

# INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tilbury

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 115174

Headteacher: Mrs. A. Enefer

Reporting inspector: David Owen  
1957

Dates of inspection: 11 February - 14 February 2002

Inspection number: 196759

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Calcutta Road  
Tilbury

Postcode: RM18 7QH

Telephone number: 01375 843254

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr T. Gilby

Date of previous inspection: 19 - 23 May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1957	David Owen	Registered inspector	Science; Design and technology; Geography.	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements.
13418	Jacqueline Darrington	Lay inspector		Pupils attitudes, values & personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
28007	Fiona Ruddick	Team inspector	English; Art and design; History; Music.	Equal opportunities How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22669	Tom Prosser	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English as an additional language; Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Physical education.	How well is the school led and managed?
2700	Peter Sudworth	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

*The terms 'attainment' and 'achievement' appear frequently in this report. Inspectors use the term 'attainment' to indicate standards against national or local criteria. The term 'achievement' is used to describe the progress pupils make compared to their prior attainment.*

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School is situated in Tilbury. The vast majority of the pupils live locally but a few travel from other parts of Thurrock. With 227 boys and girls on roll, aged three to eleven, the school is average in size. 52 children attend the Nursery part-time. The pupils live in a mixture of council, housing association and privately owned properties. Overall attainment is well below average on entry. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is 27 per cent which is about the same as the national average. 26 per cent are eligible for free school meals compared with the national average of 20 per cent. 12 per cent are from ethnic minority families and six per cent speak English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection there were only 6 full-time permanent teachers including the headteacher. One class was taken by an unqualified teacher, another by a supply teacher and two nursery nurses were responsible for the Nursery. There was also a part-time special educational needs teacher and a part-time music teacher.

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

St. Mary's is a successful school which ensures that pupils of all abilities achieve well. Although children's knowledge and understanding are, in general, well below average when they enter the school standards by the age of eleven are close to those found nationally. Despite severe staffing shortages and difficulties in recruiting new teachers, all the teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory and much of it was good or better. The pupils therefore learn well, they have positive attitudes to their work and their behaviour is good. There are good procedures for making sure that pupils are safe, secure and happy. However, the curriculum does not always ensure that the pupils' knowledge is developed in a progressive way. The headteacher leads the school very well but the demands on her are excessive given the relatively limited contribution of the governors, the inexperience of the staff and the fact that there is no deputy headteacher. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection. It provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils learn well, develop positive attitudes to school and make good progress in response to teaching that is never less than satisfactory and often good.
- The school makes very good use of specialist expertise for music.
- There are very good procedures for promoting, improving and monitoring behaviour.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- There is good training and support for teachers, especially those new to the school.
- Relationships are good throughout the school.

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

- The support for the headteacher with regard to leadership and management.
- The way in which the time allocated to subjects is distributed through the year and throughout the week.
- The planning of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage.
- The partnership with parents.

*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 improved considerably since it was last inspected in May 1997. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in relation to their prior attainment which was not the case at the time of the last inspection when progress was generally sound and it was slow for some higher attainers. Against a background of staffing problems and a considerable drop in the attainment of pupils on entry to the Nursery, the school's results for eleven year-olds

have risen at a rate which is the same as the national trend. Lesson observations during the inspection indicated that seven- and eleven-year-olds attain somewhat lower standards in history and the eleven-year-olds reach lower standards in art and design. Otherwise the school has done well to maintain standards. Assessment procedures have improved considerably, professional development is now well linked to the school development plan and, most importantly, there has been a great improvement in the quality of teaching. Changes in the provision for pupils' cultural development have been more modest and, whilst there have been many improvements in information and communication technology, there is still insufficient attention to control technology. There has been a considerable improvement in attendance over the last two years.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the last column of the above table the school's results are compared with schools that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, when the school's results for 2001 are compared with schools that had similar results in the tests for seven-year-olds in 1997 the St. Mary's pupils have made an above average improvement in English and average improvement in mathematics and science. The school did not meet the rather ambitious targets in English and mathematics, for eleven-year-olds, which it had negotiated with the Local Education Authority for 2001. The 2001 results for seven-year-olds were below average in reading and mathematics, and well below average in writing. Although the results in writing were well below average when compared with similar schools, they were average in reading and mathematics. The results in science were below average as measured by the teachers' National Curriculum assessments.

Lesson observations and other inspection evidence show that, in response to sound teaching in the Foundation Stage, the children make satisfactory progress but that this is generally insufficient to ensure that they meet the national expectations by the age of five. They do, however, meet the national expectations in their personal, social and emotional development and in their physical development. In Years 1-6 the achievement of all pupils, including the most able, is good. In all subjects, including English, mathematics and science, they attain the standards expected by the ages of seven and eleven. The discrepancy between these findings and last year's test results is due to two factors. First of all one in five pupils in the Year 6 class have special educational needs this year compared with half of the Year 6 pupils last year, and secondly the school is taking appropriate steps to improve the poor performance of boys, particularly seven year-olds, in tests.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils are enthusiastic. They are interested and involved in their lessons and other activities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils are well-behaved in lessons and as they move about the school. There is rarely any bullying or oppressive behaviour.
Personal development and	Relationships are good and the pupils are courteous. They show a sensitive understanding of how their actions affect other people. When given the



relationships	opportunity they show initiative.
Attendance	Good. In 2000/2001 the attendance rate was in the top 10% for the country. Not all of the teachers complete attendance registers correctly.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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 in all subjects is sound overall, but it is often good or better in Years 1-6. As a result the pupils learn well and make good progress. The teaching of music is consistently very good or excellent. The basic skills of literacy are appropriately taught and satisfactory attention is given to developing the pupils' skills of numeracy. The teaching of information and communication technology is sound. In the Foundation Stage all areas of learning are taught satisfactorily.

A strong feature of the teaching is the great enthusiasm and energy shown by all the staff. The management of pupils is good and the teachers make good provision for homework. Learning support assistants are well deployed in lessons and good use is made of resources. The pupils work hard. Generally members of staff ensure that the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are met. This fosters good progress and achievement. However, at times particularly in mathematics, when tasks are set for the whole class they are not always appropriate for each group.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound. It is broad, balanced and relevant and there is appropriate attention to ensuring equality of opportunity. However, at the Foundation Stage there is no proper scheme of work. The provision for extra-curricular activities is limited, and some subject policies are out of date.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Their needs are identified accurately, they are supported well and effective procedures are in place to help them make progress. As a result these pupils benefit well from the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Appropriate provision is made for these pupils. They are generally well taught. As a consequence they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The pupils' spiritual and social development receives good attention. The provision for their moral development is very good. The provision for cultural development is sound although insufficient effort is put into ensuring that the pupils develop an understanding of cultural diversity within Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, and good arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Although the procedures for monitoring, recording and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory there is no whole-school policy or approach.

Although the parents think highly of the school, the partnership between them and the school is limited. Parents do not generally work in the school as helpers. The school prospectus, the governors' annual report to parents

and reports on pupils' progress are unsatisfactory in some respects. The school does not provide the parents with sufficiently detailed information on the curriculum.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear educational direction. There has been a vacancy for a deputy headteacher for two years. The senior management team and subject co-ordinators are very inexperienced. However, they are enthusiastic and hard-working.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are supportive of the school. They have a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. However, they do not share as much as they might in the leadership and management of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Appropriate action is taken to set targets for improvement. There is a strong, shared commitment to improve. There are sound arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and developing the quality of teaching, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses financial and other resources satisfactorily. A most appropriate set of educational priorities is supported through sound financial planning. The principles of best value are applied well.

The accommodation is satisfactory and the school has satisfactory resources in all subjects. It has had great difficulty in appointing and retaining teachers. However, those in post at the time of the inspection showed high levels of commitment and were covering the National Curriculum adequately. Members of the non-teaching staff make a good contribution to the life of the school.

