

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST MICHAEL'S CE (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Flixton, Urmston

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106350

Headteacher: Mrs A Kimber

Reporting inspector: Ms L Thomas  
23574

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> October 2001

Inspection number: 196416

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Grove  
Flixton  
Urmston  
Manchester

Postcode: M41 6JB

Telephone number: 0161 748 3669

Fax number: 0161 912 2908

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Councillor T R Seddon

Date of previous inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23574	Ms L Thomas	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9843	Mrs S E Drake	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10144	Mrs P M Marriott	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language	

15474	Mr J Fairclough	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
-------	-----------------	----------------	---	--

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services

Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 1BB

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>28</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Michael's C of E Primary School serves the village community of Flixton in Trafford. It has 203 pupils on roll (4-11 years) and 34 children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. The school is organised into eight classes, including the nursery, and is about the same size as other primary schools nationally. The majority of pupils live close to the school. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is slightly above that for similar schools nationally. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (8.8 per cent) is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including statements (14 per cent) is well below the national average. One pupil has English as an additional language.

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

The school is very effective and provides very good learning opportunities for pupils. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are high in English, mathematics and science. Standards in all other subjects are at least satisfactory. However, there was insufficient evidence to assess standards in design and technology and geography in Key Stage 1. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school. The quality of teaching is good overall in Key Stage 2 with examples of very good and excellent practice. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They work hard and are helpful and considerate towards each other and to adults. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to ensuring that high standards are achieved and maintained. The school gives good value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides excellent educational direction to promote high standards and pupils' overall development.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teaching is good overall with examples of very good and excellent teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2.
- Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are high in Key Stage 2.
- Information and communications technology is delivered well and pupils attain good standards.
- Most teachers have high expectations of pupils resulting in very positive attitudes to learning.
- Assessment, recording and reporting procedures are of high quality.
- Pupils display exemplary behaviour in classrooms and around the school.
- Pupils' personal, moral and social development is very good.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.

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

- The unsatisfactory and poor teaching observed in Key Stage 1.
- The implementation of numeracy and literacy strategies in Key Stage 1.
- Consistency in the development of handwriting skills across the school.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in April 1997. All the key issues have been addressed. Standards in science are now high in Key Stage 2, and standards in design and technology are now in line with national expectations. A rigorous system of monitoring teaching and classroom management has been undertaken and this has improved the overall quality of teaching. Curriculum co-ordinators have clearly defined roles and most display good oversight of their subject areas. Assessment and recording procedures are securely in place in the nursery and are being effectively implemented. The 'caring, Christian ethos' reported in the last report remains securely in place but built into this now are high expectations that pupils reach their full learning potential. Improvement has been rapid and very effective since the appointment of the headteacher in January 1999.

### **STANDARDS**

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	B	B	B
mathematics	C	A	A	A
science	D	B	A*	A*

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

Results of 2000 tests show that by the time pupils leave the school, in comparison with all schools nationally, standards are above average in English, well above in mathematics and very high in science. The results in science are in the top 5 per cent nationally. In comparison with similar schools, standards are above average in English, well above in mathematics and very high in science. The improvement in standards achieved in these subjects over the last five years has been above the national trend. There are no significant differences in achievement by gender. The school has very effectively met the rigorous targets it set for English, mathematics and science. The school was awarded a DfEE Excellence Award for its results in the 2000 national tests.

By the end of Key Stage 1, national test results for 2000 show that standards in reading and writing are close to the national average. They are above the national average in mathematics but in the teacher assessments for science, they are well below.

Inspection findings are that pupils in the Foundation Stage attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning by age five and make good gains in learning. In Key Stage 1, present standards are in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science; in Key Stage 2, they are above in all three subjects. Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are average in Key Stage 1 and are above average in Key Stage 2. Standards in information and communication technology are now in line with national standards in both key stages; this shows very good progress in the subject since the last inspection. Standards in history are above national expectations in both key stages. In Key Stage 2, standards are above national expectations in art and design and music and in Key Stage 1, they are in line. In physical education, standards are in line with national expectations in both key stages. In Key Stage 2, standards are in line with national expectations in design and technology and geography. No work was seen in these subjects at this stage of the year in Key Stage 1.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to targets identified in their individual education plans.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, both in classrooms and about the school. Pupils are courteous, orderly and considerate.

Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils agree their own targets and are responsible for their learning. Relationships between staff and pupils and pupils themselves are very good.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils love coming to school and this contributes to the good standards they attain.

The positive attitudes to school that the headteacher and staff work so hard to foster ensure that pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. Pupils enjoy their lessons and show great interest. They learn to take responsibility for their actions.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is now a strength of the school in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. Although there remain some examples of unsatisfactory and poor teaching in Key Stage 1, there has been good overall improvement from the last inspection. However, there needs to be more consistency in the quality of teaching across all stages. The strengths in teaching are in the very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils and in the quality of their lesson planning and preparation. They share learning objectives with pupils and use data from assessments effectively to plan the next stages of learning. They work hard to make the lessons interesting and exciting for their pupils, who appreciate and respond well. As a result learning is good, pupils concentrate and work hard in class. The good quality of teaching contributes to the good gains that the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 pupils make in their learning. Teachers in Key Stage 2 teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. By contrast, Key Stage 1 teachers are insecure in some aspects of teaching literacy and numeracy. For example, some introductions are overly long and plenary sessions do not always serve a useful purpose.

Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs learn well because they are effectively supported in the classroom. Pupils who are above average attainers are well supported through high teacher expectations.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The overall quality and range of the curriculum are good. The provision for extra-curricular and out of school activities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to all aspects of the curriculum and, where necessary, receive good quality support from their teachers and teaching assistants. They are able to develop confidence and make good progress. The school complies with the special needs code of practice.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is one pupil with English as an additional language. She is fluent in English and has no difficulty in participating fully in all aspects of the curriculum.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. It is a strength of the school. The caring ethos is a significant feature of school life and is valued by all those who teach and learn there.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pupils feel safe and secure because of the very good levels of support for their general well being and in their learning.

The school works very well in partnership with parents. The information it provides for parents is very good. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school provides very good support and guidance for pupils to help them with their work and their personal development and offers equal opportunities to all.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent direction for the work of the school, setting high expectations of both pupils and staff. There is very good support from her deputy. Very good management has been a key factor in the school's improvement. Most curriculum co-ordinators carry out their roles effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are supportive, knowledgeable and fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Staff and governors analyse the school's performance effectively and have a very good overview of the strengths and weaknesses that need to be addressed.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school allocates resources well to meet the needs of pupils. Very good use is made of new technology to support and enhance pupils' learning. The principles of best value are applied and the school provides good value for money.

The school is well provided with suitably qualified and experienced teachers and teaching assistants to deliver the National Curriculum. Accommodation is generally satisfactory and is used well. Weaknesses include the use of part of the Year 2 classroom for access to two other classrooms and the uneven state of the playground surface. The accommodation is maintained to a high standard. Good quality displays celebrate pupils' achievements and serve to stimulate further effort. Very effective use is made of the good range of learning resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Children like coming to school and have positive attitudes to learning.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• Parents are made to feel welcome and are appreciative of the hard work of staff.</li> <li>• Parents are pleased with their children's attainment and progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is very good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• More extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• The number of children to be reduced in one class of 35 pupils.</li> </ul>

The school has very good relationships with its parents and maintains a very good partnership with them. They are very supportive of the school and appreciate its high expectations of work and behaviour. Arrangements for sharing information about their children's progress are very good. Some parents expressed concern about inconsistencies in the organisation of homework and some felt that insufficient extra-curricular activities are provided. Inspectors support the parents' positive comments, but judge that homework is used effectively by teachers to support and extend pupils' learning and that the school provides a wider range of extra activities than is the norm nationally. In relation to the large number of pupils in one class, inspection findings are that the teaching and learning in this class are of a consistently high quality and that all pupils make good progress across subjects.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 for the year 2000, the school's performance in reading and writing was close to the national average. In mathematics, the school's performance was above the national average and in the teacher assessments for science the school performed well below other schools nationally. Forty two per cent of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading, four per cent achieved this in writing and twenty nine per cent achieved the higher level in mathematics. When compared to schools in similar contexts, the school's performance was similar in reading and writing, above in mathematics and well below in teacher assessments in science. Over the last five years, the results have fluctuated but have generally remained in line with the national trend in reading and writing. They have improved at a faster rate than the national trend in mathematics. Results in English remain the same as they were at the time of the last inspection. They have improved in mathematics and fallen in science. Overall, many pupils in Key Stage 1, particularly the most able, are not achieving their true potential. This is a direct result of tasks set not always matching their needs.
2. At Key Stage 2, the National Curriculum test results in the year 2000 were above the national average in English, well above in mathematics and very high in comparison with the national average in science. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, the results were above in English, well above in mathematics and very high in science. Twenty eight per cent of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in English, forty one per cent in mathematics and sixty three per cent in science. The school's results have improved dramatically since the last inspection, when attainment in English and mathematics was in line with national average and attainment in science was below. The rate of improvement in the school's performance in the core subjects has been above the national trend. This is directly attributable to the improved quality of teaching, curriculum planning and very good systems of assessment that are now in place. There has been no significant difference in performance between boys and girls. The school was awarded an excellence award from the DfEE for the dramatic improvement in pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science in the 2000 National Tests.
3. The school has made its own analysis of its results in the 2001 national tests but these had not been analysed on a national basis at the time of the inspection. Early indications are that the results in all core subjects at Key Stage 1 show improvement. There may be a slight dip in the overall standards in Key Stage 2, reflecting the unusually large percentage of pupils with special educational needs in that cohort (approximately 30 per cent).
4. The baseline assessments made when children enter school at 3 and 4 years show that the general level of attainment is slightly above the national average. Pupils make good progress through the nursery and the reception classes and, by the end of the reception year, the vast majority have reached all the Early Learning goals and are beginning to work on national curriculum programmes of study. There has been an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged as satisfactory.

