efforts at spelling after the classroom assistant showed them how to use a dictionary. In addition to this support in classes, pupils with special educational needs also benefit from additional literacy lessons when they work in small groups away from the rest of the class.

83 A good feature of the teaching is that teachers share the aims of lessons with pupils. In some lessons teachers do this by telling pupils, in others they are written, so that pupils can see what they should be learning. This helps pupils understand the purpose of the lesson.

For example, because pupils in Year 5 understood that the aim of the task was to use expressive vocabulary in their writing about the story *The Iron Man*, they created interesting descriptions such as *the hands and eyes crept along the beach*.

84 The enthusiastic English co-ordinator provides good support and management of this important subject throughout the school. She has led staff meetings, analysed data from task and test results and encouraged staff to refine and develop their work.

MATHEMATICS

85 Seven and 11-year-olds achieve standards that are above average. Good teaching has helped raise the standards achieved by seven-year-olds since the time of the previous inspection. The school has maintained the standards achieved by 11-year-olds.

86 Most of the teaching is good and this ensures that pupils learn well and achieve the standards of which they are capable. All teachers have had training in how to use the National Numeracy Strategy to teach mathematics. As a result, the methods used by teachers work well and there is a good balance of mental mathematics, time when the class is taught by the teacher and time for pupils to practise and consolidate their skills. The weakest part of some mathematics lessons is the plenary session at the end of the lesson. Occasionally, teachers allow the mental mathematics or the main part of the lesson to go on for too long and this final summing up of teaching points is rushed. Teachers use computers in two ways; pupils enjoy practising their skills using mathematics and numeracy programs and pupils are taught to use spreadsheets and databases using computers and more traditional methods. This works well and ensures that pupils gain computer skills at the same time as they improve their mathematics.

87 One of the strengths of teaching is that teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of mathematics. They use the mental mathematics session to teach the basic skills of number and number operations. As a result, pupils' sharpness and accuracy increase as they get older. Pupils in Year 2 have a quick recall of addition and subtraction facts beyond 20 and those in Year 6 see pattern and relationship within numbers. One of the ways they do this well is through careful questioning. Teachers challenge pupils' thinking by asking questions such as, '*Can you do that a different way?*' and '*Is there a quicker way?*' This helped the most able pupils in a Year 3 and 4 class to devise their own short-cut methods of counting down a number line in increasing multiples of ten. In addition, teachers tailor the questions to match the different abilities of pupils and in this way everyone is involved in the mental mathematics session and has an equal chance to make progress.

88 Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils to explain their working out and develop their own ways of solving problems. This helps pupils to be more confident with numbers. In infant classes pupils learn a range of methods for adding and taking away. Consequently, by the time they are seven most pupils use number lines or count forwards and backwards when solving money and number problems. In junior classes, teachers continue to teach a range of different strategies for using multiplication and division and ensure that pupils understand the commutative and inverse properties of number operations. As a result, most 11-year-olds are good at solving number problems and puzzles. An additional bonus from this method of teaching is that pupils enjoy their work in mathematics and get a real sense of achievement when they solve problems correctly.

89 A good feature of the teaching is the way that teachers assess pupils' progress. On a day-to-day basis they are quick to spot if pupils have grasped the idea or need further practice and change their planning accordingly. This means that pupils do not get bored by continuing with work that they have already mastered. For example, in a lesson in the reception and Year 1 class, the teacher was sensitive to the fact that the most able pupils had no difficulty with the counting game and needed to move quickly onto some practical work, where they could practise their skills. Teachers ensure that pupils' work is marked but they do not always make the sorts of comments that would help them know where they have gone wrong. The fact that pupils' books are monitored puts the school in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary and improve the quality of teaching. Teachers have good systems for assessing and recording pupils' achievements and learning and they use the information from tests well. This is particularly evident in the very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers try hard to ensure that the work they are given matches the targets in their individual plans and that they are given extra help whenever it is possible. Teachers make very good use of the time of classroom assistants and support staff to provide additional support for pupils with special educational needs. This helps them make good progress and achieve the levels of which they are capable, even though this is sometimes below the level expected for their age.

