

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST EDMUND CAMPION CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Maidenhead

LEA area: Windsor and Maidenhead

Unique reference number: 110030

Headteacher: Mrs P Opalko

Reporting inspector: David Westall
2414

Dates of inspection: 27 - 30 November 2000

Inspection number: 197387

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: 5 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Altwood Road
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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Richard Foster

Date of previous inspection: 15/9/97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
D Westall 2414	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
E Forster 1333	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
B McCutcheon 2420	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
J Head 2430		History Music Physical education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	Attitudes, values and personal development
S Wellsted 3856	Team inspector	English Geography Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

There are 259 pupils on roll, taught in nine classes. Children start at the school in the term after their fifth birthday, so there were no children in the Foundation Stage in the inspection term. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, and the percentage on the school's register of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Five pupils speak English as an additional language, and two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. Pupils demonstrate a broad range of standards on entry to the school, and there are variations in the attainment profiles of different cohorts. For example, the Year 6 class in 2000 included a much higher than usual percentage of pupils with learning difficulties. Overall, however, pupils' standards are usually above average when they start at the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which benefits from effective leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff, as well as from its well informed governing body. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are a credit to the school, and it provides well for both their academic and personal development. Across the school, the teaching is mainly good, and pupils generally achieve well, as a result. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology (ICT) need to be raised, and the school development plan should include longer term planning. Overall, however, the school's strengths greatly outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good, overall, in both key stages.
- The headteacher has good leadership and management skills, and the governors are well informed and support the school well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good.
- Pupils achieve well in English; and their mathematical skills and scientific knowledge are good.
- Standards are also above average in geography, history and music.
- The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs, and these pupils make mainly good progress as a result.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is a caring community, where procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are effective.
- Strong links are established with parents, and they have a high regard for the school.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards are too low in some important aspects of their work in ICT.
- The school development plan provides insufficient outline planning beyond next term.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing most of the weaknesses identified in the last OFSTED inspection, in 1997. The quality of lesson planning has improved in Years 3

and 4, and pupils now have ample opportunities to create musical compositions in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs now have targets for their learning in numeracy; and procedures for monitoring teaching and pupils' standards are much improved. Assessment procedures are better, and effective use is made of assessment to inform teachers' planning. In 1997, the teaching of ICT was unsatisfactory, and pupils' overall standards in the subject were too low. Staff confidence and skills have improved, and the teaching is now much better. However, there is still work to be done to raise pupils' standards in some important aspects of their ICT work.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	A	C
Mathematics	B	A	C	E
Science	C	C	C	E

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

The results of the Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs), at the end of Key Stage 1 (in Year 2) were well above the national average in 2000 in reading, writing and mathematics. These results were above average when compared to the results of similar schools. These high standards have been maintained in reading, writing and mathematics since 1997.

The table above shows the school's results in the SATs in 2000, at the end of Key Stage 2 (in Year 6), were well above the national average in English and were broadly in line with the results achieved by similar schools. In mathematics and science, the 2000 results in Key Stage 2 matched the national average but were well below average when compared to the results achieved by similar schools. The Year 6 cohort in 2000 included an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and evidence suggests the English results were a particularly good achievement, as a consequence. In English and mathematics, the school achieved results which were mainly well above the national average in the previous three years.

Inspection findings broadly reflect the SATs results achieved in the last four years in English, at the end of both key stages. They show that pupils achieve well in reading, writing and speaking and listening, across the school. In mathematics, inspection findings broadly reflect the 2000 SATs results in Key Stage 1, and are more favourable than the school's 2000 SATs results in Key Stage 2. They show that pupils in Years 2 and 6 are generally demonstrating standards which are above those expected nationally in mathematics. In science, inspection findings show that pupils' overall standards are above average in Year 2. In Year 6, pupils' scientific knowledge is mainly above average, while their scientific enquiry skills are broadly average.

Across the school, standards are good in geography, history and music, and are sound in art and design, design and technology and physical education. Pupils' skills in communicating

through text and graphics are at least equal to those expected nationally in ICT. However, their standards in data handling and control technology are too low in the subject.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic, enjoy coming to school and are interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good, throughout the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with teachers and with each other. They share equipment sensibly, listen with interest during discussions and respect the ideas and beliefs of others. Pupils respond well when given responsibility for a range of school duties.
Attendance	Attendance is good, with very low levels of unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-7 years (Key Stage 1)	aged 7-11 years (Key Stage 2)
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory, or better, in 98 per cent of all lessons. Nearly three quarters of all lessons seen in Key Stage 1 were good and occasionally very good, while about half of all lessons in Key Stage 2 demonstrated good, and occasionally very good, teaching.

In English, the teaching is mainly good in both key stages, and a high proportion is very good. As a consequence, pupils make good, and sometimes very good, progress in their learning in English. In mathematics, the teaching is mainly good in Key Stage 1 and enables pupils to progress well. In Key Stage 2, mathematics teaching is satisfactory, overall, but is particularly effective for the top mathematics set in Year 6. In science, the teaching is satisfactory, overall, and enables most pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning. In the lessons observed in ICT, the teaching was mainly good. However, while teachers enable pupils to make sound or better progress in developing keyboard skills and communicating information, they give insufficient attention to the promotion of pupils' skills in datahandling and control technology.

Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. Lessons are generally well organised, move at a good pace and capture pupils'

interest. As a consequence, pupils usually listen very attentively to their teachers, concentrate well and persevere with their tasks.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and is broad and well balanced. Sufficient time is allocated for literacy and numeracy, and the national strategies for these key skills are having a beneficial effect on pupils' standards. However, aspects of ICT receive insufficient attention in the curriculum, and able pupils sometimes require more challenging work in science. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which enrich pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and they generally achieve well in relation to their capabilities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has effective procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development, and these are implemented well. The school is a caring community where every child is valued as an individual.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The recently appointed headteacher has good leadership and management skills. She fosters teamwork among staff and develops constructive relationships with parents. She monitors the school's work rigorously, and has a strong commitment to school improvement. The deputy headteacher has made a good start in her post, and provides her colleagues with an effective role model. Co-ordinators use sound monitoring strategies and make a valuable contribution to the development of their subjects. With appropriate involvement of staff and governors, the headteacher has created a well-organised school development plan with relevant short-term priorities. However, there is very little planning beyond April 2001, and this is a weakness.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school benefits from a committed governing body which makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The governors for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs are well informed. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The results of statutory and non-statutory tests are analysed carefully and appropriate targets are set for improvements. The headteacher, deputy and subject coordinators monitor the pupils' standards and the quality of teaching carefully, and provide useful feedback to their colleagues. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is analysed carefully and the governors debate expenditure rigorously in order to obtain value for money. Financial planning is appropriately linked to the priorities in the school development plan. The lack of identified objectives in the plan, after April 2001, inhibits elements of financial forward planning. Overall, however, the school makes good use of its resources.

The school is well resourced in English, history and art and design. Resources are satisfactory, overall, in the remaining subjects but the school needs more software to develop pupils' ICT skills in data handling and control technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They believe the staff are easy to talk to. • They believe children develop mature and responsible attitudes. • They believe there are high standards of teaching. • They believe children make good progress. • They believe there are high expectations of behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like homework to be set more consistently. • They would like more information about what is taught.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views. There is no evidence to support the view that homework is not consistently set; and the school provides a satisfactory range of information about what is taught.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils demonstrate a broad range of standards on entry to the school, at the age of five. There are variations from year to year and the Year 6 cohort in 2000, for example, included a much higher percentage than usual of pupils with learning difficulties. Overall, however, pupils' language and mathematics skills, and their scientific understanding, are generally above average on entry to the school.
2. In Key Stage 1, the results of the 2000 SATs were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results were above average when compared to those achieved by schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. These high standards have been maintained in English and mathematics since 1997. In the statutory teaching assessments in science, the 2000 results in Key Stage 1 were above the national average and were broadly in line with the results achieved by similar schools.
3. In Key Stage 2, the results of the SATs in 2000 were well above the national average in English and were broadly in line with the results achieved by similar schools. In mathematics and science, the 2000 results in Key Stage 2 matched the national average but were well below the results achieved by similar schools. The Year 6 cohort in 2000 included a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and evidence suggests that the English results were a particularly significant achievement, as a consequence. In English and mathematics, the school achieved results which were mainly well above the national average in the previous three years. However, the science results have been in line with the national average since 1997.
4. Inspection findings broadly reflect the SATs results achieved in the last four years in English in both key stages. They show that pupils achieve well in the subject, across the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils read fluently and confidently, using an appropriate range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. They can match their writing to a range of audiences; and most pupils write clear instructions and handle information writing well. The more able pupils write carefully structured stories which engage the reader very effectively, and some produce compelling poems with well chosen vocabulary and imagery. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils achieve well when discussing the works of well known authors, and use inference well to grasp meanings beyond the purely literal. The written work of the majority of pupils is informed by their appreciation and understanding of what they read. Overall, pupils in Year 6 organise their writing well, matching the structure, form and style to its intended purpose. The writing skills of the more able pupils are particularly high. This is evident in their stories and in their succinct and precise report writing.
5. In mathematics, inspection findings broadly reflect the school's test results in Key Stage 1. They show that pupils generally achieve well in this key stage and most reach overall standards which are above average in Year 2. In Key Stage 2, inspection findings are more favourable than the 2000 SATs results and more accurately reflect the school's earlier and better results in the tests. They show that most pupils achieve standards which are above average in Year 6.
6. In science, inspection findings show that pupils achieve well in the Year 1 class and their progress is satisfactory in the two mixed Year 1 and 2 classes. As a

consequence, overall standards are above the national average in Year 2, and reflect the school's 2000 SATs results. In Key Stage 2, inspection findings are more favourable than the 2000 SATs results, reflecting the larger proportion of more able pupils in the current Year 6 cohort. Overall, pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are above average in Year 6 and reflect the satisfactory progress pupils generally make in this element of their learning. However, their skills of scientific enquiry are less well developed, and are broadly average. In this important aspect of science, more able pupils are making insufficient progress in their learning.