5. The good progress that children make in the Foundation Stage is not maintained in Key Stage 1 where the progress made is satisfactory only. Pupils make good progress in their work across Key Stage 2. The inspection evidence indicates that pupils in Year 2 are presently attaining average standards in English, mathematics and science and pupils in Year 6 are achieving good standards in these subjects. Pupils across the school are able to speak clearly and listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They become restless and inattentive only when teachers talk for too long during introductions to topics and do not involve the pupils sufficiently. This was evident in some lessons in Key Stage 1. Pupils attain satisfactory standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar in Key Stage 1 and they attain good standards in these aspects in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 1 write at satisfactory length and with reasonable accuracy. In Key Stage 2, pupils show good writing skills and they are able to write in different styles and for a variety of purposes. Overall standards in reading are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and are good in Key Stage 2. Pupils across the school enjoy reading and are able to talk confidently about the books they have read and their favourite authors.
6. Inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and are good in Key Stage 2. Pupils have a satisfactory grounding in number in Key Stage 1 and this is built upon and developed well in Key Stage 2 where pupils become adept at mental mathematics and are able to use their number skills effectively across other subjects. In science most pupils can organise their investigations and record their findings systematically. Key Stage 1 pupils have a satisfactory grasp of scientific facts about physical and life processes and of materials and their properties and pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of these aspects of science. In Key Stage 2, pupils have also a good understanding of how to set up scientific experiments and are able to record their findings in a variety of ways.
7. Very good improvement has been made in information and communications technology since the last inspection when standards were below national expectations. Over the last two years a computer suite has been established and a teacher given the responsibility of overseeing the subject whilst also training and supporting colleagues. She has been successful in ensuring that information and communications technology is now an integral part of the school's curriculum. As a result, pupils in all classes have made very good progress in the subject and are now meeting national expectations, with several pupils showing above average standards in the subject.
8. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and, as a result of the good support they receive, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils achieve well and make good progress towards the targets set for them. This is because tasks in the classroom are planned effectively by the teacher to meet their needs and the assistants provide good support. The quality of individual educational plans is good. Learning targets are detailed, achievable and specific in the short term. Pupils are supported effectively in classrooms and this enhances their confidence and self-esteem.
9. A key factor in improving attainment across the school, particularly in Key Stage 2, is the effective collection and analysis of data about standards. The school makes good use of this analysis and the progress or lack of progress of individuals, groups and classes is tracked effectively. Closely linked to this are the very good systems

for target setting in most subjects. Teachers assess learning and progress at regular intervals, and pupils have individual targets to achieve. As a result, pupils are well motivated and the vast majority make good progress in their learning.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are very good and have all improved since the time of the previous inspection. The overwhelming majority of pupils like attending the school and are very keen to take part in all that it has to offer them. When asked, they say that a major reason for this positive approach is that other people, both pupils and staff, are friendly and helpful. In lessons, pupils pay very good attention to what their teachers have to say and try very hard to follow any guidance. There is almost always a sea of hands to volunteer answers or help, and pupils are generally very good about not calling out for their turn, confident that they will be given their chance at another time. In a very good assembly taken by the headteacher, again, many pupils volunteered as helpers before they even knew what they were offering to do. The nurturing atmosphere within the school gives pupils the confidence that they will be able to carry out any task that they are given.
11. Pupils consistently behave very well and, even where the quality of teaching is less strong, show remarkable patience and self-discipline. Pupils are helpful and courteous. They are always ready with a smile, and stand back to let others through rather than push themselves forward. From the youngest children in the Foundation Stage upwards, pupils treat resources and the accommodation with respect; they move around in a very orderly manner and are good about tidying up after themselves. In the most recent academic year, it was necessary to exclude one pupil for one fixed period in order to ensure the health and safety of everyone. The school followed appropriate procedures and the action taken has proved effective.
12. An outstanding feature of St Michael's, and one which makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning, is the very good quality of relationships between everyone concerned with the school. Pupils respond very well to the way in which teachers value their contributions and know them as individuals and they, in turn, show respect for others. Pupils of different ages, abilities and ethnicity work and play together very well. In a Year 3 English lesson, one pupil automatically adjusted the acetate on the overhead projector in order to make life easier for another who was working on it. In a mathematics lesson in Year 5, the largest class in the school, pupils at every table immediately and unasked, offered their whiteboard sponges to those who did not have them. They worked together very well in pairs when converting fractions to decimals and, in the whole-class parts of the lesson, showed appreciation of everyone's efforts, whatever their ability. Their very good relationships with the teacher and each other meant that they were prepared to have a go at answering questions, even if not entirely confident that they were right. They listened very well to both the teacher's and other pupils' explanations in order to move their learning on.
13. Teachers trust pupils to behave sensibly and know that they can rely on them to co-operate. They are, therefore, happy to offer them many opportunities to show independence and contribute to the community. Pupils thrive on such treatment and mature into dependable, self-confident young people. Older pupils look after and play with younger ones at break-times. Pupils look after the library; help visitors find their way; successfully move a trolley laden with musical instruments from the hall into their classroom; collaborate well when working and use their initiative as, for example, did Year 6 pupils when making observations of light reflected on

different surfaces. They talk confidently with adults and act as good ambassadors for their school when, for instance, going to the swimming pool or seeking support for their millennium garden. Pupils from St Michael's are welcomed by the schools to which they transfer because of their mature attitudes towards work and other people.

14. Levels of attendance and punctuality are very good, and above the national average, with no incidence of unauthorised absence. Few pupils are taken on holiday during term times and those who are ill swiftly return to the school that they enjoy attending.
15. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to the school and are well integrated within the school community. The relationships between pupils and adults are very good, and pupils gain in confidence and make good progress as they move through the school.

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

16. In the last inspection report, teaching was described as being satisfactory or better in three quarters of lessons observed and good in one quarter of these. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in one quarter of lessons. Although there was some unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1, it was less than that found in Key Stage 2. Weak teaching was mainly characterised by poor classroom organisation and an over-reliance on group work. The resulting noise from the number of activities taking place simultaneously posed too many distractions for pupils.
17. There has been improvement in all these areas. Very good improvement has taken place in Key Stage 2, where the quality of teaching and learning now ranges from satisfactory to excellent with no unsatisfactory teaching. Good improvement in the Foundation Stage has raised the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning ranges from poor to good but is satisfactory overall.
18. The improvements have come about as a result of the effective monitoring of lessons by the headteacher and deputy. As a result, whereas twenty five per cent of the teaching was good at the time of the last report, sixty nine per cent is now good, twelve per cent is very good, and four per cent is judged to be excellent. The outcomes of the monitoring have been shared with teachers to help and support them to improve their practice. The willingness of most teachers to listen to advice and their high levels of commitment have also been key factors in the process of improvement. Parents indicated in their questionnaire returns and in the pre-inspection meeting that they believe the teaching to be good in the school. Inspection evidence shows that teaching is indeed a strength of the school, but it is not consistently of a high standard across all classes. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has dropped from twenty five per cent to eight per cent since the last inspection.
19. In the Foundation Stage classes, the teachers establish good routines to develop confidence and independence in the children. Expectations are high and the children work hard to achieve the targets that are set for them. This sets good foundations for later learning. There is a strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills in English and mathematics and this leads to good progress in early reading and number work.

20. In Years 1 and 2, although most of the teaching is satisfactory, the small number of unsatisfactory and poor lessons observed are a cause for concern. The pace in such lessons is very slow and monotonous. Pupils become restless and bored and this impedes the quality of their learning. Literacy and numeracy lessons do not follow national guidelines and too often the tasks set are not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of all pupils. There is an over-emphasis on work-sheet activities that do not extend the learning of pupils, in particular the more able. There is not a satisfactory level of interaction between teachers and pupils, and this leads to most pupils sitting passively, not being required to offer extended answers to teachers' questions and not encouraged to participate in class and group discussions.
21. In Years 3 to 6 the overall quality of teaching is good with several examples of very good and excellent teaching. Throughout Key Stage 2, teachers set challenging learning targets, ensuring hard work and sustained concentration. Very good relationships exist between teachers and pupils, and teacher expectations of pupils are very high. Very good use is made of exposition and demonstration at the start of lessons. All tasks are planned to build on prior attainment and this contributes to the good progress made by all pupils, irrespective of ability. Pupils are encouraged to think things out for themselves, to use resources effectively and to collaborate with others. An excellent example, in a Year 5 science lesson, aimed to develop pupils' understanding of how the pitch and loudness of instruments can be changed. A pupil played a violin solo to demonstrate how the strings can be manipulated to produce various sounds. Pupils engaged in animated discussion of what factors would change the sound and pitch of the instrument. They continued predicting and testing their hypotheses on a sound board. Good secondary sources extend their learning by challenging them to find further information in books and present their findings to the class. Very effective cross-curricular links with English, mathematics, music and design and technology were established. The pace, rigour, variety and challenge within the lesson were of very high quality. Pupils' responses during the lesson displayed a great eagerness to learn and were of very good quality.
22. All teachers in Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of the National Strategies for developing literacy and numeracy skills, and effective teaching and delivery were observed in all classes. The quality of marking is good. The teachers' comments are helpful in taking pupils' learning forward. Homework is effectively planned and provides an appropriate introduction to new learning or suitable reinforcement and extension tasks.
23. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and is generally undertaken by class-teachers, with support from the special needs co-ordinator and assistants. Teachers are familiar with the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs and follow correct procedures. Targets are specific and teaching appropriately focused. Adults who work with pupils who have special educational needs have very good relationships with the pupils and teachers. They are able to work in conjunction with teachers to raise standards and to ensure that all pupils gain full benefit from their lessons.