90 Good management of the subject has helped teachers put the National Numeracy Strategy to effective use. Thorough monitoring of the curriculum and the results of standardized tests means that the co-ordinator is well-aware of the strengths of the subject and what needs to be done next to improve provision. All of which puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to raise standards.

SCIENCE

91 Standards are typical of seven and 11-year-olds. This is a different picture from at the time of the previous inspection, when 11-year-olds achieved standards that were above average. The main reason for this is that the most able pupils are not being set work that is demanding enough.

92 In infant classes, satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils achieve the levels expected for their age. A strength of the teaching is that teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach science. This is evident in the interesting activities they plan for pupils. For example, the fossils that the teacher used to demonstrate different types of rock fascinated pupils in Year 2 and ensured that they were highly motivated to find out as much as they could. In addition, because the teacher used the appropriate technical vocabulary to describe specimens, by the end of the lesson pupils used terms such as *ammonite* and *belemnite* in their discussions and answers to questions.

93 A close analysis of some disappointing results in national tests helped the co-ordinator identify gaps in the teaching and learning of experimental and investigative science. As a result, more time is now devoted to this aspect of the curriculum. Teachers plan many more activities where pupils learn by finding things out for themselves. This has ensured that by the end of Year 2 pupils understand the importance of making tests fair and know how to achieve this in their own investigations. For instance, when measuring the time it took for four different fats to melt pupils tried to make it a fair test by ensuring that each sample was the same size. However, these changes have not been in place long enough to raise standards and this continues to be an aspect of science that requires further development.

94 A further gap in the teaching in infant classes, which prevents it from being better, is that teachers do not give enough emphasis to the way that pupils record their findings. Too often this is done by filling in previously prepared sheets and in some lessons it is omitted altogether. This puts pupils at a disadvantage in junior classes, when they are expected to write about their experiments and record their findings as charts, graphs and tables.

95 In junior classes, teaching is satisfactory but teachers do not always ensure that pupils of different ability are given work that is pitched at the right level. Pupils' books show that, last year, average and higher attaining pupils often did the same work. For example, pupils of all abilities did the same work on electricity and circuits. This was reflected in national tests, when more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level, but fewer achieved a higher level. Although the teacher in Year 6 tests pupils before they undertake national tests. This is not sufficient to build on what pupils already know. As a result, pupils' learning is slowed and they do not learn or achieve as well as they could. The co-ordinator has rightly identified this as a key area for improvement in the coming year.

96 On the other hand, teachers are good at assessing pupils' understanding as they learn during lessons. For instance, in a Year 3 investigation the teacher took time to explain the word *predict* when she questioned pupils and found they did not understand it. As a result, most pupils went on to make sensible predictions about which kind of paper could be classified as *translucent*, *opaque* or *absorbent*.

97 A good feature of the teaching in most junior classes is that teachers ensure that there is a good balance between learning facts and engaging in experimental science. For example, in all classes, teachers provide activities that encourage pupils to learn facts about life and physical processes and materials. Consequently, the oldest pupils wrote knowledgeably about the human heart and pulse rate. The balance is maintained because teachers also provide many opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves. This was evident in a good lesson, when pupils in Years 4 and 5 learned quickly about shadows and reflections by experimenting with torches, beads and mirrors in a darkened classroom. However, workbooks show that last year pupils in Year 6 did not have the same good opportunities to learn from first-hand experiences. So, while the emphasis on learning scientific facts led to more pupils gaining the expected level in national tests for 11-year-olds it also led to a slight imbalance in the curriculum. Once again, good management by the co-ordinator means that this has been identified as a weakness in the teaching and long-term plans show that this is unlikely to happen in the current year.

98 All teachers make good use of classroom assistants, support staff and volunteer helpers to ensure that pupils with special educational needs learn as well as others. For instance, because they were given extra attention and prompting two pupils in a Year 4 and 5 lesson stayed focused on their work and made good progress in writing. Similarly, a small group of pupils in Year 3 benefited from being able to talk about their work and ask questions of a student. Teachers are beginning to make use of computers to encourage pupils to research and find things out for themselves.