## 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 good quality of the teaching, and the fact that pupils are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become more mature.</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress and they like school.</li> <li>• The children are well behaved.</li> <li>• The school is led and managed well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is inadequate provision for homework.</li> <li>• The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons.</li> <li>• The provision for physical education is limited.</li> <li>• A few parents do not feel that they are well informed about their children's progress and would like to see an improvement in the school's working relationship with parents.</li> <li>• Parents are concerned about the recruitment and retention of teachers but acknowledge that the school works hard to appoint staff.</li> </ul>

Overall the inspectors' judgements support the parents' and carers' positive views. However, whilst the headteacher leads and manages the school well, she is overburdened because of limited support from the teachers and the governors. The provision for homework has improved since the last inspection and it now makes a good contribution to the progress made by pupils. The curriculum for physical education is satisfactory. However, the parents are correct in pointing out limitations in the range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. There is a need to improve the partnership between the school and parents. Reports do not indicate clearly the progress made by pupils and what they need to do to improve.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The children entering the school have a wide range of abilities but their overall level of attainment is well below average. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is sound and consequently the children progress satisfactorily. However, by the age of five few achieve the nationally specified Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning. In particular, the majority will not achieve the expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. A major factor constraining progress is the lack of a school scheme of work to guide the staff.
2. In Year 1 - Year 6 pupils achieve well in most subjects including English, mathematics and science. This is mainly attributable to the sound, and often good, teaching. Another major factor is the good arrangements for assessment. The school also ensures that pupils from all ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress. Higher attainers make sound progress in Years 1-2 and good progress in Years 3-6. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. Where necessary the school focuses on particular groups of pupils in order to raise attainment. It has had some success in improving the achievement of boys, particularly in Years 3-6. These factors are underpinned by appropriate analyses of test results, the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy, and good leadership and management by the headteacher.
3. Although the pupils achieve well, a number of factors limit their achievements. The inexperience of subject co-ordinators means that, as yet they cannot play their full part in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Parents are not well informed about the curriculum and do not make as good a contribution to their children's progress as they might. Finally achievement in some subjects is constrained by the way curriculum time is allocated.
4. In 2001, in comparison with schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools, the results for eleven year-olds were well below average in mathematics. Compared with those found nationally, results were also well below average in English and science. In comparison with similar schools the results were below average in these two subjects. However, for the pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6, the inspection evidence indicates average standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science. The test results at the school fluctuate significantly and a major contributory factor is the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. In the Year 6 class that took the test in 2001, when the results were well below the national average, half of the pupils had special educational needs while in the present year group only one in five have identified needs.
5. Inspection findings also show that pupils progress well as they pass through the school and this is supported by the fact that the Year 6 pupils who took the National Curriculum tests in 2001 made progress above the national average in reading and writing, and speaking and listening in relation to their performance in the tests for seven year-olds four years previously. In mathematics and science their progress matched the national average.
6. In English the pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is somewhat better than it is in reading and writing. By the time they leave the school they make good contributions to discussions. Pupils use their developing skills of literacy well in some subjects, most notably history. However, through

lack of appropriate opportunities, English is used less well in science or geography. Standards of attainment in all aspects of mathematics, including mental arithmetic, are satisfactory, and the pupils' use their skills of numeracy well in science and geography lessons. Insufficient opportunities restrict the extent to which pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is fostered by using their knowledge and skills in other subjects.

7. Assessment procedures have been improved since the last inspection, and these enable the school to monitor the progress of individuals and groups. A programme of testing, including the 'baseline' tests on entry, and National Curriculum tests, supports teachers' ongoing assessments and facilitates analyses to identify gaps in the knowledge of individuals and groups of pupils. In particular the school's tracking of individuals and groups has revealed that in National Curriculum tests the attainment of girls has consistently, and greatly, outshone that of boys.
8. The staff have worked hard to evaluate the reasons for gender differences in performance and have put in place curricular and organisational changes to try to reduce the discrepancy. One of the main causative factors relates to attitudes towards boys in the local community. For instance, any complaints about too much homework are always from parents of boys. The school has attempted to address the situation by recognising that some boys have short attention spans and thus it is essential to ensure that lessons are conducted in a lively fashion. In addition more books orientated towards boys have been bought, boys are placed beside girls in class, and the teachers ensure that there is an appropriate balance between boys and girls in the school's awards system. The school is also participating in a national project, 'Success for All', which is aimed at maximising attainment in English for all pupils. In the Nursery, staff work hard to avoid stereotyping and to encourage independence. The inadequacies of the partnership between the parents and the school inevitably reduces the impact of these efforts. However, the difference between the overall performance of boys and girls in National Curriculum tests is now less for eleven year-olds than it is for seven year-olds, suggesting an improvement as the pupils move through the school. There was no evidence of any significant difference in attainment during the inspection.
9. Generally standards of attainment, by the age of seven and eleven, are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. This is a somewhat remarkable achievement given the fact that attainment on entry is now considerably lower, and the school has to devote so much of its energy simply to put a qualified teacher in front of each class. This maintenance of standards is due to the drive and commitment of the headteacher and the good relationships between her and her colleagues. Standards have been maintained in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. However, attainment in control technology is still unsatisfactory. Standards are judged to be somewhat lower in history by the age of seven and eleven, and art and design by the age of eleven. These comparisons are somewhat tentative, however, because of changes in the National Curriculum.

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

10. The school has maintained the positive attitudes evident in pupils at the time of the last inspection, with pupils eager to attend school and most arriving punctually and starting the day in a purposeful manner. Overall, pupils have positive attitudes towards lessons and learning and as a result they make good progress. Most pupils take part in the satisfactory range of activities provided by the school within the curriculum and there is a mostly good response from pupils to the very limited range of extra-curricular activities.
11. The behaviour of almost all pupils continues to be good. Bullying or oppressive behaviour is rare and when it occurs it is swiftly and effectively dealt with by the school. Pupils have a clear

understanding of the school rules and the expected standard of behaviour. They are courteous and trustworthy, and demonstrate respect both for their own and the school's property. Almost all pupils are polite, caring and friendly towards one another, staff and other adults. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, show respect for each other and in the main they are willing to listen to each other's points of view.

12. Pupils have progressive but limited roles of responsibility as they move through the school, and they respond very well to opportunities designed to foster their growth in personal development. Younger pupils perform simple tasks, such as the return of attendance registers to the school office, whilst older pupils undertake tasks requiring more responsibility such as caring for the youngest pupils during lunch and play breaks, acting as dining hall monitors in Year 5 and undertaking the role of prefect in Year 6. When given the opportunity pupils demonstrate initiative, such as requesting an after-school art club which is planned to start in the forthcoming summer term.
13. Pupils are caring towards each other, and in lessons they work together well, sharing equipment when required. They relate well to one another and are sensitive to each other's feelings, with the needs of others clearly understood. Mutual respect between pupils and staff is very clearly evident.
14. The good levels of attendance evident at the last inspection have been maintained, with the attendance rate during the last reporting year being well above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average because the school has a very strict policy about what constitutes an authorised absence. Not all of the teachers complete attendance registers correctly.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Overall the quality of teaching is sound throughout the school in every subject. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection, and in almost a half of the lessons it was good or very good. In some music lessons it was outstanding. The quality of teaching is reflected in the fact that the pupils make good progress. They come into the school with standards well below national expectation. By the age of seven and eleven standards of work seen generally match what is expected of these age groups.
16. The pupils are given a sound grounding in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and most make good progress in English and mathematics. Care is taken to ensure that the pupils use their skills – particularly writing and speaking - in other subjects, particularly in history. However, the work done in phonics is not yet consistently applied when pupils are reading or wondering how to spell words and this affects their work in all subjects. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are given effective additional support. There are individual educational plans for each of these pupils and this helps the teachers to provide work that is suited to their needs. Appropriate provision is also made for those with English as an additional language. These pupils are generally well taught and as a consequence they make good progress.
17. There has been a considerable improvement in teaching quality since the last inspection, when it was less than satisfactory in 19 per cent of lessons. The number of lessons which are good or better has greatly increased, particularly in Years 1-2. Pupil management is seldom an issue now and resources are generally well used. The pace in most lessons is well maintained with only occasional lapses. There is a much greater level of interaction between the teachers and pupils than was previously judged to be the case. Planning remains satisfactory. Despite concerns expressed by some parents, homework is now well used throughout the school to extend and consolidate pupils' learning.
18. A strong feature of the school is the enthusiasm and energy shown by all the staff. Many are very recently qualified and they show a considerable willingness to learn from evaluating their own lessons or by listening to others. These factors suggest that the quality of teaching will continue to improve. Because of their relative inexperience, a few feel less than confident about their teaching but this is not usually justified.
19. The teaching has many other strengths. Some lessons have clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils at the start so that at the end both teacher and pupils can assess whether these have been achieved. This raises the pupils' self-esteem and gives the teacher an opportunity to identify what went well and what might need further attention. Generally, the teachers have a sound knowledge of the subjects they are teaching which enables them to ask suitably searching questions to extend pupils' learning and encourage more accuracy in their answers. Many of the staff use the appropriate technical terminology in each subject so that pupils become familiar with new words and use them correctly. Teachers know their pupils well and this generates a pleasant learning atmosphere. In many lessons, good use is made of role play to add to the pupils' enjoyment and increase learning opportunities. Activities and resources are often well selected and varied to stimulate pupil participation. Formal assessment procedures and ongoing informal assessment allow teachers to identify what areas need further attention. They are well aware of the pupils' levels of attainment and what needs to be done to improve this. Good use is made of learning support assistants. For instance, in many lessons they are sensibly deployed during whole class sessions, observing and recording pupils' attainment against a checklist.

20. Even within good lessons there are sometimes weaknesses. For example, the tasks set for the whole class in mathematics are not always appropriate for each group. In a few lessons the balance between teacher in-put and pupil activity is inappropriate.

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

21. The school provides a suitable range of learning opportunities for children under five years of age in all areas of the curriculum, although the provision for developing their knowledge and understanding of the world, and ensuring their creative development is less strong than the provision for other aspects. The statutory curriculum is in place for pupils in Years 1-6 and there is a range of different activities and learning opportunities. Facilities for information and communication technology have recently been improved with the provision of a computer suite. However, the organisation for subjects does not always allow continuous development of skills across the curriculum. For example, there are substantial periods during the year when history is not taught at all. Furthermore, in physical education the pupils usually have a one hour lesson once per week, when it might be more appropriate to have two lessons of half an hour each.