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

24. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and statutory requirements are fully met. All pupils, including those with special educational needs,

have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2 and are generally satisfactory in Key Stage 1.

25. At the previous inspection it was found that not enough attention was given to ensuring progression in pupils' development of construction skills in design and technology and that, at the end of Key Stage 2, mathematics received too little curriculum time. Also information technology did not have a secure place in the curriculum. These issues have all been resolved successfully. The balance of time between subjects is now appropriate. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are given a higher priority in timetabling arrangement, whilst the other subjects receive a suitable amount of time. Information and communication technology is now an integral part of the curriculum and is used to enhance and extend the work across subjects as well as being taught in its own right.
26. The school has adopted schemes of work based on national guidelines in most subjects. In Key Stage 2, planning for lessons is very good. An overall plan shows when different aspects of each subject will be taught, and this framework works effectively and consistently through the key stage. Skills are developed progressively from term to term and planning is well matched to the age and ability of pupils in each class. In Key Stage 1, the planning is generally satisfactory but does not include the same helpful detail and structure as the Key Stage 2 planning.
27. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in Key Stage 2, where many links with other subjects are created. In Key Stage 1 the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is unsatisfactory. The organisation and structure of lessons do not follow national guidelines and the activities planned for pupils lack interest and challenge. Links with other subjects are tenuous and not well planned.
28. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils take a full and active part in all activities. The school's policy for equal opportunities is well understood by staff and pupils and is implemented effectively throughout the school. All activities provided are accessible to both boys and girls. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and meets their needs well. The guidance in the code of practice is followed effectively. All pupils with special needs have individual education plans that contain relevant targets. The work set is well matched to their abilities and they follow the full curriculum in all classes. There is only one pupil with English as an additional language. She is fluent in English and takes a full part in all lessons. The school's provision for average and higher attaining pupils is also good. Their progress is tracked at regular intervals and, when occasionally the rate of progress slows down, this is quickly identified and support systems are put in place to rectify matters. As a result, pupils across the school show an eagerness to learn, are well motivated, and make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2.
29. A very good range of extra-curricular activities extends pupils' interests. Seasonal sports are offered, including football, netball, rounders and skittle ball and, in addition, choir, recorder, computer and a faith club meet. A number of well planned visits out of school enrich pupils' learning in history and geography. Visitors to the school support and enhance pupils' learning in religious education and history. Residential visits for older pupils offer challenge and adventure as well as developing skills in information and communication technology.

30. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. These aspects are taught in assemblies, circle time and as part of separate lessons. Every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' self-awareness, confidence, and independence. Drugs awareness and sex education are handled sensitively and linked appropriately to work in science. Visiting health professionals such as the school nurse support the provision for health education. The school is presently developing a 'Healthy School' project that is looking at all aspects of healthy living.
31. Links with the community and other schools are good. The local church plays an important role in the school's curriculum. The vicar takes a weekly assembly and organises a lunch-time Faith Club, and the church's organist often plays the piano at assemblies and music lessons and helps with the school choir. Local sports coaches have provided coaching in football, basketball and rugby for pupils. Parents are involved in their children's learning through the well-established homework systems that operate in the school. Homework is structured clearly to make sure that parents are aware of the work to be done. Grandparents help in school with shared reading activities and their support enables pupils to develop better skills of expression and fluency. Good links with a nearby 'Beacon' school include exchange visits by staff and joint in-service sessions that have served to extend and enhance teachers' professional development. Satisfactory links have been established with the secondary school to which pupils transfer at eleven.
32. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. There has been an improvement in the provision from the last inspection report, when it was judged to be good. Spirituality is developed well through assemblies, in which clear messages and appropriate songs and prayers are used to reinforce the ethos of the school. Circle time during lessons is used effectively to discuss feelings about world issues and international disasters as well as enabling pupils to reflect on the consequences of their own actions. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers enable opportunities for quiet moments when individual pupils can discuss personal issues.
33. The school has very good systems in place to ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and these contribute effectively to the very good provision for pupils' moral development. An award system, based on a set of 'Golden Rules', is used consistently by all teachers and support staff. The rules are displayed prominently in classrooms and in the main areas of the school. These encourage pupils to adopt positive attitudes and behaviour within the school community. An 'Achievement Tree' in the school entrance celebrates the awards that are received by individual pupils for their good behaviour in school. Pupils are encouraged to understand the consequences of their actions and to contribute to the welfare of others in the school.
34. There is very good provision for pupils' social development. All members of staff are trained in relationship management with pupils and this includes the lunchtime supervisors. Opportunities are provided during lessons and other times for co-operative and collaborative work. Older pupils are given responsibilities for supervising corridor areas and for caring for younger pupils during lunch-times. All pupils are given responsibilities for carrying and setting out equipment during lessons, for care of the library and for tidying up at the end of activities. Pupils are encouraged to adopt social skills that develop respect for others. As a result, they are polite and courteous to one another and to adults.

35. Church links develop pupils' awareness of Christian culture, and religious education lessons enable them to widen their understanding of other world faiths. Many subjects, such as music, art, history and geography, enhance pupils' understanding of their own culture, past cultures and cultures in other places. Pupils in Year 5, as part of their study of Hinduism, recently organised their own Hindu festival of dance, music, art and writing. Discussion with pupils, their written contributions and photographic evidence show that the event was very successful in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of another major world faith and their ability to compare and contrast similarities and differences between Hinduism and Christianity.

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

36. The school provides its pupils with very good care and support that help both their personal and academic development. Parents praise the way in which all pupils, from first entering the nursery, are helped to reach their potential and develop at their own speed. They feel that the school prepares pupils well for their transfer to secondary school. The headteacher has a large number of letters from past pupils, thanking the school for the help and support that they received.
37. The procedures to ensure child protection are good. There has been recent training for staff and any confidential information is kept suitably secure. The school takes appropriate steps to ensure the health and safety of all who work there, but the policy is outdated and the school has not conducted statutory risk assessments. The surface of the playground is uneven and gritty, which contributes to the number of grazes and bumps that pupils suffer at break-times. There are good arrangements for the administration of first aid, and to cater for individual pupils' medical needs.
38. Staff work together very effectively to promote good attendance and behaviour. Registers are well maintained and parents have been well trained to send their children to school regularly and inform staff of any reasons for absence. After much consultation and training, towards the end of the most recent academic year, the school introduced the system of 'Golden Rules', based on morality and on showing respect for everyone, and they guide the procedures relating to behaviour and discipline. Staff operate the system with consistency, making appropriate reference to the rules when necessary, and all pupils know exactly how they are expected to behave and the consequences of both good and less good behaviour. The school works closely with parents should there be any cause for concern, and closely monitors the behaviour of those who may need extra support in this area. The outcome of this child-friendly yet highly structured approach is a happy school in which all members of the community are valued and good quality learning takes place.
39. At the time of the previous inspection the school was beginning to establish its procedures relating to assessment but had not yet succeeded in putting them into effective, daily practice. Over the past two years the school has focused hard on improving procedures and these are now very good. Senior staff carefully analyse the results of national tests on a whole-school basis and adapt school practice according to the conclusions that they draw. For example, an hour each week has been timetabled for older pupils to build up their confidence in free writing. The headteacher has established a very simple, yet highly effective, method of tracking individual progress as pupils move through the school. This makes it crystal clear who is performing less well or better than anticipated in relation to their previous level of work. The careful recording and monitoring of each pupil's success in

annual national and other tests, as well as of their work on a more frequent basis, leads teachers to highlight those who may need more extension work or greater support in lessons. All pupils currently have targets in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, and they can talk about what they are doing in order to help them achieve these. In most lessons, teachers skilfully use all the information that they know about pupils' ability and attainment to set them work at a suitable level of difficulty; to question their understanding, and to encourage them to think about what they are learning. This good use of the available data, which starts in the nursery, ensures that pupils make good progress in their work.

40. Teachers also systematically record pupils' personal development and use the information to give pupils the support that is appropriate to their needs. Teachers bring together the knowledge gained through their evaluations to build up a good all-round picture of each pupil as an individual. Parents and pupils greatly appreciate the care that the school offers its pupils. It is to the credit of staff that they neatly combine formal assessment with their personal intuition and sensitivity in order to provide the high levels of care that enable pupils to develop into self-confident, mature young people.
41. Pupils with special educational needs are regularly assessed and their work monitored on a daily basis. The results of this monitoring are used to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

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

42. The great majority of parents hold very positive views about the school. They consider that the partnership with them has strengthened since the time of the previous inspection, when it was judged to be good, and inspectors, too, now consider that it is very good. Parents are particularly pleased that their children like school and are expected to work hard. They consider that teaching is of good quality and that the school is well led and managed. They express much appreciation for the commitment of staff and for the good care that they take of individuals, which results in a friendly community where everyone looks after each other. They are less impressed by the inconsistent amounts of homework that they feel their children receive, and the range of extra-curricular activities that are on offer. Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments, but judge that homework is used effectively to promote pupils' learning and that the school provides a wider range of extra activities than is the norm nationally.
43. The school keeps parents very well informed about events and their children's progress. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report are both very readable documents that provide a good picture of the ethos and expectations of the school. They place much emphasis on the importance of school and parents working closely together in the best interests of the pupils. Most teachers now provide parents with useful information about what their children will be learning in the coming half-term, and how they can help with homework. They also display homework information clearly on classroom windows or doors so that parents have good opportunity to know what is expected. The information contained in pupils' annual progress reports is of very good quality. Teachers give a very clear outline of precisely what the pupil can and cannot do, clarify whether he or she is working above, at or below the level expected for their age, and give sharply focused targets for the pupil to work towards. This high quality information relates to all subjects of the curriculum and also to children in the Foundation Stage.

