

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kings Norton, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103457

Headteacher: Mrs. Mary Daniels

Reporting inspector: Mr. Robert Greatrex

19924

Dates of inspection: 29th – 31st January 2002

Inspection number: 197762

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Sisefield Road
Kings Norton
Birmingham

Postcode: B38 9JB

Telephone number: 0121 458 1546

Fax number: 0121 486 2650

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Fr. Stefan Lasczyk

Date of previous inspection: September-October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19924	R. Greatrex	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9519	S. Pritchard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27292	J. Calvert	Team inspector	Science Music Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
1185	G. Nunn	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Equality of opportunity	How well is the school led and managed?
30745	P. Thorpe	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 8XA

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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Paul's is a medium-sized Catholic primary school with 193 boys and girls on roll, from four to eleven years of age. In addition, 23 children attend the nursery when they are three. Most pupils enter school with well below average attainment levels. There are 47 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, a proportion slightly above the national average. Six of these pupils have a statement outlining their needs. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties. The vast majority of pupils are white and a small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Pupil mobility is relatively high, but beginning to stabilise as the local housing is refurbished and the quality of life on the surrounding estate improved.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Paul's is a very effective school. It is fully inclusive of all pupils whilst remaining true to its Catholic aims. Standards are improving steadily and all pupils achieve well at the school. Teaching is generally good. The school is well led and managed. Staff are fully committed to improving the school, particularly raising standards further. There is a real sense of purpose. Much is done to fully involve parents in the life and work of the school. Staff and parents work closely together and this is very beneficial to pupils. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well, largely because there is a high proportion of good and very good teaching.
- Staff expect a lot from their pupils. They, in turn, try hard and do their best. Relationships are good.
- The headteacher, deputy head and senior staff are driving the school forward. Everyone wants to see the school improve and does their best to see it happens.
- The school uses its own money and extra grants very effectively to give pupils the best education it can.
- Much has been done to involve parents in the life and work of the school. This benefits everyone.

What could be improved

- Although pupils achieve well, standards in English and information and communication technology (ICT) are low.
- Despite all the school has done, a relatively high number of pupils regularly miss school or are late.

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 improvement since it was inspected in 1997. The key issues then have been largely addressed. Standards are rising, science is better provided for. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved, particularly in Year 2. Staff have continually striven to improve the quality of education provided. National initiatives in literacy and numeracy have been fully and effectively implemented. The school has actively sought to involve itself in other initiatives, particularly those aimed at raising standards and meeting the needs of deprived areas and communities such as St. Paul's serves. It does this very successfully. Given the strong and purposeful leadership, good quality teaching, teamwork and real partnership with parents, St. Paul's is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E	D	B
mathematics	E	E	C	A
science	E*	E	D	B

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

Overall, pupils make good progress during their time at St. Paul's. Most pupils enter the nursery with well below average standards. They achieve well as they move through the school, particularly in reception, Year 2 and their final three years. Standards are improving at St. Paul's at a faster rate than in most schools.

Standards reached by eleven-year-olds in English, mathematics and science are above those generally found in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Even so, standards at the age of eleven are below the national average in English and science. In 2001, the school exceeded the target set for it in mathematics but failed to meet the target in English. Targets set for 2002 are achievable in mathematics but very ambitious in English. Standards reached by seven-year-olds are above those found in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds in reading and mathematics, but below in writing. When compared with all schools, they are below average in reading and mathematics, and well below in writing. Writing is a particular weakness. The school recognises this. Partly because there is no adequate library, pupils' abilities to find out and learn for themselves are limited. Much is being done and standards are improving slowly.

Pupils with special educational needs do well and reach the standards of which they are capable. This is generally because work is closely matched to their abilities and they are often taught in small groups where they receive much more attention. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress in English acquisition. Again, small groups mean they receive the guidance they need when they need it. More able pupils are also recognised quickly and given work tailor-made for them. They, too, achieve a lot and reach the standards of which they are capable. Girls and boys make good progress. Science standards have improved since the last inspection. ICT standards are low but improving rapidly, largely because pupils are using computers far more now. In all other subjects, standards are generally in line with those expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The vast majority of pupils are keen and want to learn. They try their best, even when the work is hard, and persevere to finish it. Pupils' positive attitudes means they are interested in everything the school offers them. When challenged by their teachers, pupils show a thirst for learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The vast majority of pupils have a clear sense of what is right and wrong. They generally behave well, whether in class or at play. Consequently, staff are free to teach. The school is a well-ordered community where pupils understand their responsibilities as well as their rights.
Personal development and relationships	Very good and a strength of the school. The close working relationships between staff and pupils means that lessons flow smoothly, no time is wasted, and much is achieved. Pupils are very co-operative. They respond very well to good and challenging teaching. Relationships between pupils are equally strong. Older ones readily offer to help those younger or new.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Too many parents regularly allow their children to take time off when they do not need to, or arrive late. They miss a lot of good teaching and this is harmful to their education and the standards they reach.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good and this standard has been maintained since the last inspection. In Year 2 and the eldest three years it is consistently very good and pupils learn at a faster rate in these classes. It is generally good in the Foundation Stage where teachers and other adults guide children well. Teachers work very well with skilled learning support assistants and pupils' learning particularly benefits from the smaller groups they work in and more attention they receive. Nearly every parent replying to the questionnaire felt teaching was good.

English and mathematics are taught well. The school's permanent teachers fully understand the national initiatives and teach literacy and number skills very effectively. Temporary teachers are less clear about what is expected. Most teachers plan stimulating tasks, so pupils are interested. Pupils enjoy this high quality teaching and respond enthusiastically.

A relatively high number of pupils have difficulty concentrating for long. This limits their progress. Effective teachers realise this and regularly change their approach. Pupils will work in a variety of different yet suitable ways within the same lesson. These teachers also know some pupils struggle to understand oral explanations, so they use lots of visual aids to help them. Other resources are chosen carefully to interest pupils. This is particularly so in writing. Newspapers may be used instead of books, to interest older pupils, particularly boys. Their attention is grabbed and they work hard. Texts are carefully chosen so that they appeal. Lessons are well planned so the purpose is clear and no time is wasted. About half the teachers use marking very well, for example to explain clearly how well pupils are doing and

to set targets for the next lesson. Teachers know their pupils, and their different abilities, very well. They plan work which closely meets their needs, starting from what they know. Consequently all pupils achieve well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Tasks in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 6 are interesting and offer lots of opportunities to pupils. Very good use is made of visits and visitors to bring the curriculum to life. Lots of extra activities after school and events and competitions with other schools further enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are quickly and accurately identified, particularly those in literacy. Targets, and how they are to be reached, are clear. Good use is made of extra staff to give pupils closer attention and more help.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Again, the needs of these pupils are known and work carefully planned to enable them to succeed. Extra staff are on hand to see these pupils get all the guidance they need. Most quickly acquire good English skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Staff constantly praise and encourage their pupils' efforts. There is a real sense of community in the school and everyone benefits from feeling a part of this 'family'. How pupils should behave is made clear to them and high standards are achieved. Staff provide lots of opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture and those of others. Spiritual development is generally satisfactory, but prayers in some classes are rushed or lack the opportunity for a moment of reflection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. St. Paul's is a very caring school, but not all staff are familiar with certain procedures they should follow. The progress of each individual is tracked very closely, particularly in English and mathematics, so that the school can be sure everyone is doing well or receiving extra help.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very close. Much is done to involve all parents in the life and work of the school. Most parents are keen to join in. They respond positively and work closely with the school to the benefit of their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy head and senior staff, gives the school strong, clear leadership. Everyone in the school knows what is done well and what needs to be improved. Teachers responsible for subjects are mostly effective. They, too, have a good understanding of what needs to be changed. Everyone is rightly focussed on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The Chair plays a full and active role in the life of the school. All governors want to see the school get better. They play their part in shaping its future. They do, however, rely too much on the headteacher. Their annual report misses the chance to promote the school's many strengths.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school closely checks how each pupil and each year group are progressing. Staff look for areas where the school is less effective, and ways to improve them. Afterwards, they check that the changes have worked. As a result, they have a good understanding of what needs to be done.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Several grants are received for particular schemes. Money is used well and for the intended purpose. The principles of best value are applied well.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	Satisfactory overall. There are sufficient teachers and a good number of learning support assistants. This means that there is usually an adult on hand to help any pupil. Learning resources and accommodation are sufficient overall but there are some shortcomings, for example the lack of an adequate library.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All parents state that their children like school. The school helps children become mature and responsible. Teaching is good. Their children make good progress at St. Paul's. Staff have high expectations of their children, and expect them to do their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents feel they are not as well informed about progress as they would like.

Inspectors agree with parents very positive views. Inspectors feel that the school does keep parents well informed about how their children are doing, through meetings and reports.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

What the school does particularly well:

- Generally, all pupils make good progress during their time at St. Paul's
- Pupils make particularly good progress in mathematics throughout the school and art and design in Years 3 to 6.
- The needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language, and the most able, are well met

What could be improved:

- Standards in English could be higher still
- Standards in ICT, although improving quickly, are too low

1. Overall, pupils do well at St. Paul's. They make generally good progress as they move through the school and results in the Year 6 national tests are improving at a faster rate at St. Paul's than they are in most schools in England and Wales.

2. At the time of the last inspection, standards at the end of Year 6 were below the national average in English and mathematics, and well below in science. The most recent national tests show an improvement in both mathematics and science. Even so, standards remain below the national average in both English and science. When results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools to St. Paul's, however, they are above average in English and science, and well above in mathematics. For the four years between the inspections, there has been a steady year-on-year improvement in English and science, and good recent improvement in mathematics. Results in the 2001 Year 2 national tests show an improvement in reading and mathematics, but no change in writing. Compared with all schools, results in the most recent national tests were below average in reading and mathematics, and well below average in writing. When compared with schools similar to St. Paul's, the results were above average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing.