22. There is a policy document for each subject but these are not dated. They have not all been revised in the light of recent developments in the National Curriculum. For example, the literacy policy contains no reference to drama, now a required element of the curriculum. There are adequate schemes of work for each subject but not for the Foundation Stage. There is a document which plans the curriculum in the long term specifying what each class will do each term. This is not greatly detailed but does give the staff a helpful reference point.

23. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are used satisfactorily and are having a positive effect on teaching and learning in mathematics and English. However, some of the teachers new to the school, were trained in Scotland where the strategies are not used. Although the school has provided appropriate training to make good the deficiency some teachers still display a lack of confidence, particularly in the teaching of mathematics.

24. There are some extra-curricular activities open to all pupils – modern dance, ballet and a computer club. The school is aware that these activities are rather limited at present. There are plans to introduce a French club and an art club in the very near future. There is a recorder club at break time and some pupils have guitar or violin lessons during school hours. There are few opportunities for sporting activities. There is a residential camp for Year 5 which is well supported, and pupils often go on visits to museums and local places of interest such as Tower Bridge, Colchester Castle and Tilbury Fort. Pupils have also been taken to local amateur pantomimes.

25. The school provides an appropriate level of personal, social and health education. There is a member of staff designated to oversee this area and to deal with any questions pupils may have on a one-to-one basis. There is a policy for the teaching of sex education, and a nurse comes into school to talk to pupils in Years 5 and 6, in separate groups about aspects that affect them directly. The pupils are made aware of the dangers of drug abuse through a drugs unit which visits annually.

26. There is effective liaison with parents before children enter the Nursery. However, the efforts of the staff to encourage independence, particularly with regard to boys, is sometimes frustrated when parents do too much for their children - when the latter are getting dressed, for example. There are appropriate links with the secondary schools to which most pupils go when they leave. Pupils visit



them with their parents and go for a day's lessons prior to moving into Year 7. Each pupil's record of progress from the age of five is sent to the next school to maintain continuity. There are strong links with the local church and pupils go there for major events in the Christian calendar like Ash Wednesday.

27. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision for spiritual development is good and some occasions arise spontaneously in class, for example in music lessons where pupils take an obvious delight in singing. However, there are some lost opportunities where this aspect could be more consciously built into planning to encourage pupils to experience the wonder of the world.
28. The school provides very well for the pupils' moral development and the provision for their social development is good. There is a very strong moral ethos and most pupils are well aware of the effect of their actions on others. There are many opportunities for social interaction, both in and out of the classroom, as pupils are encouraged to work together. Most are happy to work with a partner or a group in class and older pupils often play with or help younger ones in the playground.
29. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is sound. Pupils are introduced to cultures other than their own through looking at art or listening to music from other countries. Most learn about the developments in this country which have shaped our culture in lessons in history and geography. However, too little emphasis is placed on the multi-cultural nature of modern Britain and there are few planned opportunities to increase pupils' awareness of this.
30. The school meets all statutory requirements and all aspects of the curriculum are covered. In recent years it has focused on raising standards in English and mathematics and other subjects have been given less attention as a result. The school is aware that this now needs to be reviewed.

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

31. The school continues to provide a safe and caring learning environment for all its pupils, as it did at the time of the last inspection. A very good standard of general care is provided by sensitive class teachers, with good support from learning support assistants and midday staff. All staff are advised of the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns relating to child protection. Sound liaison and support arrangements with welfare and health services enable all pupils to be appropriately supported. The school has satisfactory administrative procedures and systems to ensure that staff are advised of any changes in individual pupils' needs
32. There are adequate systems and procedures in place for the regular monitoring and maintenance of most general health and safety requirements. This is also true for first-aid where there are a number of qualified staff. The systems in place for advising all staff of individual pupils' medical needs are informal but effective. Likewise the arrangements for ensuring overall pupil care and minimising potential risks in the school building are good. However, systems and procedures for the monitoring and recording of emergency evacuation practice and the routine testing of fire bells are inadequate. Equipment, including fire fighting equipment is routinely tested and very well maintained. Safe storage areas are provided for hazardous equipment, cleaning fluids and pupils' medication. Pupils are instructed in the safe use of equipment.
33. The very good whole-school approach to monitoring and promoting positive behaviour is very effective and as a result almost all pupils behave well. Likewise procedures for monitoring and eliminating bullying are good, although less formally structured. The procedures for promoting regular and punctual attendance are very good but the monitoring and recording of attendance is not consistent throughout the school and do not always comply with the prescribed system.
34. Procedures for monitoring, recording and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory overall. However, since there is no whole-school policy or approach to monitoring it, each class teacher has developed an individual approach. Some of these are effective and are used to inform planning and teaching but other systems are much less effective. Continuity and progression for each pupil is not always easily identified using the current system. Pupils with special needs, educational, social or medical, are identified and catered for appropriately.
35. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to develop its approach to the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress. The procedures are now good, the monitoring of individual progress is sound and the school makes satisfactory use of assessments to guide future curricular planning. A full programme of testing in English and mathematics has been drawn up using recognised national tests. Results, including 'baseline' assessments carried out in the Nursery, are recorded and analysed and staff are provided with information from this analysis. The school uses this information to help identify gaps in the education of pupils. Assessment has been extended to other subjects and records, including examples of pupils' work, are kept in individual pupils' assessment books.
36. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment of their needs is accurate and effective procedures are in place to help them make progress. Individual education plans are sufficiently detailed and specific and targets are regularly reviewed by the class teacher and the special needs co-ordinator. The school has begun to examine ways in which particularly gifted pupils can be identified and can receive additional support to enable them to make appropriate progress.

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

37. Overall, parents have positive views of the school and feel that it is well led and managed, that teaching is good and that children are expected to work hard and as a result make good progress. Most parents feel that children behave well and enjoy attending school, and that the school helps them to become mature and responsible members of the community. Although the vast majority of parents are happy with the amounts of homework that pupils receive, a minority feel that there is insufficient and variable amounts for some classes and in particular for Year 6. A considerable number of parents feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons and that provision for physical education, both within and outside of lessons, is limited. Likewise a small proportion of parents do not feel well informed about their children's progress and would like to see an improvement in the school's working relationship with them. Parents are concerned about the recruitment and retention of teachers but acknowledge that the school works hard to recruit teaching staff.
38. Although parents think highly of the school, the overall links with parents are unsatisfactory and significantly less good than those reported at the time of the last inspection. However, there are some sound aspects. There are, for example, regular letters and newsletters written in an accessible style which include both whole-school and class events. Information on the teaching of numeracy and literacy is provided for the parents of new pupils. The school brochure provides useful practical information on many aspects of school life but includes very little information on the curriculum. At present the overall information provided for parents on the curriculum is extremely limited. The school plans to issue detailed information on topics to be studied in each area of the curriculum during each forthcoming academic year with the intention that parents will be more fully informed and so able to support their children's learning. The annual governors' report to parents and the school brochure are informative and useful but do not comply fully with legal requirements.
39. Very few volunteers or parents help regularly within the classrooms or on other tasks. Two regular volunteers are very much appreciated. The Parent Teacher Association, which used to provide regular social and fund-raising events each year, has recently ceased due to lack of parental support. This is despite the school's concerted efforts to maintain the organisation. Parents are supportive of school productions and events. The provision of free adult computer literacy tuition at the school is very much appreciated and very well supported by parents.
40. Individual pupil reports are detailed but have a tendency to be descriptive rather than providing information on progress and achievement and do not generally contain targets for pupils to work towards. Opportunities are provided for parents to discuss the reports, and formal consultation evenings are held each term. Parents are fully consulted when pupils are identified as having special needs and they have regular opportunities to discuss progress, both formally and informally. They are fully involved in reviews of statements of special educational need, as well as in reviews of pupils' individual educational plans.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The headteacher provides committed and sensitive leadership for the school. She expresses explicit aims and values and demonstrates strong commitment particularly to promoting positive relationships and the raising of standards throughout the school. She has a quiet determination, and when necessary takes a firm line in order to ensure that her expectations are met. Relationships with the staff are very good and this enables them to work effectively as a team. She leads by example, and members of staff clearly value the way in which she supports them in their work and enables them to carry out their roles effectively. These were also significant factors in the previous inspection.
42. Since the majority of the teachers are new to the school and most are newly qualified, supply or unqualified the delegation of responsibilities has been limited. However, the headteacher is providing her staff with as much support and guidance as possible in an effort to prepare them to take on greater responsibilities in the coming school year.
43. The school, in common with others in the area and as noted in the last inspection, finds it difficult to recruit teachers and the headteacher and governors are commended for their foresight in writing over four hundred letters to Catholic parishes in Scotland which has resulted in a number of applications from teachers.
44. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory responsibilities. However, in its annual report to parents it does not report on the progress of the school's action plan or on how sporting aims have been met. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and how they complement those of the headteacher. They gain some idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through detailed reports they receive from the headteacher and staff, through the frequent presence of the chair of governors in the school, and as a result of observing the occasional lesson. They share with the staff a strong commitment to improvement. Governors, however, do not have a systematic approach to gathering first-hand evidence about the strengths of the school and they are over dependent on the headteacher for information and guidance. This limits the way in which they carry out their roles as 'critical friends' and the extent to which they can help shape the educational direction of the school.
45. The school has an enthusiastic but inexperienced management team whose role and influence on the school is developing. Teachers with responsibility for the leadership of a subject or aspect have a clear understanding of their role. Within the context of their inexperience they provide satisfactory leadership. They have started to examine their colleagues' plans for teaching and are prepared to share their expertise. Some co-ordinators have, for their own use, constructed action plans for developing their subjects and this is a positive initiative that needs to be encouraged and developed.
46. The number of staff at the school is generally suitable to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, but their experience is very limited. In some cases their expertise is also limited. For instance, the teaching of mathematics has been an issue, because some of the teachers were trained in Scotland where the National Numeracy Strategy is not used. The school and the teachers concerned have done well to start to overcome these difficulties, through training. Due to severe local recruitment difficulties, the school has two vacant teaching posts, both in the Foundation Stage. In addition another class is taught by an unqualified teacher. The governors have not been able to appoint a deputy headteacher to the post, which has been vacant for two years. There are no co-ordinators for art and design, design and technology and physical