44. Parents respond well to the school's efforts to include them as partners in their children's education. Many parents work and so find it difficult to provide voluntary help during the day, but they are very supportive about listening to their children read or helping with other homework. A small number help with, for instance, after-school sports or accompanying pupils to the swimming pool or on educational visits. They attend in large numbers parents' meetings to discuss their children's work, and ensure that their children attend school regularly, punctually and in a suitable frame of mind for learning. A few stalwart supporters run the 'Friends' organisation but a larger number actually attend events and thus help the school both to raise funds, for example to furnish the computer suite, and to maintain the community, 'village school' atmosphere which is one of the hallmarks of St Michael's.
45. The school has very good links with parents of children who have special educational needs and keeps them well informed about the progress of their children.

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

46. The educational direction that the headteacher provides for the development of the school is of excellent quality. Her vision of the school as a caring community dedicated to offering pupils high quality learning opportunities has been conveyed clearly to staff, parents and governors. She is very well supported by an able, well-qualified and very competent deputy who shares her vision. Together they have succeeded in raising most teachers' expectations of what the school can achieve. They have established a management framework where most teachers are clear about their role. Since her appointment in January 1999, the headteacher, as a result of very effective monitoring of teaching and attainment, has identified the key areas for development and put in place appropriate and effective strategies to bring about improvement. For example, she became aware through the monitoring of the National Curriculum test results that there was need to improve pupils' ability to plan and organise their writing. As a result, a 'Free Writing' hour has been inserted into the weekly timetable of older classes. She has devised rigorous, but easily implemented, assessment procedures that clearly highlight the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. This has subsequently led to effective strategies being put in place for setting individual targets and tracking pupils' progress through the school. These are now being implemented effectively in most classes. An LEA monitoring team was also invited to the school to observe and evaluate the quality of teaching. Oral and written feedback was provided for each teacher and, as a consequence, in-service needs were identified and relevant training provided.
47. The governing body is well informed about the work of the school and has a good range of experience and expertise amongst its members. Most have taken advantage of training to ensure that their knowledge and understanding of national and school-based issues are up to date. There is an effective committee structure. Through regular visits to the school, discussions with the headteacher and staff and attendance at training sessions, individual governors have a sharp awareness of the school's strength and weaknesses and the challenges it faces. All statutory responsibilities, apart from the oversight of risk assessment procedures, have been met.
48. Most subject co-ordinators provide good leadership in their subjects. They produce the long-term planning for each subject, give useful advice and guidance to teachers and monitor the medium and short-term planning to ensure that the coverage is satisfactory. They ensure that suitable targets are set for the

development of the work and they have good oversight of the quality of activities provided and standards achieved. The exceptions are in the co-ordination and leadership of English and design and technology. In these subjects, the co-ordinators do not have satisfactory oversight of the work through both key stages. It is as a result of the good quality teaching and the good systems of planning and assessment procedures that the senior management have put in place that the work develops well at Key Stage 2 despite the lack of subject leadership in these subjects.

49. The school development plan is of very good quality. It is a very effective tool for school improvement, especially the raising of standards. It contains specific objectives, delegated responsibilities, is carefully costed and has clear success criteria.
50. There is an appropriate match of teachers and staff to the demands of the curriculum. There are very good systems for the induction of new staff and the two newly qualified teachers who joined the school last year are now confident and effective members of its teaching staff. Teaching assistants are generally deployed well and provide high quality support in the nursery, reception, Years 1 and 2 classes. The performance management process is clearly understood and has been introduced successfully. It is linked effectively to school development planning and to the professional development of teachers.
51. There is good understanding and application of the principles of best value, and the school gives good value for money. The management of day-to-day routines by the school secretary is of very high quality.
52. Since the last inspection, the open-plan areas in Key Stage 1 have been re-adapted to form closed classrooms. The head-teacher and staff report an improvement in noise levels, pupils' behaviour and their ability to concentrate on tasks. The overall standard of the accommodation is now good, although there are a few matters of concern. For example, the access from the school building to the reception and Year 1 classrooms is through the Year 2 classroom. This poses some distractions when the teacher is talking or when pupils are concentrating on their tasks. At present, there is no suitable play area for reception pupils but the school states that money has been set aside to start the work at the end of the inspection. In addition, the general playground area is uneven and needs to be re-surfaced. In most classrooms and areas, space is used well and pupils are able to work effectively as individuals and within small and large groups. Around the school there are very good quality displays, covering the full range of subjects, which celebrate pupils' achievements and stimulate further learning. The Millennium Garden, set up by Year 6 pupils who have now left the school, is a very attractive and useful learning resource. It is very clear that everyone at the school, including caretaking and cleaning staff, take great pride and care in their building and look after it very well.
53. The level and use of resources across subjects are good. The school is now becoming increasingly effective in using computers and other technology. The setting up of a computer suite in April 2000 has proved a major asset to the school's resources.
54. The school is very successful in providing educational opportunities for all of its pupils so that they can fully develop their potential. It provides a secure and stimulating learning environment in which all pupils are equal.

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

55. To improve the school further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) devise strategies to improve the unsatisfactory and poor teaching in Key Stage 1; (paragraphs 16, 18, 27, 73, 77, 83, 91)
- (2) provide further in-service training for Key Stage 1 teachers to ensure successful implementation of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy. (paragraphs 27, 77, 83)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should consider including the following minor issues in its action plan:

- (1) the governing body should ensure that it fulfils all statutory requirements relating to risk assessments; (paragraphs 37, 47)
- (2) ensure a consistent approach in the teaching of handwriting skills across classes; (paragraph 76)
- (3) undertake re-surfacing of the playground area when funds become available. (paragraphs 37, 52)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	19	11	3	1	0
Percentage	4	25	40	23	6	2	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 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)	26	203
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
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	8	16	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	21	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (94)	92 (94)	92 (91)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	3
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	22	22	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (94)	92 (91)	79 (97)
	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	15	17	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	14
	Girls	15	15	17
	Total	27	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (76)	91 (90)	97 (86)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	13
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	27	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (67)	88 (75)	91 (81)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	170
Any other minority ethnic group	3

*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	1	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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Average class size	29

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	26

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	386,683
Total expenditure	389,191
Expenditure per pupil	1,685
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,987
Balance carried forward to next year	10,479

### **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	2

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	229
Number of questionnaires returned	132

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	38	6	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	51	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	52	8	0	5
The teaching is good.	52	47	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	57	4	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	26	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	29	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	45	6	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	68	30	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	40	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	39	21	2	13

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

56. Since the last inspection, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved and is now good. Improvements include the quality of teaching and learning which is now good overall with some examples of very good and excellent teaching. The introduction of base line assessment and very thorough tracking systems for all children have been a major contributory factor in the improvement of provision. Other important factors are the good working relationships and professional liaison between nursery and reception staff; the re-organisation of the approved curriculum areas for children in the Foundation Stage, and the much improved provision for information and communication technology. Outdoor play facilities remain restricted for children in the reception class, but money is now available and work is scheduled to start immediately after the inspection. The nursery and reception classes are very well organised and managed. The nursery has very good resources but in the reception class the resources are only adequate. The good and very good teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning.
57. Children enter the nursery in the term after their third birthday. Admission to nursery is staggered over a two-week period beginning with part-time admission and building to some full-time in agreement with parents. Children spend one year in the nursery class and then transfer to the reception class where they spend another year. Initial assessment records show that most children enter the school with acquired skills, knowledge and understanding that are slightly above those of children of a similar age. All make good progress. Children achieve well in all areas of learning and the very good experiences provided in the Foundation Stage ensure that by the time they start in Year 1 they will be working well within the National Curriculum. Very good assessment procedures are in place. These enable staff to plan suitable programmes of work and set targets for improvement for all children, including those with special educational needs.

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

58. Priority is given to the personal and emotional needs of young children and they achieve well. Most children will exceed the early learning goals in this area by the time they leave the reception class. This shows very good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching and provision in the Foundation Stage. Children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. They form good relationships, they look after themselves responsibly and behave very well. Children have positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy coming to school. They work co-operatively and collaboratively in various outdoor play activities and role-play settings. For example, in the reception class children speak and listen to each other carefully as they pretend to be fire-fighters and put out a fire. Nursery children share amicably the balancing equipment, pedal trikes, and scooters. All children take responsibility for personal hygiene, and most children put on aprons independently when working with paint, glue and water. Both boys and girls learn the importance of sharing and taking turns when playing with construction toys. They listen attentively to adults and enjoyed listening and asking questions of a Fire-fighter who visited their classroom to talk about his job and the tasks involved in putting out fires. The children concentrate well on tasks such as singing 'Five Little Ducks' in the nursery, and in reading and mathematics in the reception class. Appropriate classroom resources are suitably placed and easily available for use. Teachers and

nursery nurses actively encourage children to play well together and to show consideration to each other.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