99 The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator has identified the need to raise standards to the same high level as in English and mathematics. To this end science is targeted as a priority for the whole school. At present the school's approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous to move the subject forward fast enough.

ART AND DESIGN

100 Standards in art are high and the attainments of most seven and 11-year-olds are above what is expected for their age. These high standards have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection and are the result of good teaching. Teachers work through a broad programme of work in art and all pupils are introduced to a suitably wide range of experiences in different dimensions, techniques, tools and materials.

101 Teachers establish a good balance between; on the one hand, the use of art to develop pupils' understanding of other subjects and, on the other hand, work to increase their creativity, technical skills and knowledge of art itself. Throughout the school there are displays of paintings, pictures and collage work that illustrate pupils' work in science, history and geography. In reception classes, children paint portraits of themselves and draw pictures of their family in their work on gaining knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 use computers to generate art. For example, those in a class in Years 1 and 2 worked hard to draw symmetrical butterflies using a paint program that was familiar to them. They enjoyed the task and produced colourful and lively pictures on screen. A good example of art and literature combining forces was when pupils wrote eloquently about their favourite paintings and what it is that they liked about them. Comments about the abstract nature of Escher's work and the vibrant use of colour by Van Gogh show that older pupils have a good understanding of the artists and their work.

102 A strength of the teaching lies in the way teachers emphasise the importance of looking carefully at shape and form when drawing and sketching people. This was evident from the work of pupils in a Year 6 class who had paid good attention to detail in their sketches of various sportspeople in action. While they worked, their teacher maintained an informative dialogue with them, constantly encouraging and advising them how to reach high standards. A good strategy that improved pupils' efforts was the teacher's use of the best work to celebrate their achievements. These efforts start much earlier in the school; pupils in a class in Year 3 were taught similar techniques in their drawing and this helped them draw bodies that were in proportion. After two weeks of work, pupils in this class talked enthusiastically about how much better their pictures were and what they needed to do to improve as artists.

103 There are many good quality prints and paintings displayed around the school. In addition, the work of past and present pupils is displayed attractively in shared areas and classrooms. This makes the school a vibrant place in which to learn and provides a stimulus for discussions. For example, two boys from a junior class stopped to discuss briefly some painted faces on show in the shared area. They compared the characteristics of these faces with those that they had included in the clay models of faces that they had begun to make in art lessons.

104 The co-ordinator provides good support for the subject and practical assistance to other teachers. Collections of pupils' work show what has been achieved, though these are not always dated or annotated. The only gap in the subject is that there is no system of assessing or recording what skills pupils have learned. This is the next step needed to improve the school's provision and ensure that teachers have reliable evidence on which to base their comments in annual reports to parents.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105 Standards have been maintained in infant classes and seven-year-olds achieve standards that are typical for their age. Better teaching has led to higher standards in junior classes and 11-year-olds now also achieve standards that are typical for their age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

106 One of the main reasons for this success is good leadership by the co-ordinator. Following criticisms in the previous report, the co-ordinator has successfully re-organised the curriculum and almost doubled the time given to design and technology. Teachers now use a high quality scheme to plan work and all classes are taught two units each year. As a result, the curriculum now meets statutory requirements and pupils have a sound understanding of the designing, making and evaluating process by the time they are in Year 6. This was evident when one boy in Year 6 described to the teacher how he would alter the slippers he was making in order to improve their quality. Similarly, two girls said that they would change the materials they had chosen because it was difficult to sew and was not soft enough for slippers. Because they enjoy lessons in design and technology and have good relationships with their teachers, pupils are willing to accept advice when things go wrong and have another go. For example, one boy in Year 6 cheerfully unpicked all his stitching and devised a better method. Some pupils have to learn the hard way; another boy in Year 6 wrote despairingly to an agony aunt for advice. His moan was, *'I kept trimming my material until the slipper was so small that it wasn't worth it.'*

107 A second reason for the improved standards in Years 3 to 6 is that teaching is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers have benefited from training and the support of an adviser from the local education authority. Their increased knowledge and confidence is evident in the way that topics now build on skills that pupils have learned in the previous year. This ensures that they learn at a steady rate. For example, in Year 2, pupils used the skills of gluing, cutting and measuring that they have previously learned to make a template for a puppet. A good feature of the teaching in infant classes is that teachers have high expectations that pupils will try hard with their models and finish them to a good standard. This was evident in the good quality boats and vehicles that pupils had painted and decorated carefully.