education. The teachers who are new to the school have been inducted well with training and mentoring which is proving effective. The school makes very good use of specialist expertise in music. The procedures for performance management are sound. The non-teaching staff members make a significant contribution to the school. The number of support staff is suitable to meet the needs of pupils particularly those with special educational needs. Their commitment, enthusiasm and hard work has a major impact on the academic and personal development of pupils. This is also true of the two nursery nurses currently responsible for the Nursery. The staff handbook provides good information on school routines for new staff.

47. The headteacher carries a very large work load, with enthusiasm and good humour. There are a number of reasons for this. First of all, the youth and inexperience of many of the teachers has restricted the contribution which they can make to leadership and management. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of a deputy headteacher and the relatively low profile played by governors in helping to shape the school's educational direction.
48. Members of staff systematically evaluate test data to establish strengths and weaknesses and use the information satisfactorily to inform future planning. Assessment activities have included the monitoring of boys' achievement and subsequent efforts to raise their attainment to match that of the girls. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching are satisfactory overall. The headteacher, in partnership with the Local Education Authority advisory service, has focused on the core subjects of English and mathematics with observations resulting in demonstration lessons being arranged. The science co-ordinator has also given demonstration lessons. The headteacher has provided staff with good opportunities to attend specific in-service training to meet identified needs. The links between training and the school development plan have improved greatly since the last inspection. There are curriculum policies for all subjects but they are in need of review and updating.
49. The school's good provision for pupils with special educational needs complies fully with the national Code of Practice. The management of special educational needs by the co-ordinator is of high quality. She works very efficiently and effectively to ensure that all the staff understand the Code of Practice. As a result, teachers are well aware of the school's procedures and use them effectively to identify and support pupils at an early stage. The school uses all funding for special educational needs to good effect on pupils' learning and well-being. The special educational needs co-ordinator keeps the governor with responsibility for special educational needs appropriately informed.
50. The school is satisfactorily resourced in all areas of the curriculum and the accommodation is adequate. Some features, such as the computer suite, are good. Effective use is made of the school playground but there is no access to a grassed area for the pupils to play or to develop their sporting activities. The school cleaning staff make every effort to keep the school clean and to provide a pleasant working environment.
51. Financial and strategic planning are sound and are directly related to the school's educational priorities which are most appropriate. Specific grants are used effectively, and the headteacher and governors apply the principles of best value well when setting priorities and in the purchase of learning resources. The latest audit report indicated that the school's financial systems are operating satisfactorily; the recommendations within the report have been carried out. The significant financial sum carried forward from the previous financial year is a planned expenditure for replacing the school's heating system. Overall the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

52. In order to improve the quality of teaching and consequently standards of attainment further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- a) reduce the work load on the headteacher by:
  - extending and developing the part played by the governors in shaping the educational direction of the school; (Paras. 44, 47)
  - developing and improving the roles played by the senior management team and the subject co-ordinators; (Paras. 3, 45, 46, 113)
  - exploring, as planned by the school, every possible avenue in order to appoint a deputy headteacher, and making every effort to appoint teachers for each class. (Paras. 9, 46)
- b) make better use of the time allocated to subjects to ensure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills in a consistent and progressive way. (Paras. 3, 21, 113, 118, 131)
- c) develop a scheme of work for the Foundation Stage consistent with national requirements. (Paras. 1, 22, 62)
- d) promote and encourage closer links with parents. (Paras. 3, 8, 26, 37, 38, 39, 40, 46)

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

53. The school should also consider the need to:

- ensure that attendance registers are always completed properly; (Para. 14, 33)
- update, where necessary, subject policies; (Para. 45)
- develop a whole-school system for monitoring and recording pupils' personal development; (Para. 34)
- extend the current range of extra-curricular activities. (Paras. 10, 24)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	5	13	23	0	0	0
Percentage	5	12	30	53	0	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.]*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	201
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	52

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	61

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	3.3

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	1.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	20	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	5	12
	Girls	19	16	18
	Total	29	21	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (63)	64 (56)	91 (72)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	12	11
	Girls	19	18	18
	Total	27	30	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (44)	91 (47)	88 (19)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	14	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	8
	Girls	12	8	12
	Total	15	11	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (80)	42 (76)	77 (80)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	2	3
	Girls	9	8	8
	Total	11	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42 (76)	38 (84)	42 (80)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

## ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	171
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

## ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

## ***Teachers and classes***

### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	28.7

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

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	114

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	564099
Total expenditure	521331
Expenditure per pupil	2200
Balance brought forward from previous year	48357
Balance carried forward to next year	91125

## ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	253
Number of questionnaires returned	88

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	49	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	52	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	54	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	56	10	1	2
The teaching is good.	44	52	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	53	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	40	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	32	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	35	51	10	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	47	48	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	49	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	36	26	14	11

## **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**

54. Children usually begin the Nursery the term after their third birthday and attend part-time. They mostly transfer to the Reception class at the beginning of the term in which they will become five. Attainment on entry is well below average, particularly that of boys. The oldest children attend morning sessions in the Nursery and the youngest attend in the afternoon. The Foundation Stage had been experiencing staffing difficulties in the months prior to the inspection. There had been no Nursery teacher since the beginning of the academic year and the school had not been able to replace the Reception teacher who had left at the end of the autumn term. At the time of the inspection supply teachers were covering the Reception class and two nursery nurses were teaching the Nursery sessions.
55. The overall quality of teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory in all areas of learning. It has improved since the last inspection. As a result the children make satisfactory progress in most aspects of their work but it is good for their personal, social and emotional development in which the children reach national expectations by the end of the Reception Year. The children also attain the national expectations in their physical development. In other areas of learning their attainment in the main is still below expectations for their age by the end of the Reception year, although there is a wide range of attainment and some children do reach the national expectations.

#### Personal, social and emotional development

56. Children can work independently and individually and also co-operatively together in groups or as a class. By the end of the Reception Year, most pupils have satisfactory concentration spans and can persevere with a task. They tidy up when requested. By the end of Reception most children can dress and undress but they often expect their parents to assist with coats in the Nursery. Some children find it difficult to concentrate for an extended period of time in the Nursery. The staff encourage them to choose activities, but the children vary in their ability to work for a sustained period of time. The children are managed well and most behave well in response to this, particularly in the Nursery. A very small number of children in Reception are uncooperative at times and not readily obedient. Children in the Nursery sit together in groups at snack time and exercise good social skills. They play together well both during outside and inside activities. Children are often shy when they begin the Nursery and some have speech difficulties but they develop confidence during their time in the Foundation Stage and readily converse with adults by the end of the Reception Year.

#### Communication, language and literacy

57. By the end of the Reception Year, in response to sound teaching, several children have made a start to reading simple books which contain short sentences with repeated words but very few are reading books with a wider range of vocabulary. Children who join the Reception class at Christmas are on the whole not as forward in their learning, for example in their knowledge of sounds. By the end of the Reception year, most children know the sounds of letters and the letter names, although some still confuse 'b' and 'd'. They listen attentively and with interest to stories, such as 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', and respond well to questions about the book. However, few children in the Nursery were seen to select a book when choosing activities. They use picture

clues to help them gain an understanding of the text. The staff encourage children to form their letters correctly when practising them. A few children in the Reception class are beginning to write simple words by themselves but many need help with this activity. Some children find it difficult to hear the initial sound of a word and to repeat it correctly. When directed, children in the Nursery will listen to taped stories and they show good levels of interest on such occasions. In the Nursery most pupils can identify their own name and write with appropriate use of upper and lower case letters. Children's speaking and listening skills show satisfactory development through the Foundation Stage. However, overall the children do not reach national expectations by the end of the Reception Year.