7. In ICT, pupils generally demonstrate keyboard and computer mouse skills which are at least average, and most make mainly sound, but sometimes good, progress in communicating through text and graphics. However, the school appropriately recognises that pupils are underachieving in some aspects of ICT, most notably in data handling and control technology, and that standards are below average in these areas. In the last OFSTED inspection, in 1997, pupils were making unsatisfactory progress, overall in the subject, and their standards were below average in all aspects of ICT. Sound progress has been made in improving pupils' standards in some key elements, but there is still work to be done to raise attainment in data handling and control technology.
8. In geography, history and music, pupils achieve well, across the school. As a result, their standards are above those expected nationally at the end of both key stages in these subjects. In art and design, design and technology and physical education, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, across the school, and their standards are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make generally good progress in all aspects of their learning. They build well on their prior attainment and achieve standards which, although sometimes below average for their age, nevertheless are accurate reflections of their capabilities. It is not uncommon for pupils on the register of special educational needs to make such good progress that, at the age of 11, they achieve the expected standards for their age in English and mathematics in the national tests. More able pupils also do well, overall, in English and mathematics. However, there is scope for more able pupils to make increased progress in developing their enquiry skills in science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Throughout the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to lessons and an enthusiasm for all other aspects of school life.
11. In the great majority of lessons, pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other, and are keen to demonstrate what they know or have learned during whole-class discussions. In a history lesson, for example, pupils very effectively drew on their previous learning when discussing the reasons for the Anglo Saxon invasion of Britain. Pupils are usually eager to get on with their tasks, and strive to apply what they have been taught, persevering to complete their work in the time allowed. Throughout the school, pupils are willing to extend their learning by carrying out personal research at home. For example, two Year 2 pupils interviewed members of their family for a history lesson. Pupils enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities provided.
12. The behaviour of pupils is very good. Pupils know and abide by the school rules and those drawn up by their own class. They understand the school's systems of

rewards and sanctions, and take pleasure in the achievements of others. Pupils work well together in lessons and share resources sensibly. There was no evidence of the restlessness of a small minority of pupils noted in the last OFSTED report. In lessons and around the school, pupils behave in a sensible, mature and caring manner. They look after each other, take care of school property, share and take turns well. They have a strong sense of responsibility and feel they can make a difference. There has been one instance of exclusion in the past year. Incidents of bullying rarely occur and are promptly addressed. There is no evidence of racist or sexist behaviour.

13. The adults in the school set good examples and this is the key to the good relationships pupils have with their peers and with adults. Pupils are courteous, helpful and friendly to adults and children. They show caring attitudes towards each other, making the school a safe place to make mistakes in their learning in lessons. They learn to respect and value other people's feelings and beliefs both in lessons and in 'circle time' discussions.
14. Pupils' willingness to use their initiative is good. There is greater evidence of pupils taking initiative in organising and planning their own work than was evident when the school was last inspected. When given the opportunity to use initiative in lessons, pupils respond well. For example, in some music lessons, pupils work independently, in groups, and successfully compose music to match the graphic scores they have drawn. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 collaborate in small groups to create a dance. All pupils carry out classroom duties conscientiously. The children running the school shop are committed to the job and reliably turn up every lunch hour. Older pupils take their responsibility as door monitors very seriously, vetting those wanting to come in, in a sensible and mature manner. Whether preparing for assemblies or helping in the playground with the younger pupils, there is a sense that pupils carry out their responsibilities with a will to make things work well for the good of all.
15. Attendance at the school is good and there are very low levels of unauthorised absence. Registers are correctly completed and fully meet requirements. Pupils are generally punctual and sessions start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching was satisfactory, or better, in 98 per cent of all lessons. Nearly three quarters of all lessons in Key Stage 1 were good, and occasionally very good, while about half of all lessons in Key Stage 2 demonstrated good, and occasionally very good, teaching.
17. In the last OFSTED inspection, 92 per cent of all lessons were satisfactory or better. However, the last inspection identified the need to improve both the organisation of some lessons in Years 3 and 4, and the match of work to the different learning requirements of the pupils in these mixed age classes. Overall, the school has successfully addressed this weakness.
18. In English, the teaching is mainly good in both key stages, and a high proportion of the teaching is very good. As a consequence, pupils make good, and sometimes very good, progress in their learning in English. Expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are usually high. Their planning is good; and lessons are generally well organised and are taught at a brisk pace. Teachers provide good role models as readers and writers, and ensure that pupils learn from their reading and study of texts,

many of the strategies they need to become successful writers. The only unsatisfactory lesson observed, which was in Key Stage 2, proceeded at too slow a pace to enable pupils to make adequate progress in their learning.

19. In mathematics, the teaching is mainly good and is otherwise satisfactory in Key Stage 1. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is mainly satisfactory but is sometimes good for pupils in Years 3 and 4, and is very good for the top mathematics set in Year 6. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and ensure that the learning objectives of lessons are clearly defined. In the most effective lessons, the mental/oral introductions are well paced, teachers provide good support as pupils undertake their tasks, and plenary sessions are used efficiently to check that learning objectives have been met. In the less effective, but nevertheless satisfactory, lessons there is scope for more skilful questioning to involve all pupils, and a faster pace in the mental/oral introductions.
20. In science, the teaching is satisfactory, overall, Teachers organise their lessons well and demonstrate sound skills when developing pupils' scientific knowledge. However, they are less effective in promoting pupils' enquiry skills, and Key Stage 2 pupils have insufficient opportunities to make decisions and to use initiative in some lessons.
21. In ICT, the last OFSTED inspection found the teaching to be unsatisfactory. As a consequence, pupils made insufficient progress in the subject, and their standards were too low. Staff confidence and competence have improved since 1997, and a recent increase in the number of computers in the school's ICT suite enables the staff to make effective use of this resource. Indeed, in the lessons observed in the suite, the teaching was mainly good and occasionally very good in the current inspection. However, while teachers enable pupils to make sound or better progress in developing keyboard skills and communicating information, they give insufficient attention to the promotion of pupils' skills in datahandling and control technology. Limitations in the resources available to develop pupils datahandling and control technology also contribute to the unsatisfactory progress made by pupils in these elements of ICT, and inhibit the teaching.
22. In geography and history, insufficient lessons were observed to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. However, an analysis of pupils' work shows that teachers enable pupils to make good progress and achieve well in both subjects. In art and design too few lessons were seen to judge the teaching, but pupils' completed work shows they are making sound progress in the subject. In design and technology and physical education, the teaching is satisfactory, overall, while teaching in music is good overall, and is often very good in Key Stage 2.
23. Teachers' lesson plans include the provision of suitably matched work, and, often, identified additional adult support, for the range of pupils with special educational needs, including the more able pupils for whom extension activities are often planned. All teachers know their pupils well, and they take particular care to involve pupils with special educational needs in discussions and in all other activities, including the sharing of work during plenary sessions. Individual education plans for these pupils identify well-defined, achievable targets. The pupils themselves know what their targets are, and this allows them to monitor their own progress and to recognise their achievements. Where appropriate, for example in literacy and numeracy, common weaknesses in pupils' performance are addressed through group work in lessons. At other times, pupils with special educational needs benefit from tuition in small groups or from one-to-one support from well-qualified learning support assistants. Learning support assistants are thoroughly briefed about lessons and what pupils are expected

to learn. They make a valuable contribution to the progress made and to the standards achieved. They are also usefully engaged in making their own assessments of pupils' progress, for example during literacy hours; and their observations are used to good effect by class teachers when they plan the next stages of pupils' work. Pupils who have more complex learning needs and who have Statements of Special Educational Need are very ably and sensitively supported by regular support staff who know when to encourage, when to assist, and when to hold back and allow their charges to work things out for themselves. Where relevant, outside agencies are involved in therapy or other kinds of support. Teachers generally provide sufficiently challenging tasks for more able pupils, and this is particularly evident in English and mathematics. However, these pupils need more opportunities to use their initiative and to develop their investigation skills in science in Key Stage 2.

24. There are five pupils identified by the school as having English as an additional language. All but one of these are fluent English speakers and require no extra help with English or other subjects. The one pupil who requires help is well supported in the class by a learning support assistant and is making good progress in English and in all subjects.
25. Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils, an orderly atmosphere in lessons, clear explanation of tasks and sound, or better, use of questions to probe pupils' understanding. As a consequence, pupils respond well, listening attentively to their teachers and persevering with their tasks. Sound use is made of homework to extend what is learned in classes, in both key stages.