3. In the 2001 Year 6 national tests, only half the pupils reached the level expected in English. This was well below average. However, approximately one in three reached a higher level than that expected, slightly above the national average. In mathematics, two thirds reached the expected level, slightly less than the national average. Approximately one in five reached a higher level, again a little below the national average. In science, three quarters reached the expected level and a quarter exceeded it. Again, these figures were a little below the national average. The school exceeded its target in mathematics, but failed to meet its target in English. Targets for 2002 are realistic and achievable in mathematics, but very challenging in English.

4. In the 2001 Year 2 national tests, about three quarters of pupils reached the expected level in reading. This is below the national average. Nearly one in three reached a higher level than expected, about the same as the national average. In writing, about two thirds reached the expected level, well below the national average. Furthermore, very few exceeded this level

and this too was well below the national average. In mathematics, eight pupils in every ten reached the expected level, well below the national average. The proportion exceeding the expected level, about one in five, was also well below the national average.

5. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of attainment levels but, overall, they are well below average for their age. Many children struggle to express themselves orally. Mostly because of good support from teachers and other adults working with them, all children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress during their time in the nursery and reception classes. By the time the children leave the reception class at the end of the Foundation Stage, most have achieved the expected levels in their physical, creative and personal, social and emotional development. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, however, despite the good progress they make, standards remain below the expected level.

6. Inspection evidence suggests that current standards in Year 6 are generally a little below those expected nationally in English and broadly in line with those expected in mathematics and science. All pupils are doing as well as might be expected. This is clearly demonstrated in their work in class and through the very good and careful tracking of their progress through the school, so that staff know if they are not doing as well as expected and can intervene. Comparing their attainment levels at the end of Year 2 with those at the end of Year 6, the vast majority of pupils make good progress in all three subjects.

7. Current standards in Year 2, are below those expected for pupils of this age in English and mathematics, and broadly in line with those expected in science. Compared with the standards when they joined Year 1, this nevertheless represents good progress.

8. Standards in literacy are below those expected overall, although pupils make good progress during their time at St. Paul's. Teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of interesting texts, some from other cultures, to which pupils respond enthusiastically. In reading, pupils tend to use a limited range of strategies for working out unknown words. Partly because the school does not have an appropriate library, pupils' research skills are below the level expected. Many pupils know and use a limited range of vocabulary. This adversely affects how well they do in other academic subjects, too. In their writing, pupils write for a good range of audiences and purposes using a wide variety of styles. Increasingly, writing skills are practised in other subjects, reinforcing their interest and understanding. The 'tools' of writing, such as spelling, punctuation and handwriting, are taught effectively. In the short sessions when pupils are learning and practising these skills, they do well. However, very few transfer this good level of skill to their general work.

9. Standards in numeracy are generally in line with those expected. The standards are improving, largely because the national strategy is taught well and used effectively. Pupils' mental computation is generally quick and accurate. They respond enthusiastically to these 'question and answer' sessions, work hard and do well. Increasingly, pupils are learning strategies that enable them to tackle problems for themselves.

10. Reading, writing and number skills are used increasingly in other subjects, and this is beginning to play a part in the steady progress pupils make. ICT skills, for example, are often taught and practised through these skills. In Year 4, pupils learn how ICT can be used to do

such things as editing writing or handling large numbers, quicker and better. In other subjects, such as history, different types of writing are practised and pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of chronology.

11. Pupils with special educational needs do well and reach the standards of which they are capable. Nearly all make good progress in relation to clear targets set in their individual education plans. Tasks set are well matched to their needs and pupils' progress is very well supported by both teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils do well.

12. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also benefit from very good levels of support. They, too, are given tasks well matched to their abilities. By working in small groups, either with teachers or learning support assistants, they generally receive the guidance they need when they need it.

13. Standards reached by the most able pupils are good. The school recognises when pupils have particular skills and aptitudes and caters for them well. They make good progress. In Years 2, 4, 5 and 6, where teaching is particularly challenging and stimulating, these pupils often make very good progress.

14. The standards in science are generally satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the amount of practical work has increased and the time given to the subject is better. In their understanding and development of scientific thinking, pupils are doing much better. However, the achievements of many are limited by their relatively poor reading and writing skills. In ICT, standards are below those expected. This is largely because pupils have had limited access to computers over the last few years. Currently, pupils are doing much better and standards are rising rapidly. Standards in art and design in Years 3 to 6 are good. Pupils know and use well a good range of media and techniques. In all other subjects, standards are generally in line with those expected.

15. More than nine in every ten parents who replied to the questionnaire feel that their children make good progress in the school. At the meeting for parents held before the inspection, the parents felt that standards had improved over the recent past. Whether their children were particularly able, or had special educational needs, they felt they were doing well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

What is done particularly well:

- Pupils' attitudes are positive and they behave well
- Personal development is good
- Staff listen to pupils' concerns, relationships are consequently strong, no pupil has been excluded

What could be improved:

- More needs to be done to promote the advantages of good attendance and punctuality
- There are few opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves, largely because there is no adequate library

16. Pupils have good attitudes, behave well and enjoy very good relationships in school. They work hard and try to please. This contributes significantly to the good rate at which they learn. In most respects, this represents a similar picture to the last inspection. However, the punctuality of pupils and their overall rate of attendance have been too slow in improving and are now unsatisfactory.

17. Although often initially reticent, children generally settle quickly into the nursery. As they move through both nursery and reception, they gain confidence. They are curious and interested in the interesting tasks they are given. They behave well and begin to learn how groups and communities live, work and play together. They begin to form good relationships with both staff and other children.

18. Pupils respond well to the various methods teachers have to engage their interest and foster an enthusiastic approach to their learning. Many lessons are enhanced by the teachers' high expectations of the pupils' intellectual and creative effort. This is a commitment shared by the pupils, resulting in their consistently good behaviour and very good relationships. However, those who are rushed into school at the last minute and those that arrive tired, listless or late find it very difficult first thing in the morning to maintain their concentration. This mostly affects a small but significant number of younger pupils.

19. Attitudes are positive and co-operative, relationships among pupils very good, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or special educational need. There are frequent instances in lessons where strong and supportive relationships allow pupils to work at their own level without fear of failure. These very positive relationships do much to enhance the climate for learning.

20. Older pupils particularly enjoy and share humour with their teachers. This was particularly evident in a very successful Year 5 mathematics lesson where excellent teaching, combined with a shared sense of fun, helped pupils use and remember the rules governing decimals and their place value on a number line. Pupils are developing a healthy awareness of the link between supportive and friendly relationships, positive attitudes and good progress.

21. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They show good levels of personal responsibility and use their initiative well. Their capacity for independence is developed and encouraged through educational visits, school clubs and their charitable work. These experiences result in pupils developing a worthy sense of self-esteem. They respond readily and confidently to visitors, happily discussing their reading habits with them. They show a good level of independent thinking when they are required to act and respond promptly, as for example in their quick-fire sessions of mental mathematics. Here, they are often bursting to answer a question or to explain how they have arrived at it. This they enjoy greatly. However, a few lessons do not develop pupils' independence in terms of research and investigative skills as much as they could. The lack of an adequate school library hinders the progress pupils could make in this direction.

22. The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons and around the school. It is only when expectations for conduct are not made sufficiently clear that a small minority of younger pupils struggle to behave well in lessons. Reactions and responses from older pupils would indicate that they have developed a clear understanding of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct within a school community. Parents have noted this and comment on how well the school encourages pupils to relate to one another. The atmosphere in the dining hall is sociable. Pupils behave well here, too. Pupils play contentedly during 'wet' (indoor) play times, with the older pupils helping younger ones select toys to share and enjoy in the classrooms.

23. Behaviour is good. Pupils behave well towards one another. For example, none behave in a manner that would impinge upon the learning of others. There have been no exclusions for some years. There was no evidence of bullying during the inspection. Most arguments between pupils are short-lived and soon forgotten. Pupils confidently report to their teachers or supervisors if they feel someone is being unkind to them or their friends, secure in the knowledge that the concern will be promptly dealt with.

24. Although the percentage of absences made without good reason is less than it was three years ago, the overall rate of pupils' attendance and their punctuality is unsatisfactory. Pupils are more often absent in this school than in the majority of other primary schools. Too many arrive late and then find it difficult to settle into a lesson that has already started. Given the good teaching, effective curriculum and progress that pupils make, staff have had to work particularly hard at supporting those who are regularly absent or often late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

What is done particularly well:

- Teaching is generally of a good standard
- The quality of teaching in Year 2 and Years 4 to 6 is generally very good. Lessons are lively and stimulating, pupils respond enthusiastically and do very well
- The good number of skilled and well-trained learning support assistants is beneficial to pupils' learning, enabling them to get the help they need when they need it

What could be improved:

- Temporary teachers need better training about the curriculum and how it is taught
- Some teachers could expect more of pupils' use of the 'tools' of writing, such as handwriting and spelling, in their general writing
- Some teachers and learning support assistants teach pupils to rely too heavily on phonics to understand unknown words.

25. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. More than nine in every ten lessons seen were satisfactory or better, seven in every ten good or better, and more than a quarter were very good or excellent. Teaching in Year 2 and Years 4 to 6 is particularly strong. It is generally of very good quality, and sometimes excellent. Pupils learn at a faster rate in these classes. The very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is largely where teachers are temporary, and not as proficient with the detail of the curriculum or how it is to be delivered. The good standard of teaching reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained overall. As then, there is a high proportion of good teaching in the reception and older classes, and good teaching continues to occur in all subjects. Ninety-five per cent of parents who replied to the questionnaire feel that teaching at St. Paul's is good.

26. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, but more effective in the reception class than in the nursery. Tasks are well planned and both teachers and adults working with the children guide and support them well. The needs of all, including those with special educational needs, are recognised quickly and supported effectively.

27. In Year 2 and Years 4 to 6, teachers' expectations are particularly high. In every lesson, they make realistic but challenging demands of all their pupils, both in what they do

and the way they do it. Pupils in these classes rise to this challenge very well. Teaching in these classes is always lively and interesting. Pupils are often enthralled and stimulated by their teacher's enthusiasm for the subjects they teach. Consequently, pupils understand better, work hard to persevere and complete tasks.

28. In the most effective lessons, teachers use a variety of styles, methods and organisations to grab the pupils' interest and maintain it through the session. Pupils are never given the opportunity to be bored. These teachers recognise that many of their pupils have difficulty in concentrating for a long period of time. Consequently, different parts of lessons will involve pupils moving to different places, or working with different groups. Whatever the objective of the lesson, the teacher will try to find an interesting way of delivering it. The reluctance of some children to write for example, has been recognised by many teachers. Consequently they will look for ways to make writing fun and relevant. A very good Year 6 lesson on punctuation drew examples from newspapers. Neither girls, nor particularly boys, found this an arduous task. All enjoyed it and worked hard. They made good improvement in their learning and understanding during the session.

29. Teachers use resources very effectively, too, particularly to hold interest and concentration. Again, they recognise their pupils' needs. They know that many pupils have a limited vocabulary and difficulty understanding long or complicated oral explanations. They therefore make very good use of visual explanation to reinforce what they are teaching their pupils.

30. Teachers plan well. Lessons are well organised, with clear learning objectives and consideration of how best they should be taught. In the most effective teaching, there is very clear guidance for support staff who are often involved in discussion about the success of one lesson when planning the next.

31. Both English and mathematics are taught well. Permanent teachers know and understand the national strategies in both subjects. Planning in these lessons is very good. Teachers are confident and effective, whether teaching literacy or number skills. Lessons start well. Teachers enthuse pupils. Numeracy lessons, for example, start with good warm up sessions that enable pupils to juggle numbers and hone their abilities at mental computation. In effective teaching, very good use is made of the summing-up. In Year 2 for example, pupils understand how much progress they have made during the lesson as the teacher cleverly leads them through its evaluation. Pupils leave the lesson with a sense that they are making progress. This raises their confidence and reinforces their enthusiasm for the next lesson.

32. The most effective teachers make very good use of marking, both to give pupils a clear understanding of what they have achieved and of what they need to concentrate on next. In Year 2, most marking ends with the pupil given a target for the next lesson. When that lesson comes, the teacher reminds pupils to look at their target and refers to it in her marking of that lesson. Marking is similarly effective in several, but not all, other classes.

33. Most teachers develop their pupils' learning skills well. Although there is no appropriate library where pupils can research for themselves, teachers generally make good use of paired and group work. Pupils learn to collaborate and share and listen to one another's point of view. In Year 6, for example, pupils occasionally work in problem-solving teams. Not only do they have a task to do, but they have to organise themselves and their time to achieve it successfully. In the older classes particularly, pupils often present their findings as a group or to the class. In younger classes, teachers recognise that a relatively high proportion of pupils are reluctant to speak formally to the class. They give their pupils encouragement and opportunity to develop these skills. In Year 1, pupils were asked to comment on a recent

historical visit and whether, and why, they would prefer to live now or then. Even those reluctant to speak initially were successful through the careful encouragement of the teacher and the positive relationships in the class.

34. Class and specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Pupils' needs are recognised and met, for example in literacy, numeracy and science. Targets are appropriate to pupils' needs. Learning support assistants make a very positive contribution. They ensure pupils with statements are fully integrated and included in activities in class.

35. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well taught. The good number of adults enables these pupils to work in small groups if appropriate, and to receive the help they need when they need it. Guidance from learning support assistants is good.

36. Throughout the school, good use is made of homework to extend pupils' learning and to raise standards. The teachers work hard to develop a good relationship with the home. As far as possible, parents are fully involved in their children's learning. A good proportion of parents also work alongside their children in class. This is very beneficial.

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

What is done particularly well:

- The curriculum is of good quality and pupils' learning is extended well year-on-year
- Pupils' personal development is good
- Extra-curricular activities, and other events, visits and visitors are used effectively to extend and enrich the curriculum
- The involvement of the community in the curriculum is good

What could be improved:

- Provision for pupils' spiritual development
- Better use could be made of numeracy targets to define what pupils need to do

37. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good throughout the school. The school has developed a well structured curriculum embracing all statutory requirements and providing much more besides. The wide range of good learning opportunities meets the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and the most able.

38. For most subjects and age groups, very good use is made of nationally-recognised schemes of work. From the early learning goals in the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is cohesive. Skills are methodically developed year-on-year. All subjects of the National Curriculum are included. Furthermore, there is a satisfactory balance between each subject and, within each subject, of its components. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

39. Planning at all levels is of good quality and thorough. All plans knit together well and pupils' new learning in one subject will very often reinforce and practise what they have recently learnt in another. ICT is beginning to be used much better to support and extend learning in other subjects. Planning includes a good evaluation of what was done last. Homework successfully consolidates and extends what pupils learn in class.

40. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are of good quality. Realistic targets are set. Helpful advice about how they should be achieved is included. They are regularly monitored and checked. The policy makes positive statements and clear definitions about provision and procedures, roles and responsibilities. Pupils have full access to the curriculum and their learning is carefully planned and structured. Literacy support is consistently good, support for pupils in numeracy less so. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. Tasks are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. The school recognises individual pupils' strengths.

41. An effective policy for sex and drugs education supports good teaching and learning. The use and misuse of drugs is very clearly and thoughtfully taught using a local resource that visits annually. Personal, social and health education is taught through a stimulating and varied curriculum.

42. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. The very strong sense of community and caring is pivotal. Staff value pupils' efforts and their contribution to school life. Teachers use praise well to encourage pupils to reach their personal targets. The school is an inclusive community of staff, pupils, parents and governors. The community's contribution to pupils' progress is good. People who work in the community come into school to talk and work with pupils. Parents and friends help in many ways. Relationships with partner institutions are good. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils are treated in a warm and friendly manner by all staff and this has a positive effect on their relationships. Pupils are encouraged to take on classroom tasks and the eldest have responsibilities around the school. They support local charities and learn about being good citizens. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall; however, it varies from class to class. Several times a day pupils are given a chance to pause for reflection and pray. During the inspection, whilst in some classes everyone was still, in others they were not. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Local visits are used well. Pupils learn about celebrations and traditions in many faiths and have good but limited experiences of the richness and diversity of a multicultural society. Good provision for pupils' moral development is closely linked with the school's caring ethos. Staff insist on high standards of behaviour and consideration for others at all times. Pupils are taught what is right and to respect others and their property. Staff provide good role models.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

What is done particularly well:

- St. Paul's is a very caring school with the pupils' needs central to its planning and teaching.
- The organisation, groupings and support have a positive impact upon pupils' learning
- The school promotes good behaviour effectively
- The school does a lot to encourage regular attendance and punctuality

What could be improved:

- Not all staff are clear about child protection procedures

43. The school cares well for its pupils. Some aspects of the provision are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are now very good and a key factor in the improved quality of support all pupils

receive, particularly those with behavioural problems. The school has made good progress in supporting pupils' personal progress with parents now more actively involved in encouraging their children to adopt a healthy 'can-do' attitude towards their learning. Staff are responsive to the pupils' needs with beneficial effects on their ability and confidence to cope with everyday life in the school. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are more rigorous than they were and the school tries hard to improve attendance rates and persistent lateness by a significant minority of pupils.

44. Children in the Foundation Stage are cared for well. Much is done to ensure their start to school life is positive. They are given good support so that they begin to learn how to behave within the school community.

45. The procedures for promoting pupils' well-being, health and safety are satisfactory, as are the procedures for child protection. Pupils are made aware of safe practices during lessons and whilst moving around the school. Even so, these procedures are not understood and used consistently by all staff, and this is detrimental to pupils' well-being.

46. Staff maintain a high degree of sensitivity to the needs of the individual when dealing with welfare and child protection issues. The school recognises the need to ensure that all staff remain alert to recognising a child who may be at risk. Sufficient numbers of staff are suitably trained in the administration of first aid. Detailed records are kept of injuries and accidents to pupils, but these have yet to be analysed with a view to seeing what might be done to prevent an accident recurring. Accommodation when pupils are ill is inadequate, offering little in the way of comfort and privacy.

47. Good use is made of governor expertise to ensure the condition of the site and buildings is well maintained. Good records are kept and a check is made of work as it is done. However, these assessments do not as a rule extend to the wider range of potential risks in a school. The school has suitably addressed a health and safety issue highlighted in the last inspection.

48. The school provides pupils with a good level of personal support and guidance. The teachers know individual pupils very well, including those with learning needs, those with English as an additional language and those who have recently joined the school. A learning mentor works on a one-to-one basis with pupils of low self-esteem. Good practice is shared amongst staff, particularly in relation to dealing with pupils with behavioural problems. All groups of pupils are properly integrated into all aspects of school life. This has a positive impact on their personal development as well as on their academic progress.