108 Teachers are good at incorporating knowledge and skills from other subjects into pupils' work in design and technology. They provide many opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills. In infant classes, pupils label their designs of puppets and in junior classes pupils go on to provide clear step-by-step instructions of how models should be made. Teachers also ensure that pupils use their mathematical skills in their work. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used charts and graphs to illustrate their survey on sandwiches and inform their choice of fillings. There are also opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge of science in design and technology. Last year, pupils in Year 4 put their learning about electrical circuits to good use to make model lighthouses with working lights. The completed models worked well and were finished attractively. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to use digital cameras and other technology in their work on design and technology.

109 The co-ordinator has identified one gap in this aspect of teaching. Teachers are not yet using computers and information and communication technology in their work. However, there are plans for this to happen in the coming year, which puts the school in a good place to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Another area for development, also identified by the co-ordinator, is that there are at present no agreed procedures for assessing or recording what pupils can do. When combined with the fact that it is difficult to keep examples of pupils work and models this means that teachers do not always have convincing evidence of what pupils can do when it comes to writing reports or passing on information from one year to the next. There are plans to introduce a system that is linked with the scheme of work and try this out in the coming year. This puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve the quality of teaching and subsequently raise standards in this subject.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

110 In both subjects, seven and 11-year-olds achieve standards that are typical for their age. This is a different picture from the time of the previous inspection, when the attainment of 11-year-olds was judged to be above average. There are two reasons why this is so. First, in the past few years, schools have placed far greater emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and other subjects have been less of a priority. Second, pupils' books show that average and higher attaining pupils are often set the same work. This prevents the brightest pupils from achieving as well as they can.

111 Teaching is satisfactory, overall, and ensures that pupils learn at a steady rate as they move from one year to the next. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the topics they teach in geography and history and the methods they use are effective. For example, pupils in a Years 5 and 6 class increased their knowledge of famous Victorians by using the Internet to search for biographical information. Because this was a novel way of researching historical facts they were highly motivated to do well. In geography, teachers use maps and photographs to help pupils learn about their own locality. This works well as pupils are keen to spot places they know. The emphasis given to reading maps ensures that pupils identify features, such as rainforests and mountains, on maps of other countries. In Years 4 and 5 the teacher's imaginative use of artefacts gave pupils an increased understanding of archaeological evidence, or *things left behind*, as one pupil explained. In Year 6 the teacher raised pupils' interest to a very high level with pertinent questions, which made them think hard and look closely at a portrait of Queen Victoria's royal family. Pupils were fascinated by the teacher's development of their answers to why, for instance, the young boys of the family were wearing clothes, which appeared to be feminine.

112 A good feature of the teaching in both subjects is the use that teachers make of educational visits and visitors to the school. These provide valuable first-hand experiences that promote learning. For example, children in the foundation stage and Years 1 and 2, learned a tremendous amount about toys and games from the past when a visitor brought her own childhood toys to school. Similarly, visitors from a local museum provided infant pupils with first-hand evidence of a collection of Victorian toys and kitchen equipment, which they had been learning about in lessons. As a result, pupils were entranced and eager to learn more from their own research. In geography, the teacher in a Years 4 and 5 class used the knowledge pupils had gained from a recent fieldwork trip to a local river to build up their knowledge of how water is used in the home. A visit to a reservoir is planned to develop this work further.

113 Teachers make satisfactory links between geography, history and other subjects. For instance, the careful choice of literature helped pupils in a Year 6 lesson to increase their understanding about the contrasting lives of the rich and poor in Victorian times. In other years pupils learn about famous people, such as Grace Darling and events such as the great fire of London, through stories. Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills to find things out for themselves from sources such as books, photographs and maps.

114 They make good use of available help for pupils with special educational needs. For instance, in Year 6 a support assistant kept pupils focused on their work and they learnt at the same good rate as others. Teachers manage pupils well and form good relationships with them. As a result pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are good.