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

26. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is broad and well balanced. The last OFSTED report, in 1997, identified the need for more careful match of work to pupils' needs in some lessons in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes, and this has been satisfactorily addressed by the school. However, in science, the more advanced learners should be given more challenging work in some lessons in Key Stage 2. The last OFSTED report also indicated that pupils should have more opportunities to develop their ICT skills across the curriculum. The school has significantly improved the provision for ICT and pupils are now making mainly good progress in communicating through text and graphics. However, insufficient attention is given to handling data and to control technology, and the standards achieved by pupils are below average in these areas of ICT, as a consequence. Sufficient time is allocated for literacy and numeracy, and the implementation of the national strategies for these key skills is having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. Although the time allocated for mathematics in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory, overall, current timetabling arrangements result in some lessons being too short and others too long for effective teaching to take place. The school recognises this and is planning to make changes to the timetable in 2001.
27. The school has adopted helpful guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to provide a sound framework for long-term planning. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and these are helping to provide continuity in pupils' learning. The school will be admitting children to the new Foundation Stage in January 2001 and is appropriately planning to develop a policy for Early Years education, in the near future. This will be particularly important, as there is scope for teachers to become

more familiar with the structure and content of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal and social education, including health education and sex education. The importance of healthy eating, the need for exercise, taking care with medicines and the dangers of smoking and of drug abuse are appropriately emphasised.

28. The school enriches the curriculum through a very good range of additional learning opportunities. Extra-curricular activities include French, ICT, netball, football, drama, gardening, rugby, badminton, recorders, school band, and warhammer board games; and good use is made of visits and visitors. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. All pupils, regardless of ability to contribute to costs, benefit from the visits and journeys planned by the school.
29. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy full access to the school curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. Where necessary or relevant, they receive support in the form of special apparatus or resources, as well as adult help.
30. The school has strong links with the parish which encourages pupils to see themselves as part of a wider world. The school particularly emphasises the importance of charitable giving and through a variety of activities, such as making Christmas boxes for less advantaged children, pupils develop a social conscience and learn that their contributions can make a difference. The school makes good use of local facilities to enrich the curriculum, visiting the local arts theatre and nearby synagogue as well as using the local area for work in history and geography topics. The school has some links with local businesses and has recently secured a grant from the local supermarket towards the cost of enlarging the school playground.
31. Because children entering the school come from a large number of nurseries and playgroups, there are limited opportunities for the school to establish links with all of them. However, many children will have already met with others at the parish Sunday school or toddler group and this helps them to settle into school once they become five. Pupils make some use of the sports facilities at the adjacent secondary school and are invited to their school productions. They also have occasional opportunities to mix with other primary school pupils in sporting festivals and in special Catholic celebrations. However, curriculum links with primary and secondary staff, and shared training opportunities, are yet to be developed.
32. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
33. Spiritual development is underpinned by the Catholic ethos which permeates all aspects of school life. In assemblies, in religious education lessons and at other times during each school day, pupils are encouraged to reflect, to join in prayers and to develop their own relationship with God. Assemblies are well planned and address a range of religious, moral and social themes. Gospel values such as love, loyalty, hope, trust, truth, forgiveness, sharing and patience are strongly promoted, and proceedings are conducted in a quiet, reverential way. The spiritual atmosphere generated unites all those present within a 'family' whose faith is tangible. Indeed, so strong is the feeling of unison, that the singing of hymns has a spiritual quality. In subject lessons, in 'circle time' and in personal, health and social education lessons, pupils are encouraged to acknowledge and express their own feelings and thoughts, and to respond with sensitivity to the feelings of others. They are taught to reflect on the human condition, to consider mankind's aspirations and achievements, and to reflect on the deeper meanings of life. In their study of Christianity, pupils are taught

to consider the relevance of Christ's teachings to their own lives, while their study of other faiths illustrates the significance of religion in the lives of others. Whenever relevant, and in the most natural way, teachers draw pupils' attention to the spiritual feelings inspired by the beauty of the world and the wonders of nature. For instance, pupils in a Year 5/6 geography lesson considered the impact of mountainous regions on those who visit them in search of spiritual experience.

34. The school provides very strong moral guidance for its pupils. Staff set a good example by understanding and valuing pupils as individuals, while the Gospel values promoted firmly establish high expectations for moral behaviour and attitudes. Good behaviour, thoughtfulness and kindness are promoted consistently by all staff and are reinforced through well planned programmes such as 'Here I Am' and the syllabus followed in personal, moral and social education lessons. Pupils are taught to respect themselves, to value and respect others, and to consider, always, the impact of their actions on others. Teachers emphasise the importance of individual and collective responsibility, and good behaviour is promoted through positive means. Pupils are made fully aware of what is right and wrong, but are involved actively in promoting good behaviour, for example by devising, and upholding, rules and codes of conduct for all areas of the school. A well-constructed 'behaviour book' sets out all rules and codes very clearly. It is circulated to pupils, staff and parents, so that there is a common understanding of the school's expectations, and common ownership of the values and attitudes the school aims to promote. The school's system of rewards and sanctions is very clear and is effective in promoting good behaviour, positive attitudes and self-esteem.
35. The promotion of pupils' social development is very good. Every pupil is encouraged to undertake responsibilities within class, and older pupils assume wider responsibilities within the school. For example, older pupils may prepare the hall for assemblies, act as monitors on doors to the playground, or run the school shop. They are encouraged to be helpful towards younger pupils, whether at play or in the dining room, and to extend similar courtesies to adult visitors. Assembly themes and the wider curriculum strongly promote the value of family, home and community, and foster a sense of corporate identity and pride in the school community itself. The school council is chaired and run by a group of older pupils who are given the responsibility for consulting their peers and for deliberating on changes which might benefit the school as a whole. A 'house' system is relatively unobtrusive, but encourages social responsibility through individual effort, the generation of team spirit, and an understanding of collective responsibility. In lessons, pupils are frequently required to work collaboratively in groups or pairs, while an extensive range of visits, visitors, extra-curricular clubs and other activities gives pupils further opportunities for social interaction. From an early age, pupils are taught to understand the importance of social responsibility, for example through support for various local, national and overseas charities.
36. Pupils' cultural development is fostered very well. Through lessons, book fairs and book weeks, through the home-school reading partnership, through links with theatres and theatre groups, and through school drama productions, pupils are taught to regard reading as a pleasure and books as sources of creativity and information. In geography, history, religious education and during assemblies, pupils learn about their own cultural heritage and about the beliefs and traditions of many other cultures, both past and present. They are taught to understand and appreciate the art and music of significant artists and composers, and they benefit from workshops run by visiting artists, writers and musicians. In physical education, they explore dance from various cultures, while special themed weeks' such as those based on studies of the

Caribbean and Japan, and special events such as a 'French Breakfast' provide memorable experiences of ways of life in different countries. The school promotes pupils' awareness of the multicultural diversity of society very well, and also takes great care to nurture pupils' developing cultural interests, for example in music and drama.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. Overall, the school has effective procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development. Policies and procedures are clear and are implemented consistently across the school. This represents good progress since the last OFSTED inspection in 1997 when aspects of assessment, and in particular the use of assessment data to inform future planning, were judged to require improvement. Following the last inspection, an assessment co-ordinator was appointed and she has developed a sound overview of assessment practice across the school. Satisfactory policies for assessment and for marking have been formulated; and the headteacher has monitored teachers' marking when scrutinising work samples. Inspection findings indicate that the quality of marking is sound, overall, with some examples of good marking, particularly in English.
38. Baseline assessment information is analysed well and is used to identify children with special educational needs and to inform the planning for the youngest pupils. In the current Year 1 cohort, for example, the teacher is promoting pupils' personal and social skills which the screening identifies as a relative weakness in this year group. In Key Stages 1 and 2, summative assessments are used effectively to assess pupils' progress and aid predictions of future performance. Data from optional testing in Years 3, 4 and 5 and from statutory testing in Years 2 and 6 is analysed rigorously to identify strengths and areas for development. Pupils in all age groups also undertake standardised tests in English and mathematics, annually, and science tests at the end of each unit of work. The results of all tests are carefully recorded and kept in each pupil's Record of Achievement folder, and this evidence is used to inform planning and provision. These folders also contain examples of pupils' work in the English, mathematics and science which are annotated by class teachers, to provide useful information about the context in which the work was undertaken, and assigned a National Curriculum level. Staff meetings are held throughout the year to scrutinise samples of pupils' work and to agree levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science. There is a sound portfolio of moderated work in English and the school recognises that it would assist teachers in making secure judgements if portfolios were also established for mathematics and science.
39. Individual targets are set for pupils through discussion between the pupil, teacher and parents in the autumn term, and these are reviewed as the school year progresses. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers' planning identifies what pupils are expected to learn and these objectives are generally shared with pupils at the beginning of sessions. In some subjects, notably mathematics, pupils are then asked to make assessments, at the end of the lesson, about how well they have progressed in relation to these targets. This good practice is aimed at developing pupils' skills of self-assessment. Test outcomes are recorded on class record sheets and these are analysed by the headteacher and governors who discuss, agree and monitor the whole-school targets for attainment in English, mathematics and science. Overall, this target setting process is satisfactory, and the school is planning to improve the efficiency with which it is undertaken through the use of appropriate computer software.