49. Procedures that support pupils' personal development are effective because staff get on very well with their pupils and care for them. Teachers are particularly successful in managing the crucial period of transition from home to school. They listen patiently to pupils so that they can identify and rectify mistakes and misunderstandings. Well-timed interventions in lessons contribute to raising the pupils' self-esteem by making them proud of their individual achievements. The trust pupils have in the security and support they receive helps them concentrate on their learning. Teachers make good use of the information they have to enter into a supportive dialogue with the pupils themselves or with parents about their child's personal progress. Annual reports include perceptive comment on personal development. Very good use is made of outside agencies. During the inspection for example, members of a drama group worked with younger pupils to develop their confidence and speaking skills.

50. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. Since the last inspection, the school has reinforced the message that bullying of any description will not be tolerated. Pupils and parents see the rules on behaviour as being fair and fairly applied, and so they are willing to follow and support the school's strong stand against all forms of oppressive behaviour. Teachers encourage pupils to show kindness and tolerance to others.

Midday supervisors provide a consistent approach. Pupils are confident that they can turn to any member of staff if someone is being unkind to them. The behaviour management policy promotes early intervention to avoid conflict. Staff apply this policy consistently to discover and eliminate any persistent misbehaviour, bullying or racial incidents.

51. An extensive range of very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and the concentrated efforts of staff in applying them has slowly but surely reduced the number of occasions pupils are absent without good reason. However, the overall rate of pupils' absence is still a cause for concern as is the continual lateness of many families. The procedures have yet to motivate and appeal to parents as much as they do to their children. Registers are marked with care and strictly in accordance with statutory requirements. The school is making good use of information technology to monitor attendance data more efficiently.

52. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' academic progress are good and very good for the older pupils. Children in the Foundation Stage are carefully assessed on entering nursery. Individual needs are targeted and children are supported in their learning throughout the school. Assessment is regular and thorough through the school. Information obtained is used to adapt the teaching programme. Much information is collected and analysed. This helps the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in its provision and to set targets both for year groups and individual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are also assessed regularly, targets set and monitored carefully. Reviews are appropriate. Comprehensive procedures are in place for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Systems for collecting information in other subjects are beginning to follow a nationally recognised model. Although currently little better than adequate, this should ensure they become effective.

53. There is good practice of observational feedback in some classes, which enables learning support assistants to report to the teacher the performance and achievements of the pupils in their care. As yet a uniform system to record this valuable information has to be established.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

What is done particularly well:

- The school works very closely with parents and gives them lots of opportunities to discuss how well their children are doing
- There is a close and strong bond between home and school
- Home visits when children first start help them settle in
- Parents find the reports helpful; clear, concise and informative in everyday language

What could be improved:

- Some pupils would benefit from their parents supporting the attendance policy more
- The governing body could use its annual report to help parents become more aware of the strengths of the school

54. The school's partnership with parents promotes very effective links between home and school that enables parents to make a good contribution to their children's learning. The school has successfully built on the good links evident at the time of the last inspection.

55. Parents have very positive views of the school and what it provides for their children. They give very positive messages about the school. These were echoed in the comments made by parents spoken to during the inspection. Parents believe their children enjoy their time at school because teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of what their children can achieve by working hard and being responsible. The vast majority of parents feel the school works closely with them and keeps them sufficiently informed about the progress their children make. The school constantly reaches out to parents and encourages their involvement.

56. Overall quality of information available to parents is good and presented in a friendly and positive way. Parents are warm in their praise for the way in which they are welcomed into school. Teachers strive to be available for parents, to set aside time to answer their queries and to deal with their concerns. Parents are very comfortable about approaching the school.

57. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. End-of-year reports are thorough and indicate what each pupil can and cannot do, the progress made and targets for improvement. Information about pupils' personal development is clear. Parents have many good opportunities to discuss their children's progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have additional opportunities to work in partnership with the school and to understand the individual steps their children need to take to make progress. Very effective use is made of parent classes, class assemblies, presentations, concerts and displays around the school to show and to explain to all parents what their children are doing and have achieved.

58. The school realises the importance of establishing close links with parents straight away. Right from when children enter nursery, the school works hard and successfully establishes a close and trusting partnership. The prospectus is a satisfactory introduction to the school. This and the home/school agreement supplement the very useful programme of home visits when children start.

59. The governors' annual report does not contain all necessary information. Governors miss the opportunity to promote the school's many achievements such as the good progress made since its last inspection, the effectiveness of the policy for special educational needs; the steps taken to assist the admission of pupils with disabilities; details of the terms of office of individual governors and information about the next parent governor election. In its present format, the report does little to raise interest or awareness amongst parents.

60. Both school and support agencies continue to seek ways to enlist the help of parents in tackling and improving the low rate of pupil attendance. Even so, a significant number of parents have yet to realise the benefit of getting their children to school each day, on time, and in a condition ready to learn. Nevertheless, most parents are keen to see their children succeed and want them to do their best. A growing number are becoming enthusiastic learners themselves, responding well to the very good opportunities in school that help them work

with their children at home. As a result, parents are better informed about the work their children are doing and are gaining a valuable insight into how children learn.

61. Parents make a worthwhile contribution to their children's learning. They accept and support the school's procedures and policies on discipline and inclusion. Parents of pupils with behavioural problems work closely with the school to help their children improve their conduct. Parents of pupils with special educational needs appreciate being involved in discussions on setting targets for their children. Parents' assistance with visits helps enhance curriculum provision.

62. Parents are very much involved in supporting their children's learning and helping them achieve their targets. The school works very closely with parents. Time and opportunities are provided to discuss progress. Good relationships enable unplanned meetings to take place as and when necessary to support their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

What is done particularly well:

- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, deputy head and senior staff
- Good systems ensure the work of the school is monitored closely
- The school development plan is a useful tool that drives school improvement
- Provision for special educational needs is very well managed
- Financial management is good
- Most co-ordinators are very effective in raising standards

What could be improved:

- The quality of education provided would gain from a more adequate library and better provision for outdoor play for the youngest children
- Governors could use their annual report better to make parents more aware of the strengths of the school

63. Since the last inspection, where the leadership and management of the headteacher and governors were found to be very good, the school has undergone several changes. There has, however, been little alteration in the quality of leadership and management. Very good standards have been maintained. The present headteacher continues to provide very good leadership and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She works very closely with staff and governors to continue to raise standards, improve teaching quality and give the school a clear sense of purpose and direction. Staff are well supported by their able headteacher who recognises the importance of developing a strong team. Under her leadership, teachers and support staff work together very effectively.

64. The senior management team are able and effective. They work closely with the headteacher to ensure that issues are thoroughly discussed, informed decisions made and effective action taken. Their clear vision for the future is evident in the determination to raise pupils' standards by focusing on several key strategies, such as the acquisition of an ICT suite. In addition, they recognise the need to raise pupils' writing standards, identified as an area of concern and a priority in the school development plan. Most subject co-ordinators, too, are very effective. They are skilled and knowledgeable about their subjects. Clear plans for the development of subjects are largely appropriate. The Foundation Stage, too, is well led and managed. Provision is cohesive and well-planned. Additional staff well used.

65. The school development plan is a useful tool for school improvement. The views of all are considered. It clearly identifies appropriate areas for development and maintenance, notably raising standards. It outlines what will be done, by whom and by when. Success criteria are clear. Good individual subject development plans are also included.

66. The aims and mission statement of the school are good. They are clearly defined and reflected in the day-to-day life of the school. They are fully inclusive and seek to secure, for

all pupils, improvements in all areas of their life in school, irrespective of their ability or background. The aims and policies of the school underpin much of its work and life and are, in most cases, reflected in the practice of the school. There are a few occasions when this is not always the case. For example, the lack of whole-school consistency in the marking of pupils' work and their standards of presentation means that the practice in these two areas differs from class to class.

67. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They focus on providing the best quality education and utilising their skills fully. They are strongly committed to self-improvement and training and perform their role as critical friend effectively. Some governors visit the school when it is working. This helps these governors to make more informed decisions. Governors work closely with the headteacher. They manage the school's finances well. Governors understand their strategic responsibilities but the school would benefit from their greater involvement.

68. Data is analysed thoroughly and information gained used well to assist the school's main aim, to raise standards. Detailed information is used effectively to track the progress of all pupils. As a result, the school is taking very good steps to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their ability or backgrounds, are fully included in its life and work.

69. Good structures and procedures are used to check standards and provision. Teaching and learning are closely monitored. What works well is recognised and shared, what does not is rectified. This is particularly effective in English and mathematics and the school has clear plans in place to extend this to other subject areas.

70. Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable. Provision is good and supported by a well-qualified and very able team of learning support assistants, who work very closely with teachers. Since the last inspection, a well resourced specialist base has been established and the profile of special educational needs support raised further. Strong and energetic leadership ensures clear direction.

71. There are good systems in place for performance management. Training is well targeted at improving school performance, for example in ICT. There are appropriate arrangements in place for the induction of newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school.

72. Financial planning systems are very good and this is a major improvement since the last inspection. The school applies the best value principles well. Money identified for specific developments is carefully spent and closely monitored. The governing body is fully involved. Financial planning and the school development plan are closely linked to ensure standards rise and the overall quality of education offered improves. All these are better than when the school was last inspected. A large carry-forward, for specific purposes such as the new ICT suite and equipment, was appropriate.

73. School financial and administration procedures are good. Administrative staff help ensure the school runs smoothly. Recommendations of the most recent auditors' report are being met.