#### Mathematical development

58. By the end of their time in the Foundation Stage children have made satisfactory progress, although the majority do not attain the standards expected nationally. Most pupils can count to 20 and most can say the number which comes after a given number up to nine. Most can recognise numerals to 10, although some children still have difficulty in reading numbers correctly. They can draw a given number of objects, and the staff ensure that more capable pupils can do simple addition sums by adding on one. They draw round their feet to find the longest foot and they can interpret a simple chart of their birthdays and state in which month most birthdays occur. Children can make their own repeating patterns with alternate colours, and they can recognise the most common two-dimensional shapes such as circle and square but they have difficulty in naming common three-dimensional shapes accurately. They understand positional words such as 'between' and 'behind' and they can place toy bears in order by size. However, the children do not have enough practical experience and they have limited opportunities to order using capacity, weight and length. They do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology to support their mathematical development. They lack experience in appreciating symmetry and in programming moving toys.

#### Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. Children gain some knowledge of the world through role-play, for example, in the Nursery when they work in the 'baby clinic' and immunise and weigh the 'babies'. Their knowledge of the world is, however, limited for their age. For instance, Reception children discussing the ingredients they had put into their pancakes referred to flour as 'powder'. Reception children have made a brief study of the requirements for the growth of plants and recognise the importance, for example, of water, light and warmth. In the Nursery the children develop an understanding of the sense of smell. However, although the children's opinions about the smell of different items such as garlic, ginger, lemon and onions were recorded they were not encouraged enough to describe their thoughts and preferences or to put these in order. Children did not use the computers during the inspection.

#### Creative development

60. Despite sound progress the majority of the children do not attain the standards expected for children of this age. Although the teaching is satisfactory, the children have limited opportunities to work with a range of media and to formulate their own designs and pictures. Too often the work seen in art and design merely requires the children to colour in a template as, for example, a photocopied image of a house in the Reception class. Few opportunities are provided for children to draw by careful observation. They have some experience of three-dimensional work, largely through working with construction toys. When the children made houses out of boxes their techniques for joining were somewhat unrefined. They enjoy singing nursery rhymes and number

songs such as 'Five little men in a flying saucer' and they know the next number when one flies away. They sing in tune and with enjoyment.

#### Physical development

61. The children make good progress and a significant number attain the standards expected by the time they leave the Reception Year. The staff organise suitable opportunities to ensure the children's physical development. They hold pencils correctly and use scissors appropriately when they cut out paper. Most children are able to dress and undress for physical education by themselves. They can explore by poking, squeezing and twisting. In physical education they move in a range of ways by shuffling, rolling, crawling and bear walking. When outdoors, pupils can jump over skipping ropes but very few are ready to skip with a rope. They manoeuvre wheeled vehicles with suitable dexterity by using their feet to propel themselves along, and they steer these vehicles with accuracy.
62. A major difficulty in the Foundation Stage is the lack of a scheme of work to ensure that, day-to-day, the children's learning progresses. Whilst the staff are aware of the national guidance for young children's learning there is no school structure to ensure that the outcomes in the national guidance are fulfilled.

#### ENGLISH

63. From the evidence seen during the inspection, standards of work of pupils at the age of seven in reading and writing are broadly at the level expected for that age group. Similarly by the age of eleven, the pupils are working at the expected level. Given the well below average attainment of children on entry to the school and the fact that they are still below average at the age of five, good progress is made in speaking and listening, reading and writing throughout Years 1-6, with the pupils developing and improving their skills year on year. Throughout the school the pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The work the school has put into raising standards is bearing fruit and current standards by the age of eleven are well above those indicated by the results in national tests in 2001.
64. By the end of Year 2, most pupils learn to read texts of an appropriate level of difficulty and with growing confidence. Some can work out new words logically and in many cases suggest their meaning. However, others do not put into practice the phonic skills they learn in lessons and cannot always work out new words without support. Many answer questions about the text sensibly showing that they understand most of what they read. A few read with considerable expression to emphasise the meaning. These more confident pupils are happy to help others in a constructive manner, which demonstrates that they are secure in their grasp of techniques in reading. Most pupils are articulate in discussions and express their point of view confidently and clearly using proper sentence construction. Most listen well to both adults and their classmates and can follow verbal instructions.
65. In their writing, many Year 2 pupils can compose stories following a sensible order of events having a beginning, a middle and an end. This was seen when they wrote accounts of an unexpected birthday party. Some were able to convey the idea of their feelings of surprise at this happy experience. Most pupils can write in a variety of styles, for example retelling familiar stories or giving instructions for making a mask. Some show a good grasp of the effects of humour when asked to retell the Little Red Riding Hood story from a different point of view, with the wolf as the

'goodie' and the little girl as the 'baddie'. Work is sometimes neatly presented and some remember to join their letters. Others still struggle with the layout of their work and do not always put the date and title. Most use capital letters and full stops correctly and a few are beginning to use speech marks appropriately. Spelling is variable. Many spell accurately when writing commonly used words but are insecure in applying phonic skills. A high proportion can correct mistakes when these are pointed out but do not have the habit of checking their own work automatically.

66. As they move into Year 3, speaking and listening skills develop well, and by the age of eleven many are able to take part in discussions with some perception. In Year 6, for example, many pupils are able to exchange ideas with a partner about why an event might have happened, for instance the breaking of a window. Many can think of imaginative explanations for this, which they describe using a wide vocabulary. Discussions in pairs stimulate each of the participants and their language develops further as a result. However, most pupils remain more articulate verbally than they are on paper.
67. Reading skills progress steadily between Year 3 and Year 6 and most pupils correct themselves when they misread a word. The majority of pupils can work out new words using a small range of phonic skills like breaking words into segments or sounding letters. Quite a few read expressively, showing an awareness of the meaning of the text. Some can read a sentence but are less confident in interpreting its meaning if it contains unfamiliar words. Many pupils can relate to books and stories which require quite a mature understanding. For example, during the inspection Year 3 pupils listened to the teacher read extracts from 'The Diary of Anne Frank'. Many of them can describe some of the emotions she and her family must have endured while they hid from the Germans during World War 2.
68. In Years 3 and 4 spelling of familiar words becomes more secure but careless mistakes often creep in and corrections are not completed consistently. Many use punctuation correctly and by Years 5 and 6 most are dividing their written work into paragraphs. Most pupils are able to improve the quality of their writing through planning, drafting and redrafting before the final effort. They learn the effectiveness of using techniques such as simile, metaphor or alliteration in their writing. An example of the latter was seen in Year 5 – 'My mate Megan made marmalade in March'. Most pupils learn to write in a variety of styles – letters, plays, newspaper reporting, book reviews, poetry and descriptive narrative among others. Some can convey a scene very vividly, for example 'A single cold tear ran down her cheek'. A few in both Year 5 and Year 6 can sustain this level of writing through a whole story. Their sentence construction becomes increasingly complex. However, many pupils do not produce a sufficient volume of written work.
69. There have been improvements since the last inspection. In particular the quality of teaching is much improved. Assessment procedures are more rigorous and help to guide planning more effectively. Learning objectives are stated in planning but these sometimes lack precision. There is now good interaction between teachers and pupils in all lessons. The standard of behaviour in classes is almost always good or better. There have been attempts to match work more carefully to what pupils are already capable of but some more attention needs to be given to this. The pupils continue to have a good attitude to their work and most try hard in lessons. Standards remain broadly as expected for each age group.
70. In Years 1-2, the quality of teaching observed was never less than sound and it was sometimes good. In Years 3-6, most teaching seen was good and occasionally very good. Where teaching is most successful, teachers convey a high level of enthusiasm which stimulates the pupils and increases their level of participation and enjoyment. Very good relationships between adults and



pupils ensure an appropriate atmosphere in which pupils can learn. Small white boards are often used well to give the teacher a chance to assess how well pupils are learning each teaching point. Their use also adds greatly to the fun of the lesson as most pupils love to show what they can do. However, these are sometimes inappropriately used for pupils to do rough work where they do not encourage pride in presentation. Teachers are often good role models in the use of appropriately mature vocabulary and correct technical terminology. This helps to develop accurate use of language. For instance, Year 5 pupils were skilfully led to understand the difference in meaning between 'compare' and 'contrast'.