40. The school lives up to its mission to be a caring Catholic community where each child is valued. Relationships in the school are built on mutual respect and trust, and adults know the pupils well. Parents are encouraged to share their concerns with the school and are confident that they will be listened to sympathetically. This ensures that pupils' medical, pastoral or educational needs are known to the staff, and effective and sensitive support can be provided. Where appropriate, further family support can be requested through the parish.
41. The school is very effective in promoting high standards of behaviour across the school. Parents and pupils understand what constitutes good and unacceptable behaviour and pupils are proud to be recognised for acts of helpfulness and caring at the weekly awards assembly. The few pupils who find it difficult to maintain these high standards are carefully monitored, supported and given appropriate targets for improvement. The deputy headteacher has regular meetings with the lunchtime supervisors to ensure they are well briefed about their role and to listen to any concerns. Pupils develop a feeling of self worth and are confident to raise any matters that worry them. Consequently, incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with promptly and effectively.
42. The school follows sound procedures for child protection and has helpful guidelines for staff on awareness and disclosure. Arrangements for monitoring attendance are sound and include targets for improvement in punctuality for the very few pupils who find it hard to get to school in good time. Appropriate regard is given to matters of health and safety with regular inspections of the buildings and grounds, and guidelines for promoting safe practices in lessons such as physical education and design and technology. Pupils also benefit from visiting speakers to raise their awareness of road, water and fire safety. There are well established and properly documented records covering accident, emergencies and the particular medical support required for some pupils.
43. Parents are complimentary about the induction that their children receive when joining the school, and how it helps them settle securely into school routines. All pupils benefit from a well planned programme for personal and social education which not only covers healthy living and drugs education but also allows pupils time to reflect on attitudes and relationships. This makes a positive contribution to their personal development and adds to their confidence to cope with all aspects of school life.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Parents have very positive views about the school and have a firm sense of identity with the school community. They welcome the strong emphasis on Catholic values and the fact that the personal as well as the academic needs of the pupils are considered important. This integrated approach, they feel, leads to well rounded pupils who have mature attitudes, firmly rooted moral views and an enthusiasm for learning. Parents value the welcome they receive in school. They find all the staff easy to talk to and this promotes good communication and trust between school and home.
45. Parents receive informative documentation about the school, including curriculum summaries on what is to be taught each term. Occasional meetings are held to explain new educational strategies such as for numeracy. Parents are also invited to class assemblies and to share in the religious celebrations throughout the year. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with school activities. The school is

introducing brief questionnaires for parents to survey their views when their children progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. This good practice ensures that concerns are addressed and serves to reinforce the partnership already established.

46. Parents have regular opportunities to see their children's work and to discuss their progress and targets for improvement through the year. Annual written reports give particularly detailed and helpful assessments of pupils' academic achievements as well as an indication of their personal development. Day-to-day contact is maintained through home-school reading and homework diaries. Parents are given clear indications of the amount and frequency of homework to be set, and this is monitored each month by the headteacher.
47. For their part, parents give very strong support to the school and their children's learning. Many help in classes, accompany trips and help run after school clubs. They are keen to share their knowledge and expertise where this can be used in the curriculum, and are active helpers in school productions. Parents support their children in completing homework tasks, hear them read regularly and are happy to lend artefacts to enliven topics. The flourishing parents' association is well supported and raises significant funds to provide additional resources for the school. The parents' commitment to the school sets a very good role model for the children and fosters positive attitudes to school.
48. There is very effective communication between the school and the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress and are involved appropriately and regularly in reviews. They are made fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their children's performance and, where relevant, are involved in setting new targets. Parents are very supportive of their children, and are also appreciative of the school's efforts to help them. As a result, there is a genuine partnership which serves the children well.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The headteacher took up her post in September 2000, after a number of years as senior teacher in the school. She has made a good start, and is already demonstrating effective leadership and management skills. The headteacher develops constructive relationships with parents; and this is reflected in parents' questionnaire returns which show they feel the school is well managed and approachable. She promotes high standards and has a strong commitment to school improvement. She monitors the quality of teaching and learning by analysing teachers' planning and pupils' work in a rigorous and systematic manner, covering all classes. Well-focused lesson observations have also been conducted. The headteacher provides staff with valuable feedback from her monitoring, which has a beneficial effect on their professional development. She has good inter-personal skills and successfully encourages teamwork among staff. The deputy headteacher has four years' experience in the school, but only took on her current role in September 2000. She is working well with the headteacher, and is providing a good example to staff through her work as an effective subject co-ordinator and a skilful teacher.
50. The last OFSTED inspection identified the need for subject co-ordinators to monitor and develop their subjects more effectively. The school has made good progress in rectifying this weakness, and co-ordinators now have well established, and sound, procedures for monitoring and developing the subjects of the National Curriculum. They check the planning for their subjects, analyse examples of pupils' work and

observe lessons. These procedures give them a sound overview of provision, and they generally use the information they gather effectively to develop their subjects.

51. The school benefits from a committed governing body which makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. Appropriate committees are established and help to guide the school's work effectively. The results of statutory testing are debated thoroughly, and appropriate targets are set for improvements. The governors with responsibility for monitoring provision in literacy and numeracy are taking a keen interest in the school's response to the national strategies for these subjects. They are well informed, observe lessons and provide useful feedback to the governing body. The governor with particular responsibility for special educational needs is a frequent visitor and makes a particularly beneficial impact on the school's provision for the pupils. Overall, the governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and know the challenges it faces. Statutory requirements are met.
52. When the headteacher took on her role, at the beginning of this term, the school development plan had lapsed, and there had been no issues identified for attention in the previous term. She has acted quickly and effectively to formulate a new plan, with appropriate involvement from staff and governors. This plan is well organised and details relevant priorities until April 2001. When the school was last inspected, the success criteria for its priorities were not identified, but this is no longer the case. Costing, time-scales, monitoring procedures and those responsible for leading individual initiatives are also clearly shown in the current plan. While the planning for the current financial year is having a beneficial effect on school improvement, there is very little planning beyond April 2001 to guide the school's work. This is a weakness in the school's strategic planning, which is recognised by the headteacher and governors.
53. The headteacher retains oversight of special educational needs provision, while day-to-day management is delegated to three special educational needs co-ordinators who work with different ages of pupils. Although an unusual arrangement, it works very well and results in effective provision for pupils. There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst all teaching and support staff. All staff have received appropriate training to fulfil their roles, and administrative and organisational procedures are clear and consistent.
54. The school has sound policies for equal opportunities and for the more able, which were drawn up and discussed by the teaching staff. These policies are generally well implemented in lessons. The headteacher appropriately monitors planning and work regularly to check that pupils in parallel classes are receiving the same learning opportunities. The school makes careful assessment of attainment by gender and its programme to address the differing learning needs of boys and girls is having a positive effect on standards.
55. The day-to-day management of the school is good and benefits from effective secretarial support. Routines are well organised and help to promote an orderly atmosphere in the school.
56. The administration of the budget is carried out efficiently by the headteacher and the school finance officer. Spending is also carefully monitored by the finance committee. The committee provides good support for the management of the school. There are regular meetings, and the budget is analysed with particular care during the spring and early summer terms. Financial planning is appropriately linked to the

priorities in the school development plan. However, the lack of identified objectives in the plan, after April 2001, inhibits elements of financial forward planning. The school takes care to obtain value for money through the purchase of educational materials, and estimates for work on the building are carefully debated. Overall, the school makes effective use of its resources, and it provides good value for money, as a consequence.