74. The school has sufficient teachers and a very good number of support staff. The strengths and skills of all are employed very effectively. The accommodation overall is satisfactory. Classrooms are spacious and are enhanced by the high quality displays of pupils' work. The ICT suite is a significant asset to pupils' learning. The school lacks an adequate library, first-aid room and areas in which small withdrawal groups could work. This adversely affects standards and the quality of support to pupils. In addition, the outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage restricts opportunities for physical development. Overall, resources in most subject areas are satisfactory and used well to support teaching and learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to continue to build upon the good progress made, the school should:

(1) Continue to build upon recent improvements to further raise standards in English and ICT by:

- widening the range of reading cues taught so that pupils are not solely reliant upon phonics;
- raising teachers' and pupils' expectations that skills practised in specific lessons, such as handwriting and spelling, will be transferred to general work;
- continuing to seek ways to practise writing skills in other subjects;
- seeking to provide adequate accommodation for a suitable book collection so that pupils may practise and hone their research skills, and have the opportunity to browse a wider range of authors;
- fully implementing the school's own plans for ICT, including additional equipment and teacher and learning support assistant training.

(Paragraphs: 2-4, 6-8, 14, 21, 28, 33, 64, 74, 85, 88, 104-106, 110-115, 151, 153, 161, 163, 167)

(2) Continue to seek ways to encourage parents to bring their children to school on time, daily unless they are ill by:

- further developing and defining staff roles, particularly regarding support and advice for parents and pupils;
- continuing to promote the need for good attendance and punctuality in the community;
- continuing to work closely with outside agencies.

(Paragraphs: 16, 18, 24, 43, 51, 106, 122, 131)

Other issues that should be considered by the school:

- Ensure all staff are familiar with school policies (such as child protection and marking of pupils' work) and implement them consistently. (Paragraphs: 32, 45, 47, 53, 66, 135)
- Ensure temporary teachers are better prepared and fully understand the curriculum for their age phase. (Paragraphs: 25, 26, 106, 116, 126)
- Seek ways to build on recent improvements to further develop outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage. (Paragraphs: 74, 79, 99)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	17	11	3	0	0
Percentage	2	26	39	26	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	193
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	134

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	41

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	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.7
National comparative data	5.6

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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	16	14	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	8	12
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	23	20	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (87)	67 (70)	83 (87)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	12
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	23	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (77)	77 (80)	83 (80)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	17	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	11
	Girls	7	9	10
	Total	14	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (60)	64 (62)	75 (81)
	National	75 (75)	89 (88)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	7
	Girls	8	8	9
	Total	14	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (62)	54 (54)	57 (77)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	157
Any other minority ethnic group	12

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	27.6

Education support staff: Y1 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	223

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	2.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.67

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	623 245
Total expenditure	598 206
Expenditure per pupil	2 833
Balance brought forward from previous year	30 719
Balance carried forward to next year	55 758

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	219
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	46	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	49	3	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	52	7	3	5
The teaching is good.	56	39	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	21	13	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	23	3	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	36	2	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	48	44	3	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	44	46	3	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	44	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	36	8	2	10

(These numbers are rounded up or down from one decimal place. They may, therefore, add up to just over or under 100).

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

What is done particularly well:

- Teaching is good in the reception class
- Links with the home are strong
- Children are well cared for and their personal and social development is particularly good
- The curriculum is well planned with many stimulating activities at the right level

What could be improved:

- The outdoor provision is inadequate
- More opportunities for children to learn for themselves

76. The Foundation Stage is organised in two classes, nursery and reception. Children enter nursery at the beginning of the year they reach their fourth birthday and for the vast majority their attainment is well below average for their age. In particular, many children need a great deal of support and encouragement to express themselves orally. After a year they transfer to the reception class.

77. Links with parents are very good and children's start at school is handled sensitively. At the beginning of the year, nursery staff visit the children's homes to introduce themselves and ensure that the children see a familiar face when they enter nursery. The children come to nursery for a short time each day to begin with and their parents are encouraged to stay with them. This time is gradually extended until the majority of children attend full time.

78. Children make good progress overall, better in reception than nursery. Because of good teaching and the work of supporting adults, all children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make the progress of which they are capable as they move through the Foundation Stage. Children with special educational needs are identified and assessed quickly. Extra support is provided according to their particular needs. By the time they leave the reception class, nearly all children have achieved the nationally expected levels in physical, creative and personal, social and emotional development. They do not reach the expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.

79. Lessons are planned carefully to enable children to follow the 'stepping stones' towards the Early Learning Goals, the nationally-recognised curriculum for children of this age. Many interesting and stimulating activities are provided, although more opportunities for self-directed learning would enable children to begin to develop important learning skills earlier. Although outdoor provision has improved recently, it remains limited in size and, consequently, the range of activities offered is narrow.

Personal, social and emotional development

80. The attainment of children in personal, social and emotional development is well below expectations for their age when they join the nursery. They make very good progress

owing to the well-planned activities, good teaching and support they receive. Most children achieve the ‘stepping stones’ by the time they leave the Foundation Stage at the end of their reception year.

81. Most children settle well into the structure of school life and eventually join in with enthusiasm. Some children find it difficult to be part of a group and need support and encouragement to develop their confidence and fully take part. In both nursery and reception, time is given to ensuring that the children know the routines such as sitting quietly, clearing away their equipment and moving sensibly from one place to another. The children learn to share equipment and play and work together well. For example, when using the outdoor play area, the children take turns to use the wheeled toys and move through the tunnel and slide.

82. Children begin to develop an awareness that some actions are right and some are wrong. They learn to care about and respect the views of others. During the inspection, most nursery children experienced another culture as they made and ate samosas and dressed in Asian clothes. Class discussions are a regular feature. As well as developing children’s speaking skills well, giving good opportunities for them to express their feelings, children learn to take turns and listen to others. Children are able to talk about themselves and their families. Staff encourage them to think of others less fortunate than themselves, for example by raising money for charity.

83. Teaching is good overall. Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop their children’s skills. They work well together and, in reception particularly, there is good rapport.

84. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to come into school and help with events and activities. They choose books with their children to read together at home. This is beneficial to children’s learning.

Communication, language and literacy

85. The attainment of children in communication, language and literacy is well below expectations for their age when they join the nursery. They make good progress overall, generally quicker in reception than nursery, but remain below average and do not achieve all of the ‘stepping stones’ by the time they leave the Foundation Stage at the end of their reception year.

86. In the nursery, children begin to listen carefully to the teacher but many need adult help to respond to questions and to express their ideas. They have many opportunities to listen to other children and to take turns to speak. Throughout the day, children develop specific language to support their learning in other curriculum areas. Role play situations provide good stimulus for real conversations with others. Children take on the role of doctor, nurse or patient in the ‘surgery’ and talk with others appropriately. In reception, children take turns to be the king, queen or maid in the make-believe ‘castle’. They chat enthusiastically and many begin to take on some of the features of the roles they play.

87. In nursery, children learn to recognise their names successfully. They self-register at the start of a session. Children gain an increasing awareness of books as they listen with interest and pleasure. Nursery children handle books with care. Some know that the cover

illustration gives clues to what is inside and they follow the story by looking at the pictures. Most reception children are beginning to know a few initial letter sounds and to recognise them in simple words and texts. In the literacy session, they benefit from reading together from shared texts. With adult support, they follow the words from left to right and most join in the simple repetitive stories and rhymes.

88. In both classes, children are encouraged to think of themselves as writers. They make books to read together. The manipulative skills of writing are developed satisfactorily through practice in painting, drawing and play with construction kits. They are encouraged to write their names and simple phrases. Most manage, but very few write any sentences for themselves.

89. The quality of teaching is good. Strong emphasis is placed on improving spoken language and listening skills. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and work is matched to individual targets. All staff are fully involved in both planning and teaching. Outside agencies are used well, for example to develop children's confidence and speaking skills. Reading workshops for parents help them support reading and writing at home and school.

Mathematical development

90. The attainment of children in mathematical development is well below expectations for their age when they join the nursery. They make good progress overall, generally quicker in reception than nursery, but remain below average and do not achieve all of the 'stepping stones' by the time they leave the Foundation Stage at the end of their reception year.

91. Both nursery and reception children quickly learn to join in number rhymes and games. Most sort a wide variety of objects accurately according to colour, shape and size. Most can name common regular shapes. They are beginning to count and recognise some of the numbers from one to five. In reception, children sort, count and use money well. The more able children are beginning to add small numbers together by counting on from the larger number.

92. The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers take every opportunity to encourage children to talk mathematically. They will ask a child to count the number of children present or the number in a queue. During the inspection, for example, nursery children were encouraged to discuss and name colours and shapes they were wearing. Number rhymes and games are used well to develop understanding and practise new learning. Teachers plan work to match children's individual levels. Tasks consequently start from the child's level and build methodically. Children with special educational needs make good progress because tasks are well matched to the targets in their individual education plans.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

93. Most children enter nursery with very limited knowledge and understanding of the world, their attainment is well below expectations for their age. They make good progress overall; but remain below average and do not achieve all of the 'stepping stones' by the time they leave the Foundation Stage at the end of their reception year.

94. In nursery, children develop their observational skills well by using magnifying glasses to look at their skin and other features of the body. They know and name some body parts. In reception, children gain much from the interesting activities. During the inspection, they used their senses of taste and smell well when choosing their favourite honey, and could give simple reasons for their choices. Most were willing to have a go. Most confidently talk about their homes and families and are aware of important events such as birthdays. They have some sense of place and location, for example when taking part in visits to the clinic and the local shops. All children have satisfactory and improving ICT skills. They are becoming familiar with opening and closing a programme and controlling a mouse.

95. Staff make very good use of visits and visitors to widen children's experiences and knowledge. This is very beneficial. For example, nature and sea life centres enhance children's knowledge of living things, while the regular visit of the Life Education Van helps them to begin to understand how wonderful the body is and of the need to take care of it. Local people such as the doctor and the pet shop owner are invited to the school to talk to the children. This stimulates their interest and increases their awareness of people who work in the community. These visits and contacts also do much to enhance children's social and personal development.

96. Teaching is good overall. A very good variety of experiences are provided that widen children's knowledge and arouse their curiosity. Key vocabulary is taught well.