71. Pupils are constantly challenged by probing questions which help them to develop their reasoning powers and think more deeply about the topic under discussion. Texts are sometimes challenging for pupils, and when this is the case the teacher leads pupils to a greater depth of understanding, often through very expressive reading. An example of this was seen in Year 1 when the teacher was reading 'The Big Bad Pig and the Three Little Wolves', a nice twist on the original tale. The class are usually brought together at the end of a group work session and are given an opportunity to discuss what they have done. Occasionally, this session is given extra value when pupils are given the opportunity to evaluate their own and others' work and discuss how this could be improved.
72. Drama is integrated into lessons, with short role play sessions used well to give pupils a chance to learn in a different way and, often, to understand at a deeper level. Work in Years 3-6 is usually marked with constructive comments to help pupils to improve. This happens less in Years 1-2. Pupils are often asked to work in pairs selected by the teacher. This collaborative work is often effective in raising the confidence of pupils by giving them the opportunity to rehearse an answer before having to speak in front of the whole class. It also keeps all pupils involved in an activity.
73. Some lessons, which are otherwise good, have unsatisfactory aspects. For instance, what the teacher wants the pupils to know by the end of a lesson is sometimes ill-defined, lacks precision and is not shared with the pupils. This makes it difficult for the teacher and the pupils to assess what has been achieved. Some teachers rely too much on pupils' responses and seem reluctant to suggest ways in which these responses could be extended or improved. Praise is often judiciously awarded to raise pupils' self-esteem but sometimes this is given indiscriminately and thus loses its effect. Pupils are sometimes kept too long on the carpet area and they become uncomfortable and so less attentive. The impact of the lesson is then diminished. Sometimes insufficient time is allowed for the completion of a set task. Some teachers do not take sufficient care to model good handwriting and presentation at all times. Pupils then feel that presentation does not matter and as a result do not take pride in their own work.
74. There are useful links to some other subjects. For example, the pupils' historical knowledge is often incorporated very effectively into literacy lessons. Some use is made of information and communication technology for newspaper editing, formatting work and using the word processor. However, too few opportunities are created in science or geography to extend pupils' literacy development. The library has a reasonable range of books which are categorised clearly to allow pupils to find what they are looking for. Some use is made of the library in lesson time and pupils are encouraged to change their books regularly. However, the space is limited and there are few comfortable seats. As a result pupils are not much tempted to carry out research or browse through the shelves to stimulate their independent learning.
75. The subject is managed effectively. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented satisfactorily. The co-ordinator is recently in post and has only been qualified for two years. She has great enthusiasm and a clear vision for the subject and has identified areas which need further

development. The main priority is to raise standards in reading and writing. Some of the strategies put in place to achieve this are proving effective. Year 6 have had 'booster' classes each week since September where they are placed in sets based on prior attainment. Targets for individual pupils are set for Years 5 and 6 and this practice is shortly going to be extended across the school. These targets are discussed with both pupils and their parents so that all are aware of what needs to be achieved if each pupil is to progress. Assessment procedures enable the staff to track pupils' progress through the school. There are few opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe lessons but she is able to monitor planning in Years 3-6.

## **MATHEMATICS**

76. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment at age seven and eleven are average. This is similar to the findings at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils enter the Reception class with standards well below what is expected for their age and evidence indicates that they make good progress and that they achieve well by the age of seven and eleven.
77. In Year 2 most pupils can count, add, subtract and recognise numbers to 100. They can recall some addition and subtraction facts to 10 and they investigate number patterns successfully. Most can add and subtract ten to a given number mentally. The majority of pupils are beginning to understand the value of each digit in numbers up to 1000 and use their knowledge of doubles to calculate amounts of money. They use appropriate written methods when representing mathematical calculations. They name two-dimensional shapes and classify them according to their properties, and are beginning to understand angle as an amount of turn. They construct simple bar charts from data they have collected.
78. By the age of 11, pupils' mental arithmetic skills are satisfactory. They add two decimal numbers quickly and correctly and use good strategies to calculate the fractional parts of whole numbers. They know that division is repeated subtraction, and most pupils make satisfactory use of mental strategies and what they know about numbers, to help them when dividing. They understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils have a good knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes, their properties, and can measure angles accurately. They can handle data and they produce a variety of graphs to support their work. Most written work is set out correctly, but in a number of classes the overall presentation of work is untidy and indicates a lack of care by the children. Teachers do not always draw this untidiness to the pupils' attention.
79. The pupils are provided with a balanced curriculum and learning is progressively built upon as pupils get older. However, in the majority of lessons, the content of the work is the same for pupils of all abilities, the only difference being the amount of adult support provided - usually for the lower attainers. In some lessons teachers are astute in spotting that higher attainers need more challenge and provide this, but generally teachers are less perceptive and the match of work is not always challenging enough for these pupils.
80. Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory overall, taking into account the lessons seen and work in the pupils' books. During the inspection, teaching in lessons varied from satisfactory to good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. All teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and in lessons try to involve all of the pupils in question and answer sessions. The National Numeracy Strategy is established and teachers plan and deliver their lessons in line with its requirements. This has ensured consistency in teaching methods, and that pupils receive daily opportunities to develop and practise strategies in mental calculation. As a result pupils make good progress in many lessons. However, a number of teachers new to the school were trained in

Scotland where the strategy is not used and, although the school has provided appropriate training to make good this deficiency, some teachers still display a lack of confidence in the teaching of mathematics.

81. In most lessons the teachers use on-going assessment appropriately to adjust teaching during the lesson or to influence the planning of future lessons. In one case targets were raised as a result of such an assessment, whereas in another they were judged to be too high and the work was re-visited in a different and less challenging way.
82. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs receive additional adult assistance, either from the class teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator or learning support assistants. This works well, both in terms of providing additional teaching input to support learning and in ensuring that pupils concentrate and complete work given. These pupils make good progress.
83. Mathematics makes a sound contribution to the pupils' developing skills of literacy, particularly to speaking and listening as the pupils work together in groups and as a class. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to support the pupils' learning in mathematics.
84. Mathematics is led by a competent co-ordinator who has only been responsible for mathematics for six months. An audit of resources has been completed and a process for evaluating teachers' planning is being put in place. She has analysed the school's test results and involved the whole school staff in the process. Demonstration lessons have been held, linked to this analysis, in an effort to strengthen identified weaknesses.

## **SCIENCE**

85. Taking all the inspection evidence into consideration the pupils' work meets national expectations by the age of seven and eleven. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. All pupils make good progress and achieve well in lessons, including both boys and girls, higher attainers, pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language.
86. Pupils in Year 1 are developing a good understanding of fair testing and they can predict which materials are likely to be waterproof and then test their predictions and record the results. In Year 2 the pupils sensibly discuss the variables when considering whether weight affects how far a toy vehicle travels. They tell the teacher that they must 'keep the ramp at the same height', 'not push the car' and 'always start the cars at the same place'. They show a good understanding of what constitutes a scientific investigation by suggesting various experiments that could be undertaken to find out the effect of weight. All of the pupils have some understanding of a 'fair test', and many have a good grasp of how to set up a scientific investigation.
87. In Year 3 the pupils extend their knowledge of materials and they are able to describe the properties of materials such as plastic, paper and wood. In doing this they use an appropriate range of words; for instance, 'flexible' and 'rigid'. In Year 4 all the pupils have a sound knowledge of what sort of habitat is required by a range of insects and small animals. In Year 5 they can explain how they had conducted an experiment to illustrate how sound travels. Year 6 pupils understand how a circuit can be changed in order to make a bulb brighter, a motor run faster, and how to avoid fusing an appliance.

88. The quality of teaching is sound overall but good or very good teaching was seen in two out of the six lessons observed. As a result, the pupils enjoy their work and learn well. All of the teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. They use good teaching methods and they make effective use of resources. They assess the pupils' current knowledge and use this as a starting point for further teaching. To help them do this they employ good questioning techniques, encourage the pupils to contribute, and listen to what they have to say. A particular feature of the teaching is the teachers' willingness to evaluate their lessons and use this information for future planning. The pupils are well behaved in response to good class management, the appropriate expectations of the adults working with them, and interesting activities.
89. The good and very good lessons are characterised by the teacher's understanding of how to motivate pupils. In particular the teachers in these lessons use feigned ignorance or incredulity well. In one lesson for Year 4, for example, the teacher wanted the pupils to 'help her out' in her understanding of habitats. In another lesson for Year 2 the teacher deliberately misunderstood the pupils in order to facilitate increasing precision of language. In both of these lessons the pupils were falling over each other to join in! Such lessons also encourage the pupils to explain their thinking, and the teacher then makes skilful use of what they say. As a result the pupils feel valued, behave well and concentrate hard.
90. Science lessons generally make a good contribution to speaking and listening but less of a contribution to reading and writing. Science supports the pupils' work in numeracy well, particularly through measurement, and the recording of results in tabular or graphical form. There are links with other subjects; for instance, history through the study of vaccination. However, the use of information and communication technology is not as extensive as it might be.
91. The management of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator has a satisfactory knowledge of the quality of teaching and attainment throughout the school, and this is starting to have an impact on the pupils' progress. In addition, he has usefully taught demonstration lessons in Years 1, 2, 4 and 5, placing an appropriate emphasis on developing the pupils' skills of investigation. New equipment has been bought and resources are now good overall. However, the co-ordinator is aware of the need to purchase devices and software to increase the use of information and communication technology in science. All the requirements of the National Curriculum are met.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

92. Standards of work by the age of seven have been maintained since the previous inspection and remain close to national expectations for the age group. By the age of eleven, standards are not as high as was judged to be the case last time but they match the national expectations.
93. In Years 1 and 2, many pupils begin to develop the idea of shape and pattern in their work. Most use paint well to produce colourful and lively landscapes. Some show good manual control in producing pleasing designs for jumpers made with the ends of pencils or shaped blocks dipped in paint. Many pupils in Year 2 have good brush control as they learn how to make rainbow shades. This skill is put to good use later in the school where many pupils produce colourful, lively pictures of banded sunsets with black silhouetted shapes superimposed very effectively. Some pupils are able to use paint well to depict the texture and shape of objects such as pieces of fruit. Using pasta shapes sprayed gold, a few pupils are able to produce attractive picture frames.