57. There are sufficient teachers and, overall, the staff have the expertise and experience to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure and most are particularly well informed about the teaching of English. The school will be taking children into reception who will be in the Foundation Stage in the new year, and there is some evidence to suggest that the school needs to develop, further, its awareness of the guidance for this important stage of pupils' education. The school is generously staffed with learning support assistants. They are well briefed by teachers, develop constructive relationships with pupils and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Arrangements for the induction of staff are sound, and this is evident in the provision made for the two newly qualified teachers who have recently joined the staff.
58. The school is well resourced in English, history and art and design. In the remaining subjects, learning resources are satisfactory overall. However, the school requires more software to support the development of pupils' skills in data handling and control technology in ICT.
59. The school building provides satisfactory accommodation. Classrooms are of adequate size, and there is a good hall. All parts of the main building are accessible to those in wheelchairs, and appropriate toilet facilities are available. The school benefits from extensive grounds and has its own swimming pool. Playground space is adequate for Key Stage 1 pupils but is appropriately to be increased for the older pupils, in the near future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to improve standards and elements of strategic planning, the school should include the following issues in its post-inspection action plan:
 - (1) raise standards in ICT by ensuring that teachers are more effective in promoting pupils' skills in datahandling and control technology; (see paragraphs 7, 21, 26, 104, 105 and 106)
 - (2) improve long-term strategic planning by augmenting the current plan with outline planning for at least a further year. (see paragraphs 52 and 56)

In addition to the key issues above, the governors should also consider the following, less important, weakness for inclusion in their action plan:

- (1) ensure that the more able pupils make better progress and reach higher standards in their scientific investigations by setting them more challenging tasks. (see paragraphs 6, 20, 23, 80 and 82)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	21	36	39	2	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	259
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	33

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	26	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	18
	Girls	26	25	26
	Total	43	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	93 (94)	98 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	18
	Girls	26	26	26
	Total	43	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (82)	98 (100)	98 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	24	21	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	15	22
	Girls	18	14	19
	Total	37	29	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (89)	64 (33)	91 (89)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	14
	Girls	18	19	16
	Total	35	36	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (83)	80 (83)	67 (89)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	14

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.9
Average class size	28.8

Education support staff: Y1 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	231

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	460,328
Total expenditure	440,052
Expenditure per pupil	1,539
Balance brought forward from previous year	-575
Balance carried forward to next year	19,701

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	259
Number of questionnaires returned	89

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	30	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	53	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	57	3	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	46	16	1	8
The teaching is good.	45	53	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	47	9	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	29	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	39	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	49	42	8	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	28	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	42	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	43	9	0	9

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

ENGLISH

61. Most pupils entering Key Stage 1 demonstrate standards which are above average for their age in speaking and listening, and many are already doing better in reading and writing than is usually the case for pupils aged five. The school builds well on pupils' prior attainment throughout both key stages. As a result of good teaching, pupils of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs, make generally good progress in all aspects of their English work throughout their time in the school.
62. In the national tests (SATs) in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1, and in English at the end of Key Stage 2, the school's results for the year 2000 were well above the national averages. Since the Year 6 cohort for that year included a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the Key Stage 2 results were particularly praiseworthy and testify to the good progress made by pupils of all abilities. The pattern of results has been consistently good overall for the past three years in both key stages: very few pupils fall below the standards expected for their age, and larger percentages than are normally expected achieve, or exceed, the benchmark levels for their ages.
63. Inspection findings confirm, in both key stages, the high standards reflected in the test results. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress in reading and writing and acquire a very secure foundation in initial literacy. By the end of this key stage, the majority of pupils already read fluently and confidently, using an appropriate range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. They observe the cues to phrasing and expression provided by punctuation. They interpret texts as they read, demonstrating their understanding of mood and character, for example, by changing their tone of voice appropriately when reading dialogue. They can explain their reading preferences, know how to use information books to find things out, and have a good understanding of the ways in which graphics and layout can be used to create specific effects. By the end of the key stage, most pupils write very competently for a suitable range of purposes in English and in other subjects. They have a well developed general vocabulary and have acquired an extensive repertoire of technical and subject-specific terms. The more able pupils write well-structured stories which engage the reader, and some produce compelling poems with well chosen vocabulary and imagery. Most pupils write clear instructions and handle information writing well, but the stories written by lower attaining pupils are sometimes rather stilted. This is usually because they do not perceive a piece of writing as a coherent whole, and have not mastered the use of connectives to combine ideas within complex sentences. However, most pupils demarcate their sentences using full stops and capital letters accurately, and higher attaining pupils already use speech marks, question marks and exclamation marks well, and are beginning to introduce the use of commas. In spelling, pupils draw competently on their phonic knowledge and on patterns and rules they have committed to memory. Almost all pupils are capable of producing neat, well formed and fluent handwriting, and most do so consistently in all their work. A few of the lower attaining pupils find it difficult to combine, simultaneously, the many skills needed to produce written work, and, as a result, their handwriting is not always of the same high standard.
64. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils can discuss the work of familiar authors and show a good understanding of literary language, whether from the works of

Shakespeare, R L Stevenson and other 'classics', or from the work of contemporary writers. They understand plot, characterisation and ideas, and most use inference well to grasp meanings beyond the purely literal. During discussions, they are accustomed to substantiating their judgements using evidence from the text, and they do so confidently, explaining their reasoning clearly. Pupils of all ages respond well to the moral and spiritual dimensions in the books they read, and almost all pupils derive great pleasure from their reading. The written work of most pupils is informed by their appreciation and understanding of what they read. The work of the more able pupils is outstanding: their literary writing sometimes has a spiritual quality rare in pupils of this age, while their written reports, for example in subjects such as geography and science, are succinct and precise. Overall, pupils organise their writing well, matching the structure, form and style to its intended purpose. By this stage, the weaknesses in structure and organisation that characterised the work of lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 have been eradicated from the work of all but a few, although some pupils still experience difficulties with spelling.

65. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are above average in both key stages. They use spoken Standard English correctly, become increasingly fluent and articulate, develop an extensive vocabulary, and learn to adapt register accordingly to suit various audiences and purposes. From a very young age, pupils read aloud clearly, audibly, fluently and with expression, often taking as much pleasure from the act of reading as from what they read.
66. The quality of teaching is mainly good in both key stages, and a high proportion of the teaching is very good. Only one lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers have established good relationships with their pupils, creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in lessons which encourages pupils to take risks and use language adventurously. Expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are usually high, and teachers' expertise in English is such that, in most lessons, they are able to help their pupils to achieve high standards.
67. Teachers provide good role models as readers and writers, and they make sure that pupils learn, from their reading and the study of texts, many of the strategies they need to become successful writers. Lessons are planned well, so that it is clear what pupils are intended to learn. Group tasks are suitably differentiated to make sure that independent work is matched to the learning needs of particular groups and individuals, including pupils with special educational needs and the more able pupils. Most lessons are well organised and are taught at a brisk pace. Teachers give pupils ample opportunities to discuss any difficulties and to practise new skills, and plenary sessions are used to good effect to share work and to make sure that the key points of the lesson have been learned. Pupils are often supported in class by parent helpers and by learning support staff. Both these groups make a significant contribution to pupils' progress and attainment. Pupils withdrawn from class for short periods of instruction, for example on work associated with the targets in their individual education plans, for tuition in 'booster groups' or for work in 'additional literacy', are taught well. The one unsatisfactory lesson seen had some of these good characteristics. Nevertheless, the lesson proceeded at too slow a pace for pupils to make satisfactory gains in their learning.
68. At the time of the last inspection, the team commented on the limited opportunities for teachers and pupils to use information technology to support work in English. Since that time, the school has invested heavily in hardware and software, and there is an impressive range of text-work of good quality produced by pupils in both key stages. Audio-tapes are in regular use, while special CD-ROMs, including a 'Narnia' program

to explore characterisation, are used to good effect, even in the busy after-school computer club. Pupils regularly use ICT to produce leaflets and brochures, for example to advertise a performance of their own version of 'The Tempest' by William Shakespeare. Assessment, judged 'satisfactory' in the last inspection, is now very good. Pupils' performance is tracked throughout the school, and the results of tests, including SATs, are analysed closely to identify weaknesses in the overall performance of cohorts and to pinpoint individual difficulties. Once identified, such weaknesses are rigorously addressed through a variety of means which include the setting of individual targets, changes in curriculum planning and in teaching, specific support in the form of the additional literacy support (ALS), adult support in class and in withdrawal sessions (usually for pupils with special educational needs), and booster groups. The monitoring of classroom practice, judged to be 'undeveloped' at the time of the last inspection, is now routine and perceptive. Teachers are given specific feedback on their own performance, and more general findings are discussed openly at staff meetings with a view to improving all-round performance.

69. A particular strength of the teaching lies in the spirit of common purpose which inspires all staff to work together as a team to raise standards. The support of parents, through home reading and support for other kinds of homework and, in many cases, through helping in classes, is also a strength. The investment made by the school to ensure that all staff are suitably trained in various aspects of literacy and, where relevant, in special educational needs, pays dividends in terms of the progress made by pupils of all abilities. The subject is well resourced, and the school benefits from good quality support and advice on English from the local education authority. Last, but not least, the school's own literacy co-ordinator provides effective leadership and management in the subject.

MATHEMATICS

70. On entry to Key Stage 1, the mathematical knowledge and understanding of most pupils are above average. In recent years, pupils have achieved very good results in the national mathematics tests (SATs) at the end of Key Stage 1. These have been well above the national average over the last four years, and have occasionally been very high. The results of the 2000 Key Stage 1 SATs were well above the national average and were above the results achieved by similar schools; and there was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
71. Inspection findings show that pupils generally achieve well in relation to their starting points at the beginning of Year 1, and their overall standards are mainly above those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make mainly good, and otherwise sound, progress in acquiring key numeracy skills; and slower, but broadly satisfactory, progress in using and applying these skills. They also make mainly good progress in developing their understanding of measures, shape and space. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the key stage, and more able pupils generally achieve well.
72. The results of the 2000 Key Stage 2 statutory tests were in line with the national average but were well below the results achieved by similar schools. A more detailed analysis shows that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4, or above, was below the national average, but the proportion of pupils exceeding this standard was relatively high. These results were lower than those achieved by the school in the previous three years. The school attributes this to the high proportion of pupils with

special educational needs in the 2000 cohort and to weaknesses in pupils' understanding of datahandling, word problems, and fractions.