59. Almost all the children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class. A few reception children are already working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. Children interact well with others, speak confidently, and take turns in conversation, as is seen when they respond to dinner and attendance registration. They listen attentively to stories for an appropriate length of time and enjoy hearing and using sounds, such as rhyming words in story-books. Children in the nursery discuss and 'read' the pictures of books with the teacher, who develops knowledge and skills by relating the story to real life props such as 'flasks keeping drinks hot'. Children in the reception class refine their listening skills by listening to and identifying the sounds of objects in a bag, matching the object to the initial sound and remembering two things from each bag. Staff use talk to good effect. The use of language is developed well. Most children in the nursery are at a very early stage in their literacy skills. They learn to distinguish print and understand that it carries meaning. In the reception class, children understand that print carries meaning and that English is read from left to right. They recognise words in familiar stories such as 'Jake the snake' in 'I want my Mum'. The higher attaining children can re-tell and sequence the story effectively. By the time they leave the reception class, most children are within the early stages of reading and some can read early reading books confidently. In their writing, children develop their fine motor skills and write purposefully, using the many areas provided for them. For example, in the nursery children trace and over-write the teacher's writing and progress in the reception class to over-writing letters and copying sentences. Many children can write their names and copy-write sentences. Supplies of paper, pencils, pens and crayons are readily available in all areas of the classroom and children use them well.
60. The quality of teaching is good and examples of excellent and very good teaching were seen. This helps children achieve well in communication, language, literacy, reading writing and handwriting skills. Elements of the Literacy Framework are well used by staff. Children get off to an early but appropriate start in their literacy skills and make good gains in their learning. A commercial scheme is used well to introduce children to reading activities and letter sounds. A good understanding is developed through the use of well-known stories and rhymes, such as 'I want my Mum'. Good opportunities are given for early writing skills. For example, children in 'the writing centre', wrote an invitation to a party. Careful sequencing of tasks is used to develop children's knowledge and understanding, as with the use of a puppet 'Jake the Snake'. Such activities encourage listening skills and develop children's ability to sequence and re-tell a story. Children listen with humour as the teacher reads the story incorrectly, and they correct her mistakes enthusiastically.

## **Mathematical development**

61. The vast majority of children are on course to achieve the expected standard by the time they leave the reception class. A few higher attaining children are already working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. In relation to their level of initial assessment, they are likely to have made very good gains in their learning by the time they leave the reception class because of the good and very good teaching and interesting numeracy learning experiences provided. Children develop mathematical skills through effective use of practical activities, number rhymes, games and songs. Children thread beads and use number games to gain an understanding of the properties of number. Children in the nursery learn to count to five, for example when singing 'Five Little Ducks'. In the reception class they confidently count to 10. They sing 'Ten Fat Sausages' and experience role-play activities to support this number rhyme by pretending to fry sausages in a pan while singing the rhyme. They are acquiring a sense of the size of a number and its position in a sequence of numbers through effective use of a number line. The teacher very effectively develops children's knowledge and understanding of odd and even numbers and of place of numbers 1-10 on the line. All children enthusiastically join in all activities and show confidence in their learning. They investigate the properties and vocabulary of numbers, and mentally give numbers a correct sequence, both forwards and backwards to and from 10. They work independently in the 'Clothes Shop' calculating the cost of various items. Children identify basic shapes and make 'bead snakes' using longer and shorter vocabulary with confidence. They find long and short snakes in the sand. They explore capacity through appropriate sand and water play and make effective use of out-door provision.
62. The quality of teaching is good in both classes. This helps children to achieve well in counting and calculating, shape, space and measure. Systematic provision allows children to progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematics. The curriculum is developed through the use of topics, stories, games and imaginative play. In the reception class, elements of the National Strategy are used to very good effect. For example, in a mental and oral session, the very fast pace underpinned children's learning. The children rapidly counted forwards and backwards in threes from any given number between 1 and 10. Adult provision is professional and supportive for all children and praise is frequently used to raise self-esteem and encourage learning. Nursery nurses are well deployed and contribute very well to the good progress made in lessons. This seamless provision between all members of staff enhances the learning of all children.

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

63. Nursery children are on course to achieve the level expected for this area of learning by the time they leave the reception class. They enter the nursery with a satisfactory general knowledge and all make good progress in their work. Planning shows that work is progressively made harder but is yet kept appropriate for all children. They have many opportunities to experience work in science, for example through an investigation of what plants need to grow and thrive. In the nursery, through the provision of a range of fruit for their daily 'snack', children are introduced to similarities and differences of taste. They develop an awareness of 'mini beasts' when searching in the bark and leaves in an investigation tray. Links with literacy and numeracy are well developed. Children in the reception class learn about the work of Fire-fighters through the theme, 'How people help you'. They use a laptop computer effectively to watch images of the work of a firefighter. They ask questions

sensibly. Opportunities are given for children to improve their literacy and numeracy skills by using appropriate computer programs. They develop their skills of using the mouse and cursor both independently and with the support of adults.

64. The quality of teaching and provision is good. This impacts positively on standards in exploration, investigation, designing and making and ICT skills. Themes have appropriate objectives and interesting purposeful activities, which clearly reflect the learning goals. Adults ensure that children remain interested and concentrate by the good pace to the lessons and the changes in activity for all children. Resources are easily available to support children in their learning.

### **Physical development**

65. The vast majority of the children are on course to achieve the standards expected for this area of learning by the time they leave the reception class. They are acquiring good skills in movement and are developing a sense of space and body awareness. For example in a reception class lesson children skipped and hopped around the hall making good use of the available space. They controlled their movements well and moved with enjoyment. Children use tools and equipment with increasing dexterity. Planning shows that there are many opportunities for children to experience work both in-doors and out-doors, in physical education games and creative activities. Most children move with confidence. This was demonstrated when reception children showed very good concentration when moving in and out of different coloured hoops in the school hall. They moved with confidence and displayed good physical control. Their awareness of space, themselves and of others was very good. By using wheeled toys their sense of space and awareness is further developed. Children show an increasing dexterity when using crayons, pencils and paintbrushes, by using cutlery when they eat, and by rolling, squeezing, pushing and kneading malleable materials such as play dough. They show sound control when using scissors. Manipulative skills are developed well.
66. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching seen in both classes. Planning is good. It covers all elements of learning and gives opportunities for children to experience a feeling of being healthy and active and a sense of well-being. Children have positive attitudes to their learning and gain in confidence as they move through the Foundation Stage. This is supported through the very good relationships between staff and children and between the children themselves.

### **Creative development**

67. Children are on course to meet the standards expected for this area of learning by the time they leave the reception class. They are encouraged to express their feelings through exploring media and materials, dance, story making and imaginative play in all areas of learning. Children have daily opportunities to explore colour through painting, collage and crayoning. They recognise familiar songs and rhymes and jingles and sing them with natural enjoyment. They use the 'Clinic' and the 'Clothes Shop' to experience imaginative play and develop social and negotiating skills. Children have many opportunities to observe other children's art work, for example by studying 'The Hindu Story of the Creation', alongside their own work on 'Percy and his friends'.

68. Teaching is very good. Adults plan well and provide appropriate opportunities for children to explore art. The nursery is a veritable 'Aladdin's Cave' of artwork and display. This provides a stimulating learning environment and gives children many opportunities to observe different types of art work. Songs and jingles are used well to reinforce literacy and numeracy. Imaginative play triggers the imagination, extends language and develops social skills. Children play untuned musical instruments with dexterity and take good care of them. They develop their musical vocabulary and learn the names of the instruments that they play. The effective use of these resources motivates children to learn.

## ENGLISH

69. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the school's performance in reading and writing was close to the national average and the average for schools in similar contexts. Over the last five years, the results have fluctuated considerably, falling well below average for two years, rising above the national average in 1999 and dipping again in 2000. Reasons for the fluctuation are attributed to the ability levels of the different cohorts. Overall results in English in the national tests 2000 at Key Stage 1 remain the same as they were at the time of the last inspection.
70. At Key Stage 2, the 2000 National Curriculum test results were above the national average in English with twenty eight per cent of pupils achieving the higher Level 5. Pupils' attainment in English is also above the average performance of pupils in schools in similar contexts. There has been a significant improvement in pupils' results in English since the last inspection when attainment was in line with the national average. The rate of this improvement has been above the national trend.
71. The very good improvement at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection is due mainly to the better quality of teaching and to the school's use of assessment information. Very good assessment procedures are in place and these are well used to identify the learning needs of pupils. As a result, the school has developed a particular focus on writing to develop pupils' skills in the various styles. Individual targets are set for pupils and marking is used effectively to help them to achieve their targets. The results for the 2001 tests have not yet been analysed. Early indications from the school's own analysis points to some improvement in pupils' performance for Year 2 and a slight dip in the performance of Year 6 pupils. This was expected by the school as the Year 6 cohort performed badly in the 1997 Key Stage 1 tests and contained an unusually large number of pupils with special educational needs (30%). Taking into account these contributory factors, the overall progress of the pupils through the key stage has been at least satisfactory. There is no significant difference between the performances of boys and girls.
72. Inspection evidence, from lessons, from pupils' work in books and on display, and from discussion with pupils, shows that currently satisfactory standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are achieved in Key Stage 1 and good standards are achieved in Key Stage 2. Pupils are making satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 and good progress through Key Stage 2. This includes higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, who are given good support in lessons.
73. At both key stages discussion during lessons gives pupils opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. However, the quality of the opportunities provided varies considerably between the key stages. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have too few opportunities to talk at length and to explore ideas. Questions posed often require

only brief answers and pupils are not encouraged to develop their explanations in greater detail. Discussion time is not well planned and structured. Introductions are too long and there is too much teacher input. As a result, pupils lose interest and become distracted and inattentive. Good opportunities for discussion occur in Years 3-6 and pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm to questions posed. They readily offer ideas and they give opinions clearly and thoughtfully. They are confident at developing an argument and listen attentively to each other.

74. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are given regular opportunities to practice their reading skills. They learn to use an appropriate range of techniques to tackle unknown words. They sound out individual letters, break the words into syllables and read the text before and after the word to try to work out what it says. They read a satisfactory range of material but middle and lower attaining pupils are not able to give reasons why they like particular books or characters. Higher attaining pupils can talk about events that have already happened in the story, predict what is going to happen next and refer to parts of the text to explain their reasons. Overall standards are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 with a small number of pupils achieving above average standards. Pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy books and the majority read fluently and accurately. Most are able to talk confidently about a range of authors whom they have read and give good reasons why they enjoy particular books. Favourite authors include J K Rowling, Roald Dahl, C S Lewis and R L S Stein and pupils are able to compare and contrast the content of the books, the plot, and the portrayal of characters by the various authors. All pupils achieve good standards in reading at Key Stage 2 and a significant number achieve very good standards.
75. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress with their writing. The most able write at length and use full stops and capital letters with a good degree of accuracy. Average attaining pupils use very simple sentences that frequently start with 'But....' although basic punctuation is accurate. The work of lower attaining pupils shows insecure use of full stops but does use capital letters, and arranges sentences in an order that makes sense to the reader. The over-use of work sheets during writing activities restricts pupils' writing flow. Pupils often confine their writing to the allocated boxes on the work-sheets and do not continue further despite having further ideas to express. By Year 6, most pupils show good writing skills. Higher attaining pupils use paragraphs, speech, exclamation and question marks effectively to give their stories interest. They plan and re-draft their work to improve it as they go along. Many are able to use imagery effectively to add colour and interest to their writing. They are able to write in different styles and for a variety of purposes. Average attaining pupils follow a similar programme and often produce work of a good standard. Lower attaining pupils work at a different level of difficulty and produce a good quantity of writing with satisfactory attempts at using simple punctuation conventions.
76. A weakness in the presentation of pupils' work across the school is that handwriting is not consistently joined, with a number of pupils still using simple script. This detracts from the good quality work produced by pupils. The school does not have a consistent handwriting policy.
77. Teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 but with some (8 per cent) that is unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching occurs mainly because teachers do not have a secure understanding of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategies. Lessons are not well planned. Introductions are too long, group tasks are insufficiently differentiated and challenging to meet the needs of all abilities, and plenary sessions often do not serve a useful purpose. In Key Stage 2 the teaching is good overall with several examples of very good teaching. The work set is

suitably challenging and teachers have high expectations of pupils. Lessons are well planned and structured to meet the needs of all pupils. In one very good lesson, pupils explored different ways of beginning a story. The work of various authors was discussed and ideas and suggestions from the pupils formed a very good base for the work to follow. Higher attaining pupils composed very good quality alternative openings in the third person to stories they had studied. Other good teaching in Year 6 used a brisk pace to challenge pupils to identify good story openings that provide the most impact on the reader. Pupils responded well and analysed several different styles of opening with clarity and perception. They composed their own interesting openings to stories. Tight time limits were set to maintain the pupils' concentration. There was effective use of Thesaurus and of group discussion to develop suitable impact in story introductions. Phrases such as "Dust swirled around..." "I went to see my granddad because my granddad tells good stories" and "The key waited in space..." proved effective in making a reader want to know more about the writing. The good teaching in Key Stage 2 is also characterised by very effective planning and assessment procedures.

78. The co-ordinator for English collates data from National Curriculum test results and has reviewed the policy document for the subject. She does not have a good overview of the work in Key Stage 2. The good standards attained in this key stage are directly attributable to the very good strategies in curriculum planning and assessment procedures that the senior management team has put in place, as well as good quality teaching in all classes. Demanding targets have been set for improvement in school and individual performances. The success of the targets is evaluated and assessed at regular intervals. Homework is well planned and parents are made fully aware of what work their children are expected to complete.

## **MATHEMATICS**

79. The 2000 National Curriculum test results for Year 2 pupils show that their performance was above the national average and in relation to schools in similar contexts; the results for Year 6 pupils show their performance was well above the national average. The school's performance in the 2000 National Curriculum test results show that Year 2 pupils attained standards above those in schools in similar contexts and the performance of Year 6 pupils was well above. As the inspection took place early in the academic year, the results for the 2001 National Curriculum tests have not yet been analysed. The early indications from the school point to a possible improvement in pupils' performance for Year 2 and a slight dip in the performance of Year 6 pupils. The slight dip in results for Year 6 is explained by the cohort's very low attainment in the 1997 Key Stage 1 national tests and the large number of pupils with special educational needs who took the tests. Thus the overall progress made by the Year 6 pupils has been good. There is no significant difference between the performances of boys and girls. Standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection in both key stages.
80. Current inspection findings, taking account that it is very early in the academic year, are that Year 2 pupils' attainment in mathematics is satisfactory and that the attainment of Year 6 pupils is good. Pupils' progress, including that of those with special educational needs, is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2.
81. Year 1 pupils display satisfactory competence at adding and subtracting from 0-9. They are able to use 1p coins to buy two items in a toy shop and to find the total money in a purse. Lower attaining pupils display a secure understanding of numbers to 5, middle attainers are secure in their understanding of numbers to 10 and higher attaining pupils are able to handle numbers to 20 and beyond. Higher

attaining pupils in Year 2 are able to count forward and backwards in 2s, 5s, and 10s. They are able to give change from 20p. They have a satisfactory understanding of hundreds, tens and units which they apply to put numbers in order. They know the names of the most common two- and three- dimensional shapes and some of their properties. Middle attaining pupils have a secure understanding of tens and units and of the value of a digit in two digit numbers. They can carry out simple calculations accurately. Lower attaining pupils are not secure in their understanding of the place value of a digit in two digit numbers. They can use money to give change from 10p. Pupils of all abilities have a satisfactory understanding of the purpose of graphs to display information. The pace of the work throughout the key stage is, however, slow and many pupils are capable of producing more work, and of a higher standard, than they are doing at present.

82. Throughout Key Stage 2, there is good emphasis on developing pupils' mental mathematics skills. This is sharply focused and is taught briskly and with suitable rigour. As a result, pupils across attainment levels become comfortable with mental arithmetic calculations. For pupils in Years 5 and 6, number facts are firmly embedded so that instant recall is generally good. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 display a secure grasp of equivalent fractions. They recognise that  $\frac{2}{8}$  is the same as  $\frac{1}{4}$  and understand the relationship between the denominator and the numerator. They are able to use their understanding of place value to multiply and divide whole numbers by 10. They add and subtract decimals to two places. They can find perimeters of simple shapes and understand the concept of finding areas by counting squares. They can solve problems involving the four rules, money calculations, decimal values and percentages. Middle attaining pupils have covered the same curriculum at a simpler level and achieve good standards in their recall and understanding of the work covered. Lower attaining pupils can perform simple addition, subtraction and multiplication and division accurately. They have a satisfactory grasp of simple fractions.
83. The teaching of mathematics ranges from poor to very good. The quality of teaching in all Key Stage 2 classes is never less than good and is often very good. The poor and unsatisfactory teaching of mathematics seen during the inspection was in Key Stage 1. The main factors contributing to the low quality of teaching are an insecure grasp of the National Numeracy Strategy, over-long introductions, a very slow pace to activities, and a lack of challenge in the tasks set. There has been a decline in the quality of teaching mathematics in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection when the teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to good. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 shows significant improvement from the last report, which noted some unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is particularly strong. The very good teaching is characterised by the teachers' sound mathematical knowledge, very good assessment of the pupils' understanding, clear explanations and sharp questioning. A strong feature throughout Key Stage 2 is the use of resources to give pupils good visual models. Teachers use these in classroom displays and refer to them in explanations and questions. An overhead projector was used effectively in a Year 6 lesson to demonstrate the concept of equivalent fractions to pupils. The work set in all Key Stage 2 classes is suitably challenging and pupils across the ability range achieve good standards. Homework is used well to support the work in classes.
84. Despite the unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1, leadership and management of the subject are generally of high quality. The co-ordinator has a very good overview of the teaching and learning of mathematics throughout the school. She has provided relevant in-service training for colleagues. She has had opportunities to monitor standards of teaching and learning across the school but this requires a

more regular and rigorous input in Key Stage 1. Very good assessment systems lead to individual targets being set for pupils. Her leadership has contributed to the school's improved standards in mathematics since the last inspection.

## SCIENCE

85. In the 2000 National Tests at Key Stage 1, the school performed well below both the average of all schools nationally and schools in similar contexts. The performance of pupils at Key Stage 2 in the National Curriculum Tests for 2000 was very high in comparison with schools nationally and against schools in similar contexts. Sixty five per cent of pupils achieved the higher Level 5. When taking the three years 1998-2000 into consideration, the performance of pupils at Key Stage 2 in science was well above the national trend. Inspection evidence points towards an improvement in standards at Key Stage 1 where pupils are now achieving in line with national expectations and to the high standards being maintained in Key Stage 2.
86. Targets for individual pupils are regularly set and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning, including that of pupils with special educational needs. The school has developed a very good system for target setting, which provides a seamless approach to learning and is a very good model of inclusive education.
87. During the summer term of the year 2000, Year 6 pupils and their families built a garden as a gift to the school to commemorate the millennium. Each class has its own special garden, for example the sensory garden, a herb and vegetable garden, a hedgerow, a bog garden and a pond to attract wild-life. Wild seasonal meadows and mosaics have been used to brighten brick walls. Plants have been donated to the garden from Highgrove House and Prince Charles's gardener has visited the school. Each class takes responsibility for an area of the garden and looks after it for the other pupils in the school to share. As a result pupils display good knowledge and understanding of different plants and the varying conditions they need to grow and develop.
88. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing satisfactorily their skills, knowledge and understanding of science and its vocabulary. In Year 1, pupils continue their learning from the Foundation Stage and are beginning to understand the principles of a fair test. They used an investigative approach to learning to test for magnetism, using different materials and a range of magnets. They recorded their results using a table and came to a sensible conclusion. In Year 2, pupils developed an awareness of the use of magnifying glasses when they made fingerprints and used the magnifying glass to identify which type of finger print they had got. Pupils are encouraged to draw and label. Presentation of work is satisfactory and teachers take care to remind pupils of the skills used when recording their findings. Pupils enter the key stage with a satisfactory range of scientific knowledge. Pupils, in general, make satisfactory progress through the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their nursery nurse in small groups within the classroom.
89. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to make close observations of how light reflects from different surfaces. They measure the reflections and predict what will happen. Year 5 pupils understand the term 'pitch' and how the pitch and loudness of instruments can be changed. Year 4 pupils conduct a fair test to see which materials will best serve to keep a milk carton cold in the classroom. Year 3 pupils investigate softest and hardest, heaviest and lightest. They develop their reasoning skills when comparing for example the hardness of the materials used. There is

evidence of very good coverage across all attainment targets and of higher attaining pupils achieving elements of Level 6 work in their ability to describe and explain life processes as they near the end of their time in Year 6. Pupils develop a very good scientific vocabulary and are able to use this in relevant contexts. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum and make very good progress in the well matched but relevant tasks they are set.