94. Most pupils continue to improve their use of paint as they move through Years 3-6. Some, inspired by the work of David Hockney, reproduce the effect of light shining on swimming pools. Many in Year 4 can use pieces cut from a magazine well to make a collage of the human face showing varying skin tones and hair texture. Shading techniques with pencils of different hardness are less well developed but some pleasing work is done in charcoal and occasionally in pastel. Many remain unsure of the proportions of the human body and most continue to draw faces from the front rather than attempt different angles. Some pupils in their last two years at the school show a growing ability to evaluate both their own pictures and those of famous artists. By observing how different effects are created they are able to improve their own work. Some are able to capture movement having studied the work of Monet and African artists.
95. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved and there is no evidence of unsatisfactory teaching now. Pupils continue to make steady progress in using a variety of media. They build on the skills they have learnt, both in individual lessons and as they move through the school. They enjoy art lessons and most try hard and take a pride in their work.
96. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and lessons are well prepared. The teachers are enthusiastic and energetic in their approach which draws pupils well into each lesson. They explain the task clearly so that pupils are aware of what is required of them. Generally, they use questions appropriately to make pupils think more deeply about their work. Pupils are often encouraged to describe what they are seeing when looking at the work of other artists. This helps to develop language and also to identify techniques that have been used to produce certain effects such as Monet's use of colour to create atmosphere and light. Some, but not all, teachers demonstrate techniques well so pupils can learn by watching. Most work is displayed well to add value to what the pupils achieve.
97. In some lessons, too much time is spent on reprimanding minor misdemeanours so the flow of the lesson is constantly interrupted. In the main insufficient time is allowed for pupils to evaluate what went well in their own work and that of others. An opportunity is thus lost to increase their sense of achievement and give pointers for improvements in the future. Pupils are not encouraged to use sketchbooks to plan or draft their work or practise different techniques.
98. At present there is no co-ordinator for the subject but some training has been provided for the staff. The scheme of work, based on national guidelines, ensures that appropriate work is covered. There is a small portfolio of pupils' work in each year to show the areas of the curriculum covered. However, as this is not matched to nationally expected levels of attainment for each year group its contribution to progress is limited. Progress is also constrained by the fact that there is an insufficient variety of pencils, boards and paper. There are useful links to other subjects in the curriculum such as literacy, religious education and geography. The links with history are particularly strong and pupils produce some very vivid displays to add depth to their studies of, for example, the Vikings.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. National Curriculum requirements in design and technology are fulfilled and pupils' attainment meets expectations by the age of seven and eleven. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities and those with English as an additional language make good progress. Proper attention is paid to designing and evaluating, as well as making. The work undertaken takes account of topics being studied, enabling pupils to make good links with other

subjects and to use their mathematical and literacy skills. However, little use is made of information and communication technology.

100. In a lesson for Year 2 the pupils had a sound understanding of the design process as they discussed with their teacher ideas for making a model vehicle to carry 'Porky Pig', a soft toy which lives in the classroom. They were successful in committing their individual, annotated designs to paper. The pupils were able to describe elements of their designs and talk about the thinking behind the decisions they made. This work made a useful contribution to writing and to speaking and listening.

101. In a lesson for Year 5 good links were made with music and science as the pupils examined percussion instruments with a view to making their own. They made good progress in establishing the advantages and limitations of the materials they were to use. In work carried out before the inspection, Year 6 pupils had achieved satisfactory standards in designing, making and evaluating a shelter, a bridge and a rabbit hutch.

102. The quality of the teaching is good. The pupils are provided with opportunities to learn effectively through activities that are directly related to their everyday experiences or other subjects. Often the tasks are set in a context likely to capture the interest of young children. For instance, as a starting point for the 'Porky Pig' lesson, the teacher produced a letter, built up the excitement about opening it, and then read it. It proved to be a letter from Porky's mum! This could not fail to motivate Year 2 pupils. In the instrument making lesson the pupils experimented with real instruments, establishing the scientific principles underlying aspects of their design. As a consequence one pupil made an 'instrument' from a margarine box and three elastic bands and then proceeded to play 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' on it! The pupils make good progress and behave well in response to the teaching. Relationships are good and this enables teachers and pupils to have fun during the lessons. This was evident when the Year 2 teacher, overhearing a comment from one of the pupils, remarked 'No, we're not going to make Porky into a pie!'

103. Although there is currently no co-ordinator for design and technology, appropriate provision is made for the subject. The national scheme of work is used and this provides adequate guidance for the teachers. Resources are sound and they are used well by the staff.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

104. All pupils make good progress in geography and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. As a result standards of work by the age of seven and eleven are broadly in line with the national expectations for the age groups. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. In Year 2 many pupils are able to see the differences between the area in which they live and a contrasting one, for example an imaginary island. As well as recognising that Tilbury is very much more densely populated and has much more traffic, they also point out more detailed differences. For instance, one pupil notes that whereas Tilbury has a library in a permanent building, it is more likely that the island will be served by a mobile library.

105. By Year 6, most pupils understand weather patterns in different parts of the world with one boy, for example, giving a 'textbook' definition of Africa's equatorial rain forests. They also achieve satisfactory standards in mapping, when they draw the playground to scale, illustrating the drainage system. This, in common with other aspects of the work in geography, makes a significant contribution to the pupils' developing skills of numeracy.

106. Based on the two lessons seen and an examination of past work, the quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall. The teachers are enthusiastic and have good relationships with the pupils. As a consequence the latter work hard and learn well. The methods used by the teachers are appropriate to the age group, and they show a good understanding of the subject and the needs of individual pupils. The teachers encourage the pupils to develop their own ideas and then they build on these in order to extend knowledge and understanding; in the lesson for Year 2, when a mobile library was suggested for the island community, the teacher asked the pupils whether they thought this might be a boat. In this lesson the teacher also used a story well to generate interest. This was successful, and the pupils paid careful attention, behaved well and contributed to the discussion with enthusiasm. A particular feature of the lesson was the use of drama, with the pupils miming Island occupations and also the jobs that people do in Tilbury.

107. A lesson for Year 6 was one of a well planned sequence which provided the pupils with opportunities to practise their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Thus the pupils used research skills in the library, collected, represented and interpreted data, and used the Meteorological Office web site and fax service. Taking the school as a whole, however, geography is not used well to help the pupils develop new skills in literacy or to practise existing ones.

108. The subject is satisfactorily led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator, who has devoted the bulk of his time to developing science, the other subject for which he has responsibility. Resources are sound and have been enhanced recently by the purchase of more maps.

## **HISTORY**

109. Standards of work seen for pupils aged seven and eleven are broadly at the levels expected for those age groups. Throughout the school pupils of all abilities make good progress. In Years 1 and 2, pupils begin to understand, in the context of their immediate family, that time passes and changes occur. They realise the passing year is marked by birthdays, Easter, Christmas etc. The majority have some understanding of the idea of 'then' and 'now'. Most realise that toys, houses and holiday activities have changed since their grandparents' day. Many come to understand the way in which famous people have made their mark, for example Florence Nightingale.

110. From the age of seven onwards, most pupils develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between cause and effect in various periods of history. Most Year 3 pupils can discuss how the lives of the people of Britain were affected by the Second World War, and in Year 4 some are able to understand and relate to the different roles played by men and woman at the time of the Vikings. The depth of understanding about this period was well demonstrated by two pupils who 'became' Vikings and answered questions from the class with considerable factual recall and perceptiveness. Many Year 5 pupils are perceptive about the social differences between rich and poor in Victorian times and a few become quite indignant about social injustices. By the age of eleven, most pupils have gained a deeper understanding of different periods of history and begin to understand some of the reasons why Britain is as it is today.

111. Since the last inspection, standards of have been maintained for seven-year-olds but standards by the age of eleven are not as high as they were judged to be last time. Pupils continue to enjoy history and local museums are still used effectively. Visits to places of interest locally are well chosen to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

112. It was only possible to observe one lesson which was judged to be very good. It is not possible to make a definitive judgement on the overall quality of teaching and learning, although a scrutiny of work and discussion with staff and pupils suggest that it is at least sound and often better. Good use is made of local people who are able to talk to pupils about their childhood memories of World War 2. Pupils are encouraged to ask sensible questions to gain a deeper insight into the difficulties evacuee children encountered. The use of role play is very effective. The pupils' skills in art and design, and design and technology are put to good use to make very attractive displays with a strong visual impact. Year 3 pupils, for example, produced a creditable Anderson air raid shelter. In some lessons, pupils are encouraged to develop their skills in literacy when they write diaries or accounts of other people's way of life. However, insufficient attention is paid to encouraging pupils to realise how personal opinion distorts historical fact.