73. Inspection findings are more favourable than the 2000 SATs results. They show that, at the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have a good understanding of the number system and of measures, shape and space; and are learning to handle data competently. Progress in learning to apply these mathematical skills to solve problems is slower, but broadly satisfactory, across the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; and more able pupils, in Year 6, make very good progress in developing their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. Overall, standards in mathematics are above average at the end of Key Stage 2.
74. Throughout the school, pupils show an interest in the subject, and behaviour in mathematics lessons is very good. Pupils respond particularly well when they are involved in practical activities, for example, in a very good lesson in Year 1 when using clocks to learn about hour and half hour times. Most pupils are developing good work habits as they move through the school and the vast majority, in both key stages, demonstrate a mature approach to their learning.
75. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is mainly good, and is otherwise satisfactory. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is mainly sound although some good teaching was observed in the youngest half of the key stage, and more able pupils in Year 6 benefit from teaching which is very good. Teachers show a secure subject knowledge and conscientiously plan daily mathematics lessons in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. Learning objectives are clearly defined and are appropriately shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. In the more effective lessons, the mental/oral introduction is well paced and teachers use skilful, differentiated questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. In these lessons, teachers support pupils well as they work, taking care to circulate and assess progress. Plenary sessions are used effectively to check that learning objectives have been met and to clarify the strategies pupils have used to solve the problems set. As a consequence, pupils demonstrate a keen interest in their work, work at a good pace and develop their mathematical understanding well. In the less effective, but nevertheless sound, lessons teachers do not always ensure that all pupils are actively involved in the mental/oral activities, or target their questions at individual pupils to check learning; or maintain a brisk pace during the introduction to the lesson. As a result, a minority of pupils work too slowly.
76. Across the school, teachers make effective use of assessment to inform their planning and all available data is analysed carefully to set appropriate targets. Teachers plan work for pupils of different abilities, and tasks are usually well matched to pupils' needs. In both key stages, learning support assistants are carefully briefed and provide good support, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils work in ability sets in Key Stage 2 and this helps to ensure that teaching is well targeted to meet the needs of all pupils. However, the current setting arrangements result in a large group of Year 5 pupils being taught by one teacher, supported by two classroom assistants. Although these lessons are well organised and managed, the size of the group restricts effective interaction between the teacher and individual pupils. The school recognises this and is appropriately making alternative arrangements for next term. Teachers are beginning to make effective use of the school's ICT suite although the school is aware that there is a lack of appropriate software to support and extend pupils' numeracy skills, and to develop their knowledge and understanding of handling data.

77. The co-ordinator for mathematics has only recently taken on the post. She has attended training for the implementation and monitoring of the National Numeracy Strategy, and has made a sound start. The previous co-ordinator maintained an effective overview of mathematics through monitoring teachers' planning, observations of lessons, work sampling and analysis of test results, and this good practice is planned to be continued. The co-ordinator appropriately intends to evaluate the effectiveness of the commercial scheme which is in use in the school and to track the provision for using and applying mathematics. A thorough analysis of pupils' performance in the Key Stage 2 SATs has been undertaken by the local education authority numeracy consultant; and the governor with responsibility for numeracy has provided good support through her analysis of other test outcomes, across the school. Samples of pupils' work are regularly annotated and levelled by teachers and the whole staff discusses these, twice a year. The co-ordinator recognises that it would be helpful to collate these samples in a school portfolio. The time identified for mathematics is satisfactory, overall. However, in Years 5 and 6 the time allocated to the subject on a day-to-day basis is uneven and, as a consequence, the effectiveness of teaching is reduced in some sessions which are either too long or too short. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory.

SCIENCE

78. On entry to the school, the scientific knowledge and understanding of most pupils is above average. The results of the statutory teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, in 2000, were well above the national average and were in line with the results of similar schools. Inspection findings are broadly consistent with these results, and show that the vast majority of Year 2 pupils reach the nationally expected standard, and a significant proportion do better. These standards result from pupils making good progress in the Year 1 class and satisfactory progress in the two mixed Year 1 and 2 classes. As a consequence, pupils' overall achievements are sound, in Key Stage 1, in relation to their starting points at the age of five.
79. The results of the statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 2, in 2000, were in line with the national average, but were well below the results achieved by similar schools. The school believes the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 cohort in 2000 restricted the school's potential to achieve better results; and there is evidence to support this view. However, pupils' results in the statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were only marginally better in the previous three years and were still within the average range in relation to national averages. Pupils' standards in science were significantly lower than those achieved in English and mathematics in these years, which were mainly well above average.
80. Inspection findings are more favourable than the 2000 SATs results, reflecting the significant proportion of able pupils in the current Year 6 cohort. Overall, pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are above average in Year 6 and reflect the satisfactory progress pupils generally make in these elements of their scientific learning, across the key stage. However, their skills of scientific enquiry are less well developed, and are broadly average. In this important aspect of science, more able pupils are making insufficient progress in their learning, and the achievements of average attainers are barely adequate.
81. In Year 1, pupils achieve well when identifying objects which are made from plastic, wood or metal; and make good progress when discovering that some materials are attracted by magnets. They know that light comes from a variety of sources, and can

name of some of these sources. Year 2 pupils make sound progress when learning about healthy eating; and know that living things have basic needs for their survival. In Year 3, pupils demonstrate sound observational skills when describing the characteristics of a range of materials, while most Year 4 pupils know why some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make sound progress when learning about the properties of solids, liquids and gases; and understand why condensation and evaporation occurs. However, most pupils, including the more able, make limited progress when copying the methods, results and conclusions of experiments from the board, and their skills in devising and conducting their own simple investigations are often underdeveloped.

82. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory in science. Teachers plan their lessons carefully; and pupils with special educational needs are supported well, across the school. In both key stages, teachers generally organise their lessons efficiently and motivate their pupils effectively. Their explanations are clear, and skilful use is made of questions to probe pupils' understanding in the best lessons. Teachers demonstrate sound skills when developing pupils' scientific knowledge. However, they are less effective in promoting pupils' enquiry skills, in Key Stage 2, where pupils have insufficient opportunities to make decisions and to use initiative in some lessons. While most science tasks are appropriately matched to pupils' needs, there is sometimes insufficient difference in the levels of challenge provided for pupils in the mixed year group classes in Key Stage 2. This results in the more advanced learners marking time in some lessons, and restricts their attainment.
83. The science co-ordinator took on her role in September 2000 and has good subject knowledge. She has observed lessons and provided staff with useful feedback on the strengths and areas for improvement in their teaching. The co-ordinator has already formulated a useful action plan for the subject, recognising there is scope to raise standards further. Science resources are satisfactory overall, but require auditing and re-organising.

ART AND DESIGN

84. Pupils generally make sound progress in art, across the school, and their standards are mainly satisfactory for their ages at the end of both key stages. The last OFSTED inspection found that standards were average at the end of Key Stage 1, but were above average at the end of Key Stage 2. There is limited evidence of above average work which has been created in the current term. However, the school portfolio and displays of work in school corridors demonstrate the high standards previously achieved by Key Stage 2 pupils when taught by the art co-ordinator who left the school at the end of the summer term.
85. Work in the current term shows that Year 1 pupils achieve well when creating carefully observed self portraits, and demonstrate sound standards when making simple prints. In the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes, pupils make satisfactory progress when creating patterns after studying the decorations on illustrations of ancient vases, but gain little benefit from colouring in line drawings on work sheets. These pupils achieve satisfactory standards when experimenting with rubbings on different surfaces to create a range of patterns. In the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes, pupils make satisfactory progress when studying examples of Aboriginal art; and their own abstract pictures, showing their routes to school, reflect some elements of this work. In the Year 5 and 6 classes, pupils achieve mainly satisfactory standards when designing hats to be worn by Shakespearean characters.

86. During the inspection, art was only taught in one class, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. In the lesson seen, in the older half of Key Stage 2, the teaching was broadly satisfactory but many pupils needed more focused instruction to improve their drawing skills. Evidence from pupils' recent work suggests that the subject knowledge of teachers is generally satisfactory. However, there are sometimes limitations in their confidence and expertise which mean that elements of the recently introduced scheme of work, produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, could be implemented more rigorously and effectively. The temporary co-ordinator for art recognises she would benefit from in-service training to develop her knowledge in the subject.
87. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their visit to the National Portrait Gallery in the last academic year, and know about the work of a range of artists. The school's art week, which was also organised by the previous art co-ordinator, provided pupils with good opportunities to use a range of mediums and to learn from visiting artists. The subject is well resourced.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning in design and technology, and their standards are in line with those expected for their ages in both key stages.
89. In Year 1, pupils make sound progress when learning basic joining techniques, using glue and masking tape. They achieve well when creating designs for model castles and decide the materials they will need. Pupils are aware of a number of methods to create simple hinges for the doors in their castles, and demonstrate sound skills when using these techniques. In the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes, pupils gain a sound understanding of the properties of a range of vegetables, including their taste, texture and appearance. They make satisfactory progress when designing their own vegetable salads, and use simple tools and equipment safely and hygienically to make their meals. They achieve sound standards when evaluating the success of their creations, and make good use of ICT to make posters which advertise the merits of their salads. In Years 3 and 4, pupils achieve well when using recycled materials to make models which have at least one moving part, powered by pneumatics. They achieve sound standards when designing and making photograph frames. In the Year 5 and 6 classes, pupils learn to make bread. They are able to modify the basic recipe by adding additional ingredients to make new bread products, and demonstrate a sound understanding of marketing techniques when creating advertisements for their bread.
90. The quality of teaching in design and technology is satisfactory, across the school. Teachers' planning is sound, and is sensibly based on the clear guidance provided by the scheme of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Lessons are well organised and capture the interest of the pupils. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and concentrate well on their tasks. In the best lesson seen, in the Year 1 class, pupils benefited from particularly well focused guidance to develop their designing and making skills. Resources for design and technology are satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