115 The only weakness in teaching in both subjects is that teachers do not always pitch work at the right level for pupils of different ability. In Years 1 and 2, teachers use too many worksheets, which limit the response of the most able pupils. In Years 3 to 6 the gap is most noticeable in pupils' workbooks when all pupils are set the same tasks. Consequently, the most able pupils often fail to achieve their full potential because the work is not difficult enough. The co-ordinator has identified this as an area for improvement in the next year and because the school is following a structured programme of work in both subjects it is in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

116 Standards have risen considerably since the previous inspection and are now typical for seven and 11-year-olds. The reasons for this are good leadership and management by the subject co-ordinator, better teaching, improved resources and a wider curriculum.

117 Most of the teaching is now satisfactory and some good lessons were seen during the inspection. As a result of national initiatives and training, teachers are far more confident at using computers than they were at the time of the previous inspection. This is evident in their increased knowledge of how to use the computers and in the way they provide clear instructions for pupils. For example, pupils in the Year 4 and 5 class were given very detailed step-by-step instructions to help them in their task of creating a fish tank with reflecting fish. The teacher also provided pupils with written instructions so that they could work through at their own pace.

118 A good feature of the teaching is that teachers are confident enough to give pupils the chance to explore and find things out for themselves. This was evident in all of the lessons seen and is one of the reasons why pupils are confident and keen to have a go when using computers. However, when things do not go as planned, teachers intervene to help pupils move on and prevent them from wasting their time. This happened in a good lesson, when pupils in a Year 6 class were set the task of exploring websites about famous people. Some found what they were looking for quite quickly but others found that the plethora of information about Shakespeare was far more than they had expected and they could not find simple biographical information about the writer. Teachers gave pupils sufficient time to explore and realise that they were not getting what they needed before suggesting that they try a different character.

119 Since the previous inspection the school has installed a suite of computers. This increase in resources has had a significant impact on pupils' learning. Because of the regular opportunities they get to use computers seven-year-olds are confident about using the programs and hardware. They know how to save, retrieve and print out their work and are familiar with the keyboard and many of its functions. When word processing they take a long time to type in text because most use only one finger on each hand. However, they are much quicker at manipulating objects onscreen by using a mouse and their drawings are lively and colourful. Older pupils have done a lot of catching up and have benefited from having more time to spend on computers. They are confident in using all aspects of information and communication technology and are beginning to consider why they would choose to use computers to share information rather than other methods. For example, in a good lesson, pupils in a class in Years 5 and 6 compared the advantages of drawing abstract pictures of animals by computer and by hand and decided that there were many more advantages to using a computer.

120 The curriculum for information and communication technology now meets statutory requirements. Following advice from the subject co-ordinator, teachers now use a good quality programme of work to plan lessons. This ensures that all aspects of the curriculum are now being taught and there are no gaps in teaching or learning. In addition, the co-ordinator keeps a close check on the curriculum by monitoring teachers' planning.

121 While teachers are good at assessing whether pupils need help or more practice to develop their skills, they do not have an agreed system for assessing and recording pupils' learning over a longer period. The co-ordinator rightly sees this as being the next step for development within the subject. The proposed plans for trying out a system of recording that is linked to the development of skills is likely to be useful in helping the school to move forward and continue to raise the quality of provision and standards.

MUSIC

122 Standards have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection and remain typical for seven and 11-year-olds. Pupils who have extra tuition to play musical instruments do well and make good progress.

123 Teaching is satisfactory and there is good tuition for pupils who choose to play an instrument. The methods used by teachers are effective. Teachers' own knowledge and talents are supported by an appropriate scheme of work. In the lessons seen during the inspection teachers followed this closely and it ensured that pupils learned at a steady rate. For example, in the class in Year 3 the teacher began the lesson by revising the value of musical notes and then introduced the symbol for a *rest*. The pupils then clapped a number of rhythms and ended the lesson by singing a song. This common format for the pupils' lessons means they gain a clear understanding of how their learning develops throughout the lesson. Teachers also provide opportunities for pupils to listen to and talk about music. As a result, younger pupils say which style of music they prefer to listen to and older pupils talk more knowledgeably about instruments, notation and composers. Because teachers use the correct technical vocabulary, pupils respond by using terms such as *pulse*, *beat* and *rhythm* when talking about music.