113. There is insufficient evidence to judge the standard of subject management because the co-ordinator is newly qualified and had only been in the post for one month at the time of the inspection. The time allocated to the teaching of history is at the lower end of what the government suggests. This is to an extent redressed through the strong link to many literacy lessons where the pupils' historical knowledge is used effectively as a background for different styles of writing. Some use is made of information and communication technology including the Internet.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. Since the previous inspection the school has made many improvements in information and communication technology but it acknowledges that there is still much work to do to improve the quality of the provision for control technology. Standards by the age of eleven are below national expectations in this aspect of the subject. Otherwise pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress and their attainment matches national expectations by the age of seven and eleven.

115. By the time they are seven, pupils have developed satisfactory levels of mouse control and keyboard skills. Year 2 pupils successfully drag and enlarge images, and when selecting shapes and predicting mirror images pupils select appropriate tools and choose colours to enhance their work. They use subject specific vocabulary, such as 'mouse' and 'keyboard'. Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop word processing skills, for example when typing out prayers they use the 'enter' key to create line breaks. They use capital letters, the delete key, full stops and the space bar. In Year 1 there are close links with literacy when a scene from the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' was illustrated by the pupils using a colour program. Throughout Years 1-3 pupils produce posters and illustrations relating to on-going work within the classroom.

116. As in many schools, a major strength is the pupils' skill in using information and communication technology tools to communicate and handle information. Pupils in Year 6 are confident when using the school's network to 'log on' to their work spaces, launch the programs they need to use, and save and print their work. In common with younger pupils in the school, they talk enthusiastically about their use of the computer and are keen to share what they have done. They have satisfactory skills in using a word processor to present their work and they make appropriate use of different fonts, colours and emphases - 'bold' and 'underline' - to set out their work and make it look attractive. The school has Internet access and by the age of eleven pupils are confident in using it to search for sites that provide information to support their work. In a lesson for Year 6, for instance, the pupils demonstrate their skills in accessing the World Wide Web to gather information on the weather in the regions that they are studying in geography. The pupils understand that computers can be used to hold information and are powerful devices for sorting and searching.



117. In all the lessons observed teaching was never less than satisfactory. In half of the lessons it was good. Lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives for what pupils will learn. They were well organised and the teachers gradually and skilfully developed new skills. In a lesson for Year 4 the pupils were encouraged to use a variety of presentation techniques to produce posters relating to their work in literacy. The lesson was well led and the pupils were motivated by the task. A lesson for Year 5 was one of a well-planned sequence of lessons aimed at creating records for a database. The teachers carefully question pupils in order to review and consolidate their use of the network and the development of skills.

118. The school has a scheme of work for information and communication technology. Although this covers the National Curriculum, not all aspects are given sufficient attention in teaching. In particular the pupils are not yet provided with enough opportunities to monitor events and control devices. The school has a new computer suite and all classes are timetabled to use this resource. Teachers are benefiting from professional development provided by the co-ordinator as well as an outside consultant. At times teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise their information and communication technology skills in other subjects, but this aspect is generally underdeveloped. Pupils do not normally use the computers outside the allocated periods. During the inspection the suite was only used for 50 percent of the time.

## MUSIC

119. The standards in music for pupils aged seven and eleven match the national expectations for these age groups. Throughout the school there are a significant number of pupils working above these standards, particularly in singing. In every lesson pupils listen attentively and try very hard to achieve what is required of them.

120. By the age of seven, most pupils sing with great enjoyment showing an awareness of rhythm, pitch and dynamics (the effects of singing louder or more softly). Most can clap rhythms accurately. They are able to recognise a range of untuned percussion instruments, such as castanets, tambourines and maracas. They learn to accompany songs such as 'Zip-a-dee-doo-dah'. Some are able to sustain quite complicated rhythmic patterns throughout a song although others find it difficult to sing and beat the rhythm at the same time. Most pupils pick up a new song quickly, including the words, and by the end of lessons can give a creditable performance. Most can recognise 'high' or 'low' notes on the piano and can pick out the highest note when the teacher sings a line of music. Some are able to associate music with different kinds of movement. For example, a few were able to identify Saint Saens' representation of an elephant in his 'Carnival of the Animals'.

121. As they move through Years 3-6, most pupils develop their skills in singing. Most can identify notes on the five line staff and some can say how many beats there are in each bar. By Year 4, many know the names of various note values such as crotchets, semi-breves, minims and quavers. In each year group, a growing number of pupils can accompany a song with recorders, chime bars or xylophones. Year 6 pupils are able to adapt their accompaniment to take account of syncopated rhythms. Performances of songs by the end of each lesson are lively, enthusiastic and increasingly confident. The words can clearly be heard and pupils use dynamics to good effect. Most pupils derive great enjoyment from their music lessons and often applaud others' efforts spontaneously.

The choir performs with great enthusiasm and to a high level. They sing confidently with descants. Singing in assemblies sometimes lacks the vivacity and tunefulness of class or choir performances.

122. There has been a considerable improvement in teaching quality since the previous inspection and it was very good or outstanding in each of the lessons observed. Standards are rising as pupils benefit from this very high quality of teaching. Pupils continue to show a good level of enthusiasm and participate with confidence. Progress is rarely less than steady overall and is usually good in lessons.

123. The tremendous enthusiasm and wide subject knowledge of the music teacher ensure that pupils learn systematically to improve their skills. Lessons have a happy atmosphere which helps the pupils to learn more quickly. The teacher continuously encourages the pupils to play 'with some gusto' which helps them to perform to an increasingly higher standard as lessons proceed. There is very good demonstration of technique so the pupils have a good example to follow. Pupils are taught how to use their tongues, lips and breathing to improve singing techniques. Teaching points are constantly reinforced to consolidate pupils' learning. Technical terms are always used correctly to develop the pupils' accurate use of music vocabulary. Very good relationships between the teacher and the pupils and a high expectation of good behaviour ensure that there is a good atmosphere in which the pupils can learn. Pupils are quite often asked to evaluate how their performances could be improved. Games, such as identifying an instrument with their eyes shut, are well used to add to the general enjoyment and to sharpen pupils listening skills.

124. The subject is well managed by a co-ordinator who has only been in post for a very short period and teaches at the school for two days a week. She is a music specialist of considerable standing and has a clear vision for the subject. The scheme of work has been devised by her and meets National Curriculum requirements. Pupils can learn to play the recorder, guitar and violin and in Year 6 they use a recording studio nearby. There they have the opportunity to develop their knowledge of mixing sound decks and also to play a full drum set. This makes a positive contribution to attitudes and to progress. There are well developed and motivating links with other subjects; for example, to design and technology where pupils use their knowledge of sound production to create their own instruments. There are plans for pupils, in the near future, to develop their composing skills using information and communication technology.

125. Pupils go out of school to sing to older members of the community. The Christmas concert is another opportunity for pupils to perform in front of an audience which develops social skills as well as musical ones. The subject makes a contribution to pupils' spiritual development through fostering a joy in singing. Cultural development is enriched through listening to and performing a wide range of music from all over the world.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

126. Three physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, two in Years 1-2 and one in Years 3-6. All were gymnastic lessons and indicated that standards in physical education match national expectations. This is a similar picture to that reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils take part in a programme of swimming lessons and are able to swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

127. Throughout the school pupils have access to a broad variety of physical activities. These include gymnastics, swimming, dance and outdoor adventurous activities. These are carefully planned to ensure that, as they grow older, pupils progressively acquire a range of skills in all areas. The

school does not have access to a grassed playing field and this restricts the development of the sporting side of the curriculum, especially competitive team games and competitions.

128. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Lessons are well prepared and organised and proceed at a good pace. Activities for lessons are well planned and there is a clear structure. Links with literacy are good. For example in one lesson the story of the 'Three Little Pigs' was used well and this captured the pupils' imagination and motivated them to perform to a high level. There is sound teaching of skills and appropriate opportunities for pupils to practise them, individually and with a partner. Teachers draw pupils' attention to key points, assess the quality of their performance and give feedback to help them improve. Occasionally they demonstrate themselves or use pupils to model good practice.
129. Pupils are taught about the important contribution which physical activity makes to a healthy lifestyle and about the effects of exercise on their bodies. The pupils have a good understanding of these issues. There is also a strong emphasis on safety and pupils' attention is regularly drawn to this. They are very conscious of how to ensure that they cause no risk to themselves or to others.
130. Pupils enjoy physical education lessons. They sustain high levels of activity, showing great willingness and determination to improve their level of skill. Behaviour is very good. Pupils listen carefully to instructions, organise themselves effectively and clear away equipment promptly. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to the curriculum and make satisfactory progress.
131. Physical education is allocated one period of one hour duration during the school week and when the whole school attend Mass at the local church the class allocated a lesson at that time does not have physical education during that week. A lesson of one hour's duration is demanding on pupil concentration as well as on the motivating skills of the teacher. At the time of the inspection there was no staff member with co-ordinating responsibility for physical education.