Physical development

97. The attainment of children in physical development is below expectations for their age when they join the nursery. They make good progress and achieve the 'stepping stones' by the time they leave the Foundation Stage at the end of their reception year.

98. Nursery children run, jump, climb and balance with increasing confidence. They use balls and bats to develop skills of throwing and catching and eye-hand coordination. In reception, children respond well to instructions when moving round the room and they are developing a good awareness of space. They practise balancing on different parts of the body with increasing control and travel around, under, over and through large balancing and climbing equipment. All the children are beginning to recognise the changes that happen to their bodies after physical activity. For example they check their heart beat before and after moving vigorously.

99. Teaching is good. Good planning ensures that all children practise and build on skills already learnt. Activities are well organised with good emphasis on social skills such as sharing, cooperating and playing safely. Good use is made of the outdoor play area and the school hall to extend physical activities beyond the classroom. Even so, the outdoor play area is inadequate to meet all of the children's needs and consequently limits their progress.

Creative development

100. The attainment of children in creative development is below expectations for their age when they join the nursery. They make good progress and the majority achieve the 'stepping stones' by the time they leave the Foundation Stage at the end of their reception year.

101. Children use a wide variety of media including paint, crayon and collage to make pictures with a range of textures. During the inspection, nursery children made interesting 'splash' pictures linked with their current theme. In reception, children developed their observational skills well, looking at pictures of bees and then using their knowledge of colour and form to carefully reproduce the stripy body in their own pictures.

102. All children enjoy singing and listening to music. Songs and rhymes are often linked effectively to other areas of the curriculum. In the role play areas, children are beginning to develop a range of skills, for example when they pretend to be a doctor or patient.

103. Teaching is good. Teachers and other staff plan appropriate activities with a variety of materials. In reception particularly, children are given choices within a carefully-chosen range so that they build upon previous learning. Children's art work is carefully displayed, giving them a sense of value.

ENGLISH

What is done particularly well:

- The school has a clear understanding of relative strengths and weaknesses in English
- Good use is made of the National Literacy Strategy, the curriculum is relevant and interesting
- Good and often very good teaching is leading to good gains in learning
- The subject leadership and management are excellent

What could be improved:

- Standards generally, but particularly in writing, could be higher
- The provision of an adequate library would be beneficial to pupils' general learning and research skills particularly

104. Standards reached by eleven-year-olds in national tests show a steady improvement over the last four years, although they remain below the national average. The improvement is largely due to some very good teaching, the good use of the National Literacy Strategy and the careful use made of assessment to check pupils' progress.

105. Standards reached by seven-year-olds in national tests are improving in reading but remain well below the expected level in writing. Again, there is good use of the National Literacy Strategy and assessment.

106. Inspection findings indicate that standards are rising gradually. Reasons for improvement include the very well planned curriculum, full of stimulating, interesting and relevant activities, coupled with the very careful use of assessment to track pupils' progress and identify their needs as they move through the school. Even so, standards in writing are rising only slowly, largely for two reasons. Most importantly, a significant proportion of pupils come to the school with limited knowledge and competence in reading, and particularly, writing. Many of these pupils have special educational needs. Despite the good and often very good teaching, they learn at a slow rate. Furthermore, they need to go over new learning more often than most children of their age. The progress of a small number is further hampered by their regular absences. In addition, the school has had some problems recruiting teachers. It is almost always the case that the most effective teaching is done by the permanent teachers.

107. Most pupils learn at a good rate. Pupils with special educational needs make the progress that can be expected of them. Where they have individual education plans, targets are clear and tasks planned in lessons organised to meet them. Many of these pupils benefit particularly from the opportunities to work in small groups, either with their teachers, additional teachers, or their skilled and well trained learning support assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language are also given good support, carefully targeted to meet their needs. They, too, make the progress of which they are capable. The most able pupils are

catered for well in the school. For example, particularly able readers are given reading materials of the right level.

108. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are a little below those expected nationally for pupils of this age. However, pupils do make good progress from the low standards they had reached when they entered the school. Most pupils listen carefully and generally show this in the way they respond. Many are confident when talking to their friends, their teacher or another member of staff. Some can explain their ideas and thoughts carefully and clearly. The majority generally offer responses that are minimal, possibly a word or two or a very brief sentence. They make good progress in Year 2, where their teacher regularly and consistently challenges them to do better. Here, there are very high expectations that they will pronounce words carefully and accurately, and that they will attempt to give more than just a word or two in answer to questions or when expressing their views and opinions. This is very beneficial to their rate of progress.

109. By the end of Year 6, pupils speaking and listening skills have continued to improve at a good rate and the standards they reach are broadly in line with national expectations. The vast majority of pupils are talking and listening confidently. They are thoughtful in the development of their ideas, and clear in their description of events and opinions. Some question the opinions expressed by others in discussion. The school has responded well to the last inspection report. Opportunities for pupils to talk through their ideas and opinions are monitored more closely. Much has been done, both within lessons and through special events, to develop opportunities for pupils to speak and listen. For example, there are formal debates and many lessons include opportunities for informal discussion. The most effective teachers use these as an opportunity to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills methodically. Class assemblies, too, give similar opportunities. Even so, some pupils remain reluctant and hesitant to speak. For example, in Year 3, a small number of pupils need a great deal of encouragement before they will speak aloud.

110. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are below national expectations. Some read with understanding, while many struggle to express anything beyond very simple opinions concerning the main events or characters in the stories they read. Most pupils, when they come across a word they do not know, use a very limited range of methods to try to read the word. If their chosen method fails, many struggle to succeed. Even so, phonic knowledge and awareness is developing well. Pupils are making good progress for several reasons. Firstly, pupils are interested in reading and most of those who struggle are willing to have a go at words they do not know. Secondly, they are given lots of opportunities within school to practise their reading skills. Thirdly, the good use made of the reading element of the national strategy is beneficial. Finally, both teachers and learning support assistants have good levels of expertise and give pupils the guidance and support they need.

111. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are broadly in line with national expectations. However, the knowledge and use of information books is a relative weakness. This is largely due to the lack of adequate library facilities in the school. There is simply nowhere available for pupils to go and select information books, or use a number of information books to develop their own knowledge. This has an adverse effect upon research skills, too. Most Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the most important ideas, themes, events or characters in the stories they read. Some make reference to the text when explaining their views about these things. They have a good understanding of the contents

and index page of information books, and limited understanding of how to use a glossary. All pupils are very well supported in their individual reading. They are given lots of opportunities to read, and adults will often listen to them. Pupils enjoy this, try hard, and make good progress. Some have a good knowledge of a wide variety of authors, but most do not. Only in the literacy hour do most experience a wide variety and range of authors. Again, the 'shared reading' element of the literacy hour is very beneficial to the development of pupils' skills.

112. By the end of Year 2, standards in writing are below national expectations. The good emphasis given to writing in the recent past by is, however, making a positive difference and progress is steady. The National Literacy Strategy is used well by teachers, particularly to widen the range of writing pupils undertake. Writing skills are now more frequently and methodically practised in other subjects, too. A few more able pupils are using some interesting vocabulary when they write, but most use a relatively limited number of words. Although they have all made good progress since they entered the school, about one third only are working at the level expected. Most pupils generally write in sentences with capital letters and full stops, about a quarter can use question marks accurately.

113. By the end of Year 6, standards in writing remain below the expected level although the pupils have continued to make good progress. Some pupils know that a story is written in sentences and that sentences are grouped in paragraphs. They know that you use a paragraph to start a new part of the story. They can explain why. Most know about the advantages of planning a story and how a story can be structured, They often have good ideas about how characters can be introduced. They know that work is improved by drafting and editing, and that the computer is particularly beneficial when doing this. Teachers' very good use of the National Literacy Strategy means that these pupils, too, are given a good range of writing opportunities that cover a wide range of genre. They are skilled in writing mystery stories.

114. Throughout the school, new spellings are taught and practised each week. Care is taken to develop pupils' spellings skills, and they do comparatively well. Handwriting, too, is practised regularly. However, good skills in special lessons do not convert into improvement in general writing. Pupils have difficulty, too, in transferring punctuation skills taught by their teachers into their general writing.

115. Pupils' reading and writing skills sometimes limit their progress in other subjects which rely upon them using both. In reading, many pupils have satisfactory knowledge of the most commonly used everyday words, but struggle with subject-specific language. In writing, many pupils struggle to express themselves.

116. The overall quality of teaching is good and in several classes, Year 2 and the eldest three year groups, teaching is very good. This is very beneficial to pupils' learning and they make particularly good progress in these classes. Teaching is especially effective when the methods of delivery are very visual and interesting. This grabs and holds pupils' interest. Those who have difficulty concentrating for any length of time, particularly benefit from this approach. Teaching methods, too, are regularly varied by the most effective teachers. In Year 6, for example, pupils will work on one task individually, on another in a pair, and on a third in a team. When considering punctuation, the text chosen may be from a newspaper which is particularly interesting to this age group in general and boys in particular. In these ways, the teacher gets the interest of the pupil. The most effective teachers are constantly modelling how to go about tasks so that pupils have regular opportunities to see what is expected, and

how it can be done. Teachers are always looking for a different approach. For example, in Year 5, the teacher wrote an uninteresting beginning to a story and then asked the pupils to improve it. Teachers work well with learning support assistants. In Year 5, a pupil with special educational needs was able to fully participate in a class discussion, and offer an answer, because of the very good quality of support and the very good relationship between the adults so that the class teacher knew when the pupil had an answer to offer from the assistant's cue. As well as allowing the pupil to participate in the lesson, this was very beneficial to his self-confidence. Plenaries are used with varying success. In Year 2, they are very good, and fully evaluate pupils' achievements and gains in learning. In Year 3, however, they tend to be 'show and tell' sessions with little value in summarising, developing or evaluating pupils' progress. Where learning support assistants work with small groups, this is often of high quality and also leads to good progress. In Year 1, skilled support carefully explained tasks and effectively enabled a group of less able pupils to learn particular letter sounds. Although the work was intensive and at the end of the day, the learning support assistant's high expectations were matched by the pupils' endeavours. Throughout the school, pupils and staff share very good relationships. Pupils are keen and eager to please their teachers, particularly when the latter's expectations of them are challenging but achievable. In older classes, teachers and pupils share a very good sense of humour which sets an excellent climate for learning without impinging upon the progress made.