91. As a result of the school's timetabling arrangements, only two geography lessons could be seen, one in each key stage. Other sources of evidence include discussions with staff, teachers' planning, displays, and an extensive range of pupils' work, particularly in Key Stage 2. While it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject, this evidence shows that pupils generally make good progress in geography. As a consequence, their standards are mainly above those expected nationally at the end of both key stages.
92. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop their knowledge of the locality and of the immediate school environment. Within the school itself, they plan and record the routes they take when moving around the site. During walks in the area outside the school, they note characteristic features of the roads, houses and other buildings, and record their findings in the form of simple maps. They also learn to use maps of different scales. For example, pupils in reception devise a key to show the location of the local churches, schools and hospitals on a street map of Maidenhead, while pupils in Year 1 locate the cities of Prague and London on a map of the world, noting their relative proximity on a 'world scale.' Through the continuing adventures and travels of 'Barnaby Bear', pupils in both Years 1 and 2 develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. They learn to use a map of the world to locate the many popular holiday destinations visited by Barnaby, and they begin to draw simple but significant comparisons between places. For example, they note that 'evergreen' trees characteristic of the mountain regions of Austria are not commonly found in this country, and that while some places in the world, like Africa, are hot, others, like parts of Russia, are cold. In an extended study of the Caribbean island of St Lucia, they draw meaningful comparisons between its capital, Castries and Maidenhead, recognising the impact of climate on human activities, including employment, in each place.
93. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 deepen their understanding of contrasting localities and of climate when they learn about the Indian village of Chembakolli and compare the life of Chanda, a woman from that village, with their own. They recognise, for example, the significant differences in the houses, water supplies, transport and schools in the two places, and the huge impact of electricity on their own lives in Maidenhead.
94. In their study of mountainous regions in Years 5 and 6, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the impact of climate and environment on human activity. They recognise, and explain, the reasons for the development of tourism in Chamonix, and they show particularly good understanding when they discuss, in role, the impact of tourism on local residents such as farmers, rangers, business developers and hotel owners, predicting, from their various viewpoints, the way the area will change over the next ten years.
95. Throughout both key stages, pupils acquire a developing grasp of technical geographical terms which they clearly understand, and which they use confidently.
96. At the time of the last inspection, the team found that insufficient use was made of information technology to support the teaching of geography. Since that time, the school has acquired a range of CD-ROMs to support various topics and themes. A digital camera is used by teachers and pupils – particularly to record geographical features seen during field trips, and there is some evidence of the use of programmable toys, in Key Stage 1, to plan and follow directions. The use of ICT for datahandling, and the use of the internet, including e-mail, to support work in geography is generally underdeveloped. However, there are some examples of good

work carried out independently at home by older pupils who have used the internet to download information and images to enhance their individual research projects.

97. In the two lessons observed, teaching was sound in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Evidence from these two lessons and from the range of the work seen shows that teachers' knowledge of the subject is generally good, and sometimes very good. Lesson plans are clear and detailed, and are underpinned by a good scheme of work. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is a considerable strength. It has an enduring effect on the interest shown in geography by the pupils themselves, who anticipate, then relish, their residential fieldwork visit to Wales in Year 6, and who produce independent research topics of a very high standard. Special events such as 'themed weeks' on Japan and the Caribbean, and a 'French Breakfast' bring the subject alive and make a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. The occasional use of geographical contexts to develop pupils' writing skills, for example by producing tourist brochures on Maidenhead and St Lucia, establishes relevant cross-curricular links.
98. Resources for geography are adequate and are used well. The co-ordination of the subject is effective in securing a broad coverage of the Programmes of Study, progression in pupils' learning as they move up through the school, and generally high standards of performance in terms of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject.

HISTORY

99. Only one history lesson was observed in each key stage during the inspection. Further evidence was gathered from teachers' planning, from displays of work and artefacts and from discussions with teachers and pupils. Sufficient evidence was gathered to indicate that, in both key stages, pupils have maintained the good progress and above average standards that were identified in the last inspection report.
100. Pupils develop a good sense of chronology. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 listened to a taped interview of a child in their class talking with her grandfather who was an evacuee during the war. They were most interested to discover he caught and ate rabbits and, through discussion, understood why. Later they heard a second interview when a child talked to her father who was in the Falklands war. Pupils were able to identify that one preceded the other and could identify evidence in the interviews to support their views. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, learning about invaders and settlers, have a clear understanding that the Romans came before the Angles and Saxons. When watching a video of Sutton Hoo, they noticed that both the Romans and the Angles and Saxons buried valuables with the dead, for use in after life, demonstrating their growing awareness of similarities and differences in various periods in history.
101. Key Stage 2 pupils speak enthusiastically about a recent visit to Verulamium at St Albans. One pupil writes 'the mosaics are so big...I don't know how they built them by hand'. Prior to this visit, pupils looked at artefacts linked with the Roman invasion, drew them and used these to ask questions when they made their visit. As part of the current topic of Invaders and Settlers, some pupils have written moving accounts about people in their family who have had to move. This ranges from moving because of a new job, to the potato famine or the German invasion of Poland. Activities like these help pupils to see the significance of people and events in bringing about

change. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were eager to talk about the recent Invaders Day, when actors came to the school, changed a classroom into a Celtic roundhouse and pupils dressed in Roman or Celtic costume. Some experimented with Roman script using ink made from soot, water and gum. In the Key Stage 2 lesson observed, an archaeologist showed the pupils how to dig and what to look for. She allowed some to use her tools and 'dig' from a small sample of soil to find items of interest. The children thoroughly enjoyed their dig and were told they must leave their finds to be photographed and measured before removal. From this, they understood that the context in which objects are found is as important as the find itself.

102. Too little teaching was seen to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching overall. Nevertheless, the quality and quantity of work seen and the pupils' response to the subject, together with teachers' planning, testifies to the subject being taught with commitment and enthusiasm. Samples of work and photographs provide ample evidence of how well teachers bring history alive for the pupils and help to develop pupils' understanding of different historical perspectives. Evidence in pupils' books shows they are encouraged to undertake independent research; and that homework is used appropriately, giving pupils opportunities to interview family and friends or to download information from their own computers.
103. There are many examples of good cross-curricular links. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 read extracts from Dickens's 'Hard Times' and Flora Thompson's 'Lark Rise to Candleford' when studying the Victorians. When studying dinosaurs, pupils draw a diplodocus to scale and the jaws of a Tyrannosaurus Rex to actual size. Pupils make Viking helmets and design shields; and they use CD-ROMs to find information or word process their written work. In physical education, pupils use their knowledge of the Roman Invasion well to create a dance representing the Romans' landing. The newly appointed co-ordinator is well supported by her predecessor and the subject is well managed. She takes a keen interest in history and is a good teaching model for colleagues. Some good monitoring is carried out through discussions with pupils, sampling work and looking at teachers' plans to ensure appropriate coverage and progression. The previous co-ordinator has also observed lessons and given useful written feedback to teachers. The subject is generally well resourced, with a good range of books to support the main topics, and boxes of artefacts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Since the last inspection, in 1997, the school has improved the provision it makes for this subject but this is just beginning to make a significant impact on teaching and learning. The number of computers in the school's ICT suite was increased shortly before the inspection enabling staff to make better use of the time available through whole-class teaching, when appropriate. As a consequence, more opportunities are now being taken to involve pupils with the subject on a regular basis. A significant percentage of pupils demonstrate sound or better keyboard and computer mouse skills; and most pupils make mainly sound, and sometimes good, progress in communicating through text and graphics. However, the school recognises that pupils are still underachieving in some aspects of ICT, most notably datahandling and control technology, and that standards are below average in these areas.
105. During the inspection, pupils in all year groups were observed working in the ICT suite. They make mainly good progress in communicating through text and graphics, and sound progress in developing their ICT skills. In Year 1, pupils learn to use a word bank to select appropriate vocabulary and develop skills such as 'scrolling.'

Other ICT skills such as 'drag and drop' are developed, for example, when 'dressing teddy'; and keyboard knowledge improves through the use of different keys to alter texts. Older pupils in Key Stage 1, produce attractive titles for posters they are creating in design and technology by experimenting with the size, colour and style of fonts. Pupils in this key stage have also used painting programs, and have accessed and printed information related to work they are undertaking. Close observation of toys develops their understanding of battery power and switches, and they gain some experience of handling data when producing graphs of their favourite colours. However, this aspect of ICT is not developed progressively across the key stage and standards are low. Pupils in both key stages have access to the school's 'Roamers' to develop their knowledge and understanding of control technology.

106. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 progress well when combining text and graphics to communicate information, as part of their work in religious education. They show sound computer mouse and keyboard skills and a growing understanding of facilities such as 'resizing' and 'clip art' when designing birthday posters. In Years 5 and 6, pupils use ICT effectively to organise and analyse ideas and information; and can edit text and use a variety of presentation techniques. For example, as part of their English work on writing for different audiences, they use the techniques they have learned to produce their own newspaper articles in broadsheet or tabloid format. Older pupils also experiment successfully with graphic modelling, learning how to copy and paint shapes and translate them in order to create a repeating pattern. Some work on handling data is undertaken in Key Stage 2, for example, a survey of medals won by various countries in the recent Paralympics. However, progress in this strand of ICT is unsatisfactory and standards are below average at the end of the key stage. Opportunities for pupils to create, test, improve and refine sequences of instructions to make things happen, and to monitor events and respond to them, are currently restricted by limited resources and, as a consequence, standards are well below those expected nationally.
107. Pupils enjoy using computers and other ICT equipment. They show an enthusiasm for the subject, concentrate very well and their behaviour in the ICT suite is very good. Pupils of all ages work together well when sharing computers and help one another. The school has recently introduced a weekly after-school computer club for pupils of all ages, and this is very well attended. During the inspection, the oldest pupils attended the club and were well motivated in their explorations of two web-sites, chosen by the co-ordinator. Some older pupils also demonstrate their enthusiasm for the subject by using ICT to complete homework tasks, for example, producing attractive booklets about St Lucia as part of their work in geography.
108. In the lessons seen in the ICT suite, the quality of teaching was mainly good and, occasionally, very good. Staff confidence and competence are improving and teachers are enthusiastic about making more use of ICT across the curriculum. A training programme has been organised for 2001, using government funding, and this is aimed at improving staff skills further. The co-ordinator gives good support to teachers in their planning; and the ICT learning support assistant provides valuable technical advice during lessons in the suite, and works effectively with pupils of all ages. Teachers also benefit from the support of the chairman of the school Parent-Teacher Association who works closely with the co-ordinator to ensure that the network is functioning correctly. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are clearly defined and shared with pupils at the beginning of each session. The management of pupils is good; this ensures that optimum use is made of the time available in the ICT suite and that pupils make good progress.

109. The co-ordinator for ICT has only recently assumed responsibility for the subject. She has good subject knowledge and is very enthusiastic about the development of ICT throughout the school. She appropriately promotes the use of a range of ICT equipment, including a digital camera recently used effectively on a Year 3/4 visit to St Albans. The co-ordinator has quickly acquired a good overview of the subject and is well informed about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, in both key stages. Examples of pupils' work are being collected in order to monitor pupils' progress and standards in ICT, and there are plans for staff to discuss these and agree levels of attainment. A sound action plan has been formulated in order to improve standards in ICT and this has been discussed with the governors. Helpful guidance, published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, is helping to secure progression in the development of pupils' skills, and additional useful materials are currently augmenting this scheme.
110. Resources for ICT are satisfactory, overall. The school has made good use of national funding and various voucher schemes to improve resources, and receives valuable financial support from the school Parent-Teacher Association. The co-ordinator has appropriately audited the software available to teachers and is aware that resources to support the teaching of datahandling and control technology are currently unsatisfactory.

MUSIC

111. Throughout the school, pupils clearly enjoy music and they attain standards that are higher than those expected for their ages. This is an improvement since the school was last inspected, when standards were judged to be average. During the inspection, pupils were seen composing, performing and appraising. In addition to the lessons observed, the recorder group and the school band were seen rehearsing, and pupils were observed singing in assemblies. In both key stages, pupils sing very well. In the Key Stage 1 acts of worship, the pupils' faith is almost tangible when they sing the hymns. They sing beautifully, with clarity and evident enjoyment. When the whole school takes part in an act of worship, the pupils' singing is uplifting. They know the songs well, all sing confidently with very good control of pitch and volume, and their diction is very clear. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate good knowledge of musical terminology when they read the notation for a new two-part song. For example, they can describe the meaning of staccato and crescendo and respond appropriately in their singing. Within a lesson, they can learn both parts and, by the end of the lesson, keep their parts, unaccompanied. Composing was identified as a weakness when the school was last inspected. Since then, the school has made good progress in improving the teaching and learning of this aspect of music, and now pupils' skills at composing are good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils choose instruments and combine their musical ideas to effectively create the build up of a storm. In Years 3 and 4, pupils compose music to match the graphic scores they have drawn. When working in groups, pupils collaborate very well, respecting the views of others. Pupils organise their groups' musical compositions and perform with great dignity and seriousness. Others make constructive comments and sensible suggestions for improvement. Often they use some very interesting arguments to justify their views. Pupils benefit from the tuition given by peripatetic staff, and those taking part in the school band achieve high standards of performance. The recorder group also achieves good standards.
112. Across the school, the teaching of music is mainly good, and is often very good in Key Stage 2. Music in the three Year 5 and 6 classes is taught by the co-ordinator.

Lessons seen during the inspection were singing, composition, performing and appraising. In these lessons, teachers demonstrate they have sufficient subject knowledge and are able to provide pupils with challenging activities. Lessons are consistently well prepared and planned, so that no time is wasted and pupils' participation in their learning is very good. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to experience music from around the world, through the choices of music played in assemblies and through a good range of visiting performers.

113. The recently appointed co-ordinator has been involved in music in the school for some years. She provides good musical expertise to a confident staff and is active in developing music in many areas of school life, including musical dramas, and performances that take place in the parish church. She provides valuable support and advice to colleagues, including some monitoring of lessons where she has given useful feedback and suggestions for improvement. Overall, resources are satisfactory and in good condition. There is a good range of untuned instruments. A recent acquisition is a digital piano, which will enhance accompaniments particularly for performances. The school is aware of the need to build up a wider range of tuned instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. During the inspection, gymnastics, games skills and dance were observed. In both key stages, pupils reach the standards expected for their age and have maintained the standards achieved in the last inspection.
115. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in learning to control a ball between cones with their feet when they move slowly, but tend to lose control when they travel faster. They can describe what they have learned. Pupils in Year 2 lay out apparatus for gymnastics with due attention to safety, and find imaginative ways of propelling themselves across benches and ladders. However, there is scope for them to make better use of the floor space in gymnastics lessons.
116. In Year 3 and Year 4, pupils revise and refine their dance movements when re-enacting the Roman invasion of Britain. In one lesson, Year 3 pupils demonstrated a degree of control and co-ordination, which was slightly above average for their age. They are aware of the need to observe others' space and develop fighting movements which are carefully choreographed for dramatic effect and which show a good understanding of composition. They can recognise and explain strengths and weaknesses in others' performance. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make sound progress, and really enjoy their lesson, when learning 'crab football' from a visiting Wycombe Wanderers player. In a dance lesson, they watch a Flamenco dancer on videotape and pay particular attention to the movement of her arms. A few girls use this observation to improve their own performance. In this class, the quality of the girls' dance is notably better than that of the boys. Most girls dance with some sense of aesthetic awareness. They have a better understanding of the contrasting effects of changing speed and levels and pay more attention to the finer body movements of their hands and feet. These elements of dance are generally underdeveloped in the boys' performance, which often suffers because of self-consciousness.
117. Throughout the school, pupils give insufficient attention to the importance of evaluation during lessons. Often they review the learning objectives at the end of a lesson, and this is good. However, if evaluation only comes at the end, it gives pupils no opportunities to refine and improve their skills.

118. In both key stages, pupils generally have positive attitudes, try hard to improve their performance and work well in groups or pairs when required to do so. Their behaviour is generally good in lessons.
119. Across the school, the teaching is mainly sound, with some examples of good teaching in each key stage. All teachers have sound subject knowledge. Planning is satisfactory overall, but rarely includes opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work or that of others. More common is the practice of the teacher using pupils to demonstrate teaching points, where they point out the key features, rather than inviting pupils to identify them. Lessons have clear learning objectives and, in the best lessons, these are discussed with pupils at the start and end of lessons. Lessons generally move at a good pace. Teachers ensure pupils are properly dressed, draw their attention to safety features and to the effect that exercise has on their health. All lessons start with a warm up exercise and conclude with a cool down exercise.
120. The subject is broad and generally well balanced. The school is fortunate in having its own swimming pool, and the second half of the summer term is given over to swimming and athletics for all pupils. Outdoor and adventure activities take place during residential visits in Year 6. The school has plans to make better use of the grounds for orienteering, as suggested in the last report. The co-ordinator provides sound support to colleagues and takes a keen interest in developing the subject. She has monitored some lessons and given colleagues some helpful feedback. Through her monitoring of teachers' planning she has found that too much time is devoted to games and intends to address this. Recently, training and resources provided by the TOPS project have increased staff confidence in games and gymnastics. A TOPS dance training is planned in the near future. Resources are broadly satisfactory, although the wall bars and most of the stools are unsuitable for Key Stage 1 pupils, and many of the mats are too heavy to be moved easily by pupils.