90. Cross-curricular skills are developed effectively, particularly in Key Stage 2, through measuring and collating evidence, interpreting data, recording in writing, discussion and using ICT skills to support the work.
91. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall but is variable with some good and unsatisfactory teaching seen. The better lessons featured a good pace, clear planning and a sound understanding of the subject. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the pace of lessons slowed and the management and organisation did not support continuous learning experiences for all pupils. Worksheet activities that did not challenge and extend pupils' learning were too frequently used at the expense of more demanding investigative work. In Key Stage 2, teaching was never less than good, and examples were seen of excellent and very good teaching. In these lessons planning was effective. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and place a suitable emphasis on scientific vocabulary. In an excellent lesson, the teacher displayed very good subject knowledge when setting up experiments to study 'pitch' with Year 5 pupils. Pupils listened to and watched a pupil playing a violin. They set up their own experiments with sound-boards and very effectively made predictions, tested these and drew conclusions. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Pupils' activities are relevant and well linked to the learning objectives that the teacher indicates in the planning. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. As a result pupils attitudes are very good. They respond well to challenges set by their teachers, listen well to each other and value each other's opinion. Pupils collaborate and co-operate well when engaging in investigative work. They demonstrate a mature and confident attitude, which is responsible and caring towards each other. The level of investigative work in Key Stage 2 makes the subject exciting and challenging. Pupils behave very well and use equipment and materials safely and sensibly.
92. The long-term and medium-term plans are linked to national guidelines. Assessment is closely linked to the completion of units of work. Individual targets are set and understood by pupils. The co-ordinator manages the subject very effectively. Much work has been undertaken to improve planning, assessment and resources in the subject. She monitors planning, teaching and learning across the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

93. During the inspection only two lessons were seen, both in Key Stage 1. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 2 but pupils' present and previous work was examined and discussions took place with pupils and teachers in relation to the work undertaken. Inspection evidence shows that attainment is in line with the national average at Key Stage 1 and is above the national average at Key Stage 2. All pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve satisfactory standards and make sound progress in the subject. Pupils in Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress in the subject. Standards have been maintained in Key Stage 1 and

have improved in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. The school has adopted national guidance in the subject and this is reflected in the planning. There is an effective policy document and resources are good.

94. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, use a range of media and materials to develop their skills and techniques in the subject. Pupils learn about famous artists such as Cezanne, and develop their historical knowledge when observing a Victorian portrait. For example, in Year 1 pupils use a picture of a Victorian lady as a guide to developing a self-portrait. Sketch books are used for pupils to draw each other's eyes. Pupils then draw the eye onto a face which they had previously drawn and painted. Pupils demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of colour mixing but the work is conducted at a very slow pace and too little work is accomplished within lessons. In Year 2 pupils used an observational drawing of St. Michael's to study shapes they could see. They then made a drawing of one of these shapes, for example 'a triangle at the top'. Pupils chose suitable tools with which to make a print of their drawing. Use of mathematical language to support learning was good and pupils developed their vocabulary through use of descriptive language to explain to the class how they had constructed their print.
95. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Most teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and this provides pupils with appropriate learning opportunities. Lessons are generally well planned and organised. Teachers give clear instructions and guidance to help pupils improve their basic skills. All pupils have very good attitudes in lessons and listen carefully to their teacher.
96. Pupils' work in art and design makes a satisfactory contribution to their moral, social and cultural development. They work well together in lessons and take responsibility for clearing away after the lesson. Evidence of pupils' cultural development is seen in Year 5 where pupils have developed a very good standard collage and display on the Hindu story of Creation. Links to music are also well developed in this class, where a display on 'sounds' in music encouraged pupils to investigate further. Pupils use their residential visit to Edale to develop landscape painting skills. They use the local environment, for example St. Michael's church porch, to develop observational skills. Good use is made of ICT, through the use of web-sites for the investigation of famous artists and software to create art designs, to support the subject.
97. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She leads by example and her classroom has a very stimulating and high quality display that consists of art work, re-created stories, songs and poems. She has begun to monitor standards in Key Stage 1 through the use of a monitoring sheet at the end of a unit of work. She plans to develop this into Key Stage 2. She is developing an art and design portfolio and has made a good start with significant examples of work from the previous academic year. There is a good range of resources that are stored centrally. They are well organised and are easily accessible to staff and pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

98. No lessons were taught in Key Stage 1 as art and design is the focus of the work for this half term, with design and technology planned for the next half term. A book of photographic evidence of past work across the school is available and contains an interesting range of work. However, there are no explanatory captions and the

photographs are undated. It is therefore impossible to make a secure judgement about standards or the quality of teaching.

99. Standards in Key Stage 2 are now in line with national expectations. Sound progress has been made since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. Throughout the key stage, pupils experience an interesting range of activities which are linked well to current topics and which develop skills in a systematic way. They learn how to use different tools and techniques effectively to create their products. At the time of the inspection, Year 3 pupils were designing and making photograph frames; Year 4 pupils were designing and making cool bags; Year 5 pupils were designing and making their own musical instruments and pupils in Year 6 were designing sandals. Through the work, good cross-curricular links are developed with mathematics, science, literacy and information and communication technology. For example, in a Year 4 class the work is effectively linked with the science topic where experiments have been set up to test which materials are best for retaining heat. Measuring accurately and recording findings in tabular forms are also an integral part of the work throughout the key stage. Information and communication technology is successfully used both as a source of information and as a means of designing and recording plans. Pupils who have special educational needs enjoy success and achieve well in a subject where attainment in spoken and written language does not impede their ability to express ideas and they use tools and other resources effectively.
100. No overall judgement on teaching can be made as only one design and technology lesson was observed. However, displays, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions demonstrate that Key Stage 2 teachers have good subject knowledge and display effective skill and expertise in this area. In the Year 3 lesson observed, teaching and learning were good and pupils attained good standards in the designing and making of photograph frames. Pupils displayed a good level of competence in measuring, sawing, sanding, gluing and sticking. Resources were well chosen and used. The teacher encouraged and valued pupils' ideas and suggestions, and they in turn co-operated effectively in pairs and in larger groups. Pupils' eagerness to learn and their evident enjoyment of the tasks undertaken were significant features of the lesson.
101. The curriculum co-ordinator does not take an active role in overseeing and monitoring the subject across the school. She is more knowledgeable about work previously covered in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. There is, however, a school policy document that provides suitable guidance for the development of the subject. Resources are sufficient and accessible.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

102. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. It was not possible to evaluate standards at Key Stage 1 as the subject is not being taught this term and there was insufficient evidence of pupils' work from the last school year. Standards in geography in Key Stage 2 are the same as at the time of the last inspection.
103. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 display satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the work they have covered on their locality and the environment. They can identify various landmarks on maps of the area and use geographical vocabulary to describe some features of the area such as the nearest industrial estate and the location of schools and hospitals. Pupils in Year 5 are able to talk knowledgeably and with good understanding about experiments they have undertaken to see how water can become contaminated. They know about microbes and germs and the effect of detergents in water. They offer various thoughtful reasons for impurities in river water, such as chemicals from farming and public litter. They recognise the

need for pure water to ensure public health. Pupils in Year 6 are able to research and organise their findings on landforms such as mountains and valleys effectively. They use the facts and knowledge they have gathered to give good, clear oral presentations to their fellow pupils. Most can discuss sensibly how people can improve and damage the environment. They are familiar with the location of countries on a world map and can identify rivers, mountain ranges and oceans.

104. The quality of teaching in geography at Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers display good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and very good relationships exist between pupils and teachers. In Year 3, good use of local maps enables pupils to locate places of interest and plan various routes in the area. Extension activities for higher attaining pupils are suitably prepared and the work in lessons matches effectively the needs of all pupils. Teachers across the key stage have high expectations of pupils. The good use of a variety of resources such as maps, magazines, reference books and computer programs, enables pupils to research as individuals, in small groups and as a whole class. As a result of the good teaching, pupils display interest and good motivation in the tasks they undertake. The work challenges all pupils. Of particular note was the way in which lower attaining pupils sifted relevant information from text books rather than merely copying it in its total form.
105. The school has adopted a national scheme of work and good links with literacy, mathematics, science and ICT have been developed. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and the work of pupils well. She has identified issues of differentiation as a way to improve learning.