117. The curriculum is well planned and full of good opportunities for pupils to experience the full range of the subject. The National Literacy Strategy is used very effectively. The school offers a great number and variety of opportunities in other subjects, for example keeping an historical diary, for pupils to practise and hone their skills in other subjects. In addition, a good range of poetry and prose from a number of cultures are used. For example, in Year 4, pupils contrast Creole poems with those learnt previously. Assessment is used very carefully to monitor how well pupils are doing. In several classes, marking of work is used to set targets that are individual to the child and set the framework for their next piece of work.

118. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The co-ordinator has a thorough and complete understanding of the subject and how pupils acquire speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. She offers very effective support and guidance to her colleagues through notes about lessons they have planned and her own observations of their teaching. National test papers are analysed to see whether there are particular weaknesses in the school's curriculum provision. Training is planned for staff. Where staff are new to the school, they are given additional guidance. Governors are involved and fully informed.

119. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Staff confidence in their teaching of English has improved, and they are very willing and open minded when faced with new ideas. National test results have risen. Pupils' knowledge has been developed well, particularly of aspects such as technical language. Current plans, for example to continue to look for ways to teach and practise English skills through other subjects, are appropriate.

120. Of particular benefit to pupils and parents has been the school's commitment to involving parents in their children's learning. Workshops and programmes have been developed and are offered regularly to parents to enable them to better understand how their children learn, particularly the skills of reading and writing. Parents are encouraged and enabled to work alongside their children in school, and to extend this out of school. This is a

very positive development and an example of how effectively the school seeks to involve parents and enable them to be true partners in their children's learning.

MATHEMATICS

What is done particularly well:

- Standards are improving year-on-year
- Teaching is improving and is particularly good in Years 2, 4, 5 and 6
- The subject is well led and managed

What could be improved:

- Some introduction to lessons are too long, and pupils lose interest

121. Good progress has been made since the last inspection with regard to standards reached by the end of Year 6. Four years ago, 11 year old pupils' standards were below average. Now many pupils attain national standards whilst a small number exceed them. During their time in Years 3 to 6, all pupils regardless of ability and background, make very good progress in their learning so that by the age of 11 many pupils are competent with multiplication and division and have an understanding of place value in six-figure numbers. They are familiar with the names of various angles and are able to convert vulgar fractions into decimals and percentages. They calculate areas of irregular shapes and are confident in the multiplication of decimals, the use of approximation and of co-ordinates. They are able to construct and interpret simple line graphs.

122. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' standards were similar to national standards at the end of Year 2. Inspection evidence indicates that the standards of the current Year 2 pupils are below average. This change is largely because there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current year. In addition, standards in Years 1 and 2 have been adversely affected by relatively high absence figures and pupil mobility.

123. In Years 1 and 2, the early mathematical skills and concepts learnt in the Foundation Stage are satisfactorily built upon. As a result, by the end of Year 2, nearly all pupils including those with special educational needs, as well as those for whom English is an additional language, are able to add and subtract numbers to 10 and solve problems using these numbers. Many are beginning to sequence numbers up to 100 and solve simple addition and subtraction sums accurately. Money problems are tackled enthusiastically, although not all are confident in this area. Similarly, most have a good knowledge of simple two- and three-dimensional shapes, although their knowledge of the properties of these shapes is much less limited.

124. Discussions with pupils at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 show that their knowledge and understanding of the number element of mathematics is better developed than any other aspect.

125. There are several factors that contribute to pupils' good achievements in mathematics, particularly in Years 2 and 4 to 6. Within these year groups, pupils receive a high proportion of very good teaching. Teachers are confident in their own ability to teach the basic skills, they expect and get high standards of work and much work is completed during the course of lessons. This was noticeable in a very good Year 4 lesson where pupils were taught the principle of angles being degrees of turn. Through clear, concise explanations, reinforcement by practical demonstration, nearly all pupils knew that a quarter turn was 90, half turn

180 and a full turn 360 degrees. In addition, the most able pupils learnt that half of a quarter turn was 45 degrees. The very good use of resources helped reinforce this learning.

126. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has also had a most positive impact on pupils' learning and the standards they reach. Teachers' planning, following the strategy's guidelines, is very good and the structure of it ensures that lessons proceed at a brisk pace and that much work is covered. Lessons start with quick-fire mental agility sessions. Pupils' are motivated and learn quickly. Many look forward to these sessions particularly. In most lessons, pupils work hard and co-operate very well, both in class and in group work. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the subject and are keen to learn. In one or two instances, the teacher's over-long introduction, particularly in the main teaching activity, means that a few become bored or lose concentration. As a result, less progress in pupils' learning takes place.

127. Co-ordination is good and the subject well-managed. Teachers' planning, pupils' completed work and classroom teaching are all monitored. Assessment test results are analysed to build a view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. This information is then used to consider curriculum improvements. Good support is provided to teachers and, where appropriate, suggestions are made for improvement. Good assessment procedures are in place with regular testing of pupils to inform teachers of their progress. Learning resources are satisfactory and teachers use them effectively.

SCIENCE

What is done particularly well:

- Standards and national test results are improving
- The subject is very well led and managed
- The curriculum is well planned and offers staff lots of support and guidance

What could be improved:

- Investigative work could be further developed, especially to challenge the most able

128. At the time of the last inspection, standards at the end of Year 6 were well below average. Since then, standards at the end of Year 6 have improved more quickly than the national trend. Even so, the proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding the level expected in the 2001 national tests was below the national average. When results were compared to similar schools, though, attainment was above average.

129. At the time of the last inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 were broadly average. The proportion of pupils of this age reaching the level expected in the 2001 assessments made by their teachers was below the national average and when compared to similar schools was above average.

130. Standards seen during the inspection are broadly in line with what is expected at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Judgements about standards are based upon the lessons seen (which were few in number owing to the organisation of the timetable), analysis of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

131. Pupils' progress in developing knowledge, skills and understanding is now satisfactory overall, because teachers planning is good, more time is given to the subject since the last inspection and the amount of practical investigative work has also increased, which serves to improve scientific thinking. Whilst investigative science activities feature regularly within the science curriculum in each year group, pupils generally do not readily predict what will happen before carrying out their experiment. They have not yet learnt to think as scientists. The level of understanding and development of scientific thinking is not consistently reflected in the written work because of pupils' limited writing skills. How well some pupils achieve is affected by lethargy at some times of the day, lateness, low attendance, staff changes and most particularly high pupil mobility.

132. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress because teaching provides well for their needs. A range of effective questioning reinforces learning and assesses pupils' knowledge and understanding.

133. Although satisfactory and improving, pupils' experimental and investigative skills have not developed at the same rate as their knowledge and understanding. The school has identified the need to increase the opportunities for pupils, particularly the more able, to develop their skills of prediction, enquiry and exploration further, within investigative science. There are few extended opportunities in tasks for pupils to apply their knowledge to practical activities through new tasks, and evaluate their findings, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

134. Teaching overall is good although the quality of teaching varies. Characteristics of the most effective teaching include challenging tasks and well thought out and fully resourced investigations. Pupils are taught they can find out something new by using what they know already. They are actively engaged in purposeful discussion and encouraged by the teacher and the skilled learning support assistant, to say what they think will happen and learn it is important to give a reason. They know this is their prediction. In a good Year 4 electricity lesson, thorough planning, management and organisation, use of time and deployment of support staff, coupled with very good working relationships and overall positive pupil attitude towards their learning, led to good achievement by all pupils. Where teaching is less effective, resources are not prepared well, or their use is poorly explained to the class, or the teaching does not use pupils' prior knowledge or develop it in a chosen activity.

135. Some teachers use marking very effectively. Analysis of pupils' work in Year 2, for example, contains good marking with positive comments, which serve to inform and help pupils move to their next stage of learning. Work is well presented because the teacher has high expectations of the class and pupils achieve well during the year. An analysis of pupils' work in Year 6 indicates that the teacher effectively modifies tasks to match pupils' differing abilities. Again, the teacher's marking evaluates the work, recognises pupils' achievements and sets clear targets for the future. In other classes this is not the case, and pupils have neither such a clear understanding of how well they have done, nor targets for the future.

136. The curriculum is good. The nationally-recognised scheme of work is used effectively, with minor changes appropriate to the needs of the pupils. Assessments and investigations are linked, too. Curriculum changes follow the analysis of previous national test results, to identify weaker areas.

137. Monitoring is effective in improving the curriculum and teaching. Since the last inspection, pupils' work, teachers' planning and teaching and learning are all regularly checked. This is very beneficial. Through good discussion, all teachers have a consistent view of national curriculum levels.

138. Co-ordination is very good. Relative strengths and weaknesses are known. Areas for improvement are identified in a clear action plan, including the need for a continued focus on developing questioning techniques and scientific vocabulary. Other appropriate plans include the renovation of the pond and surrounding environment, so it can support the curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

What is done particularly well:

- Standards are good in Years 4, 5 and 6
- Techniques and skills are taught well

What could be improved:

- Opportunities to work in three dimensions are too few

139. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2, and above national expectations by the end of Year 6. Particularly good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 largely accounts for this improvement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

140. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop good observational skills. For example, Year 2 pupils draw and paint leaves with care and satisfactory attention to detail. Skills in drawing, painting and picture composition are developing well.

141. In Year 6, pupils demonstrate a broad range of skills which they use effectively. Pupils know how some significant artists worked and use their techniques to bring interest to their own work. During the inspection, pupils in Year 4 were studying Van Gogh's painting of a chair, noting the perspective and other features before drawing in the same style. This will lead to work in design and technology and history. Pupils in Year 5 were looking at the work of Monica Young, a well known potter. The good lesson began with a clear demonstration of the technique of pot-making by coiling clay. Pupils were enthused and keen to try. In Year 6, pupils studied the work of Constable as part of their work comparing rural and urban landscapes.

142. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are clear and confident in their explanations of tasks and techniques, so pupils fully understand. A good range of media is used effectively to support the different skills taught. Teachers manage pupils well and consistently reinforce appropriate subject vocabulary. They maintain a good pace throughout lessons and encourage pupils to evaluate their work. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes are good and they work with enjoyment. They listen carefully to their teachers, respond well to practical guidelines and take pride in their work.

143. The curriculum is good, with a wide range of interesting and relevant activities. Work is often linked effectively to study in other subjects, such as when Year 2 illustrated the story of Noah's Ark. Visiting artists enrich pupils' artistic knowledge and understanding. Assessment is currently inadequate, but being developed. The standard of display around school is generally good but examples of three dimensional work are few. Good examples of a variety of art from around the world are on display. Resources are good. Co-ordination is good. A clear and appropriate plan exists for the development of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

What is done particularly well:

- Good links are made to other subjects
- Curriculum tasks are interesting and relevant
- Good use is made of assessment, including pupils' self-assessment

What could be improved:

- There are no significant areas for improvement

144. Owing to timetabling, no design and technology lessons were observed. Judgements are based on discussion with teachers and pupils, analysis of pupils' work, photographic evidence and examination of teachers' planning.

145. Throughout the school, standards are in line with national expectations, as they were when the school was last inspected. All pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs.

146. Good links are made between subjects. For example, good links were made with literacy when pupils in Year 1 designed and made good quality, attractive picture books. In food technology, they designed and made a fresh fruit salad, paying particular attention to the need for hygiene and safety. Pupils in Year 2 build on their experience of materials and techniques and consider different ways of joining materials together when they design and make model vehicles. They work with construction kits, building models such as small three-dimensional scenes from their local environment. They record fully the careful step-by-step process of planning, investigating, reviewing and evaluating.

147. In Years 3 to 6, good emphasis is placed on further development of the basic skills taught earlier. Again, good links are made with other subjects so that new learning in one reinforces learning in another. In Year 3, pupils apply their scientific knowledge and understanding to design and make a healthy sandwich. Awareness of the needs of living creatures is applied imaginatively when Year 4 pupils design and make interesting environments for pets. In Year 5, pupils demonstrate good sewing skills to create a small sampler as part of their historical study of Victorian Britain. In Year 6, pupils use the skills they have learnt to design and make a moving story book. Pupils enjoy the subject. They are aware of the need to use equipment safely and support each other when working as part of a team.

148. Teacher's planning is good and covers all aspects of the subject. Useful assessments are carried out at the end of each block of work. Pupils also fill in a self evaluation sheet. This good practice enables staff and pupils to determine what has been achieved, and what needs to be done next. Co-ordination is effective and the subject is adequately resourced.

GEOGRAPHY

What is done particularly well:

- Progress is good throughout the school
- Pupils' attitudes and enthusiasm for the subject are good

- Teaching is lively, the lesson content interesting

What could be improved:

- Better use of assessment would give teachers a clearer understanding of what pupils know
- Older pupils particularly need more opportunities to research from books for themselves

149. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress. Even so, by the end of Year 2, standards are still below national expectations. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations, where they are identical to those at the last inspection.

150. In Years 1 and 2, all pupils including those with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well in their learning of many geographical skills and concepts. In Year 1, they learn about their local area and the different housing types located within it. Pupils know the differences between a wide range of buildings. Good teaching in Year 2 helps pupils develop satisfactory mapping skills. For example, they recognise side views and that a plan is a 'bird's-eye view'. Pupils explain their classroom plans clearly, including the location of various features in it. Other plans carefully plot their routes to school. Whilst the quality of pupils' learning is generally satisfactory, weaker writing skills impede pupils' levels of attainment.

151. A similar picture is apparent in Years 3 to 6 where again all pupils of all differing ability levels achieve well in their learning despite their limited writing skills. Mapping skills developed in Year 2 are built on effectively in Year 3. Studying the contrasting locality of St. Abbs provides pupils with further good opportunities to develop their map-reading skills and begin to develop an understanding of life in a rural community. Pupils' geographical knowledge and skills continue to be enhanced throughout Years 4, 5 and 6. In Years 5 and 6 in particular, good and often very good teaching enables pupils to quickly understand the features of coastlines and rivers. The accurate use of geographical terminology such as 'confluence' and 'meander' enhances pupils' vocabulary. Poor writing skills, and the lack of opportunities to fully develop independent research skills, continue to inhibit pupils' progress.

152. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers interest pupils with imaginative tasks. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the subject whether in discussion or when answering questions in their lessons. They are keen to learn, enjoy talking about, for example, their studies of coastal features in Year 5. They are always willing to share resources with each other. They behave well in lessons. Positive attitudes are fostered and developed by good quality teaching. For example, in a good Year 5 lesson, the teacher's carefully focused questions quickly motivated pupils and drew out from them correct geographical terminology taught previously. Tasks were carefully matched to pupils' abilities. Photographs of various coastal features were well used to enhance pupils' learning and understanding. In the final few minutes, pupils' learning was consolidated by a discussion of the key points learnt.

153. The curriculum is of good quality and contributes to the good rate of pupils' learning. Skills and understanding of concepts are developed year-on-year. Good use is made of visits to consolidate pupils' learning. Good use is beginning to be made of ICT to enhance pupils' learning, for example in Year 6, where pupils search the internet for information. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to research from books, however. Assessment is not yet developed, and occasionally this means work is not well matched to what pupils can do.

154. Co-ordination is satisfactory overall, but few opportunities exist to monitor the subject in order to recognise strengths to build upon and weaknesses to improve.

HISTORY

What is done particularly well:

- Historical enquiry skills are developed methodically
- Pupils' enthusiasm for history is good, and they make good progress

What could be improved:

- The curriculum, and use of assessment, need to be improved
- The role of the co-ordinator needs to be extended

155. Standards are below national expectations by the end of Year 2, and in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. Throughout the school pupils make good progress. In Year 2, standards have fallen since the last inspection. This fall is largely owing to the much higher level of special educational needs in the present class. In Year 6, standards are identical.

156. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, largely because teaching is good. In Year 1, pupils have a satisfactory grasp of the historical concepts of similarity and difference, as well as that of change over time. For example, they looked at 'Life in Grandma's Day', and what it was like going to school then. This they compared with now. They made some perceptive observations. They develop a sense of chronology well, for example when constructing time lines of their family's birth dates in Year 1 or of the development of various vehicles in Year 2. They show interest and curiosity in famous events such as the Great Fire of London and the sinking of the 'Titanic'. Many pupils have a satisfactory awareness of some differences between the past and present.

157. Progress is good in Years 3 to 6, characterised by the way in which skills, knowledge and understanding of history are developed. In Year 3, pupils find out about the Ancient Greeks and their method of writing. During Year 4, the use of evidence is built upon very effectively, for example when pupils find out about Henry VIII and then offer their considered views and reasons for his actions. Chronological sequencing is extended well in Year 5 through Victorian study. In Year 6, primary and secondary sources of evidence are used well to build a clear and accurate picture of life in World War 2. These older pupils recognise that the past can be divided into periods of time, they realise that they can use information sources to answer questions about the past and can explain and suggest the consequences of the main events and changes over a period of time.

158. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, in Years 2, 4, 5 and 6, pupils' rate of learning increases and pupils achieve well in these year groups. In a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils were contrasting the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times. Very good use of a video quickly reminded pupils about life then. It aroused interest and reminded pupils of previous work. A very good discussion followed. The teacher, through careful questioning, enabled the pupils to learn some of the characteristics of life then, for rich and poor. Group work allowed pupils to discuss their views, share resources and further develop their understanding. The round-up session at the end of the lesson reinforced and consolidated pupils' learning. All pupils were challenged at a level appropriate to their ability, enabling

them all to make rapid progress in their learning. Such very good teaching also has a noticeable effect on pupils' attitudes. They responded very well, were keen to learn and thoroughly enjoyed the lesson. When teaching is less effective, it is generally because teachers do not recognise that many pupils have limited concentration spans and need a variety of presentation. This is particularly so when introductions are too long.

159. The curriculum is satisfactory overall but the school's plans for a review are appropriate. As with most foundation subjects, procedures for assessing pupils' progress are barely adequate although clear and appropriate improvements are planned. Good use is made of visits to historical sites, such as to Selly Manor in Year 1. Such visits greatly help reinforce and extend pupils' understanding. Resources are adequate overall, although a better collection of artefacts would enhance learning.

160. Co-ordination is satisfactory overall and improving rapidly. The new co-ordinator is knowledgeable. She already has a good understanding of some of the needs of the subject. As yet, however, she has few opportunities to monitor the work pupils are producing and the standards they are reaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

What is done particularly well:

- Provision, including the suite, is much improved and this is very beneficial to pupils' achievements
- Teachers are working hard to raise standards and pupils' achievements in ICT
- Co-