124 A good feature of the teaching is the way that teachers encourage pupils to think and talk about their learning. This happened in a lesson in Years 5 and 6, when pupils were asked to talk about the difficulties they encountered as they played different parts of the tune at the same time. They talked knowledgeably about the difficulties of keeping to their own part when their neighbour was playing a different part. Similarly, because they were given time to discuss their own performance, pupils in a Year 6 class were able to decide what they needed to do to improve.

125 Teachers value the comments and opinions of pupils and this ensures that they are not afraid to have a go and are keen to do well. This was evident when pupils in a class in Year 6 offered their views about the type of percussion instruments they might use to support the tune they had just heard.

126 The school is in a good position to be able to improve the quality of provision. Good management has brought about several changes to the curriculum since the previous inspection. Specialist tuition is now available and an increasing number of pupils are keen to take advantage of this. A lunchtime recorder group enriches the curriculum and pupils who attend make good progress. Pupils from each class were recently given the opportunity to perform to the rest of the school. Younger pupils sang about Noah and his ark and older pupils performed a variety of songs and musical themes that included songs

from the Second World War, which they had been studying as a history topic. This helps increase pupils' confidence and is a measure of the importance that the school gives to music in the curriculum. Teachers do not yet use computers often enough as a means of listening to, recording or composing music. This is an area that the co-ordinator recognises needs greater emphasis.

127 The only weakness to the school's provision is that there are no shared procedures for assessing or recording what pupils know and can do. This means that teachers do not have detailed records or evidence to help them make their annual reports to parents. The co-ordinator has identified this as the next step in improving the school's provision and subsequently raising standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128 Standards in gymnastics and dance are typical of seven and 11-year-olds. Good teaching and the many after school sports activities ensure that 11-year-olds do well at games. Most pupils swim the recommended distance by the time they leave the school.

129 Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and use tapes or broadcasts in a number of lessons. This ensures that pupils have music and story to support their learning in dance and gymnastics. This works well in that pupils develop a sense of rhythm and grace to their movements. However, the time allocated to lessons is not generally long enough to complete all of the tasks and have sufficient time for pupils to practise and refine their performance. This slows the pace of learning and prevents standards from being higher than they are.

130 Some good teaching was seen in lessons in Years 3 to 6. A common feature of these lessons was the high expectations that pupils would perform to the best of their abilities. For example, in a good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher's suggestions on travelling and balance were clear but not prescriptive. As a result the class responded with original ideas. These ideas were improved after watching others demonstrate.

131 One of the reasons why standards are not higher is that teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate their performance. For example, in some lessons, pupils were beginning to explore ideas such as heavy and light movements, but the teachers moved on before pupils could practise the sequences they had made up. As a result, many pupils lack simple skills. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 3, when many pupils struggled to sustain a marching beat whilst changing direction.

132 The many after-school sports clubs enrich the curriculum and the pupils who attend make good progress in developing tactical skills and learning the rules of games such as football and rugby. The school teams achieve considerable success because of the coaching of teachers, other staff and parents. One of the features of these teams is that pupils of all abilities get to represent their school. This raises their sense of pride in the school and their own sense of worth. As a result, pupils are very keen to talk about their sports achievements and younger ones say they look forward to when they can join in after-school activities.

133 The health and safety issues noted in the previous inspection report have all been resolved. The accommodation is sufficient to teach a widening curriculum. However, the recently appointed co-ordinator recognised the need for a fresh look at priorities in the subject. The curriculum has been broadened to include athletics and there are plans to

provide pupils in Year 6 classes with a more balanced programme of physical education. One of the areas identified as in need of development is that there is no agreed or shared system for assessing and recording pupils' skills. At present a proposed system is being considered by staff. This puts the school in a good position to be able to make the improvements necessary to keep a closer check on what pupils can do and ensure that work builds on skills they have already mastered.