## **HISTORY**

106. Standards are above national expectations at both key stages and there has been good improvement since the last inspection where attainment was average and progress satisfactory. The curriculum has been developed to make use of research skills and to link with skills from other curriculum areas such as literacy, numeracy and ICT.
107. Year 1 pupils talk knowledgeably about the use of various Victorian artefacts such as a bed warmer and hand iron displayed in their class. They listen attentively and respond eagerly to questions about the use of the objects. They are able to link the past with their own experiences. For example, when they are shown a chimney sweep's brush, they refer to the 'boy sweep' from Mary Poppins. Year 2 pupils are able to link historical data with geographical studies when studying seaside resorts and when comparing the local area with a developing country. A timeline is used to record famous events in history right up to the millennium. Pupils are able to refer to various items on the timeline. Previous work covered has included a record in the form of a timeline of the progress of the Beatles pop group and a study of seafaring developments over a period of 500 years from the invention of the mariner's compass in 1286 to the Mayflower sailing to New England in 1620. The work covered shows good use of the skills of report writing and explanation.
108. It was only possible to observe teaching at Key Stage 1 and this was good in both lessons. A Year 2 lesson on Poppy Day and its links with World War One showed good planning and delivery as pupils related their visit to the local war memorial to take photographs. Numeracy was used in a relevant context to count through the years on a timeline and in linking the eleventh hour, day and month as a time for remembrance. Good learning was shown as pupils used knowledge from previous lessons to interpret photographs and to establish that both sides, as a relief from the

horrors of war, would celebrate the Armistice. Questions were used well by the teacher to bring sensitive answers from the pupils and to seek reasoning and explanation in answer to questions such as 'Why was this so special?' However, although the classroom support was used well to involve lower attaining pupils in discussion, the follow-up activity did not extend higher attaining pupils to record their knowledge and ideas in their own words. The over-use of worksheet activities that merely require pupils to place brief captions against pictures detracts from the level of challenge posed in the lessons.

109. After discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutinising work previously covered, it is evident that the teaching in Key Stage 2 is also of good quality. Visits are made to the school's locality and to other places of historical interest such as stately homes. Visitors to the school include members from the British Legion and grandparents, who talk about their experiences of the war years. Resources are of good quality and are used efficiently. Computer discs are used effectively for research and pupils are provided with good learning experiences involving the use of research and interpretation skills. The subject is well led and the co-ordinator has a good overview of the work across the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

110. Attainment in both key stages is in line with national expectations and, as the inspection has taken place very early in the academic year, standards are likely to rise above national expectations by the end of the year. This is very good improvement from the last inspection when standards were below national expectations in both key stages.
111. The school has done much to raise the profile of ICT over the last two years. Thirteen new computers have been purchased and a computer suite established. A member of staff has taken over the role of directing the teaching in the ICT suite and of working alongside class teachers to enable them to gain confidence and expertise in the subject.
112. In Year 2, pupils display good keyboard skills for their age. They are familiar with the basic skills of entering text and with simple editing procedures. They are able to use the shift key to insert punctuation marks and capitalise letters. They are competent in using the mouse to select and move words and pictures and to assemble sentences. They can use a graphing package to select appropriate icons, recognise quantities and create a pictogram. They can read a set of symbols and predict the correct outcome. They are able to use key words from fixed categories to label and classify objects. Displays of previously recorded work show evidence that they have had experience of using programmable floor robots for control, giving instructions and predicting outcomes.
113. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils are able to combine graphics with text and most are able to change the size of the graphics. The majority are able to enter data into a database and to use it subsequently to answer questions. They are able to produce bar charts of their findings on such topics as 'Litter' and 'The Rain Forest' which link effectively with class work in mathematics, science and geography. Good links with the music curriculum have also been established, for example by using software to refine a musical experience. They are able to send, receive and reply to e-mails and the most able can refine text messages.
114. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils' work folders display a wide range of work, with evidence of ICT being used very effectively to support work across the curriculum. Good use

has been made of text and clip art to produce an advertisement to promote St Michael's Primary School as a target school for parents in the area. Pupils have sent, received and replied to e-mails and are able refine text messages and send attachments. They have used 'logo' to create designs and shapes, and they demonstrate satisfactory proficiency in using the repeat instructions and changing the angle of turn. They display good word-processing skills and the more able are competent at using more advanced features such as cut and paste, find and replace, inserting bold and changing the fonts to create different effects. They are able to search the Internet to gather information and use this effectively to support their work across the curriculum. They copy text and pictures for others to view.

115. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the subject. They have equal access to all activities. Some lower attaining pupils in Year 5 were seen searching confidently through an existing database and identifying flowers from a pressed collection they had previously entered. They were able to create a new branching database of a variety of musical instruments available in the school. The instruments were identified, using key vocabulary such as pitch, percussion, strings, wind, volume and timbre.
116. The leadership and management of this subject are of very high quality. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and is able to impart this successfully to less confident colleagues. She teaches all classes and also works alongside colleagues in class lessons and in the ICT suite. She has ensured that ICT has become an integral part of the school's curriculum and is used to support and enhance the work in all subjects.

## **MUSIC**

117. Standards are in line with national expectations in Key Stage 1 and are above in Key Stage 2. Standards found in the last inspection have been maintained in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, standards have improved since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make sound progress in Key Stage 1 and make good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate good vocal skills and their singing is good.
118. Pupils make good use of their singing skills in many areas of the curriculum. Language skills develop well through the acquisition of good listening skills, the understanding of musical vocabulary and performing skills. Effective use is made of songs and jingles to improve children's literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils in Year 2 explore percussion instruments and use their listening skills to satisfactory effect when listening to a tape of 'Sleigh Ride'. Most can tap a steady beat. All tried very hard, with satisfactory results, to fit an instrument to the music. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 develop their listening skills well when listening to a range of sea songs and shanties. They display good sequencing skills when matching pictures to the music. In Year 4 pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of strong and weak beats and use body parts to demonstrate this. Year 5 pupils are able to link science and music together as they listen and develop an understanding of pitch. In Year 6, pupils display good understanding of standard notation, musical vocabulary and musical score. Through listening for beat changes in music, they demonstrate a successful recognition of notation and a good sense of beat.

119. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and is good in Key Stage 2. Where the teaching is good, pupils make good gains in their knowledge and skills in listening, interpreting, performing and composing. The teachers' good understanding of the subject, supported by a commercial scheme to give confidence to non-specialist teachers, has ensured that by the time they leave the school pupils are enabled to become confident musicians. Pupils' attitudes to music in both key stages are good. All pupils behave well throughout lessons. In the good lessons, there is skilled management of pupils, a fast pace to activities, and plenty of variety. In lessons where teaching was satisfactory, the pace of lessons was slower and the activities undertaken were not varied enough to ensure that pupils remained interested and motivated throughout each lesson.
120. Music is incorporated into seasonal performances, such as musical Christmas activities. The church organist visits the school to play for assemblies and to train the school choir. At present the choir are rehearsing 'Joseph'. Resources are good and are easily accessible to staff and pupils. Music notebooks are used to record pupils' compositions. Subject leadership is of very good quality. The co-ordinator works hard to raise standards in the subject. She is dedicated and enthusiastic. She monitors planning across classes and fills in evaluation sheets for each teacher on a termly basis. She has carefully linked the National Curriculum requirements to a commercially produced scheme and this has given teachers a firm foundation on which to base their teaching.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

121. Pupils achieve standards that are in line with national expectations at both key stages. This is similar to the standards achieved at the time of the last inspection. However, teaching has improved. There is a full programme of activities and teachers are using new schemes of work to teach the full curriculum. Extra-curricular activities for Key Stage 2 pupils include football, netball, basketball and rugby. Visiting coaches provide good support within these activities. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and are now of good quality and easily accessible to staff and pupils. The unsafe storage of large apparatus that was mentioned in the last report has been rectified.
122. Year 2 pupils are well co-ordinated and move freely around the hall. Changes in movement from running to hopping are comfortably carried out, and pupils respond well to the teacher's instructions in a 'Simon says' game. Pupils are able to support their weight confidently on hands and feet as they stretch out one leg. They watch and evaluate the work of others and note the use of arms, legs and feet when required to jump high or when landing off small apparatus. Year 5 pupils were able to interpret and develop good movement sequences in a dance lesson. They represented the rolling waves of a stormy sea with imagination and dexterity and co-operated effectively in groups. Earlier in the lesson they listened expectantly to quiet, atmospheric music and used this to develop strong powerful positions that used body shape well. In all lessons, boys and girls interact easily in groups and there is equality of opportunity provided for all pupils across the subject.
123. Teaching is good at Key Stage 2 and is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. In a good dance lesson observed, the tone was set by the effective use of music as the children changed. A 'hushed' atmosphere was set and pupils listened expectantly and with eagerness as the teacher explained the kind of movements she expected from them. Pupils formed groups to represent 'thunder', 'waves', and 'rain'. Good quality discussion took place. Pupils' responses were of good quality, showing effective and imaginative interpretations of the music. Performances by the end of

the lesson were of good quality. Examples of other good teaching were characterised by good control of pupils, efficient planning and delivery of lessons, high expectations of pupils and good pace and variety within activities undertaken. Where teaching was less effective, there was no change to the pace of lessons. Instructions were carefully delivered in a level voice that maintained control but did not stimulate the pupils to produce imaginative movement. Examples of pupils' movement were not used to develop a greater range of ideas and to improve performance.

124. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The scheme of work provides useful suggestions for the development of work across the school and there is a good range of resources which are easily accessible to staff and pupils. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities which include football, netball, rounders and skittle ball. The subject leader does not monitor standards in the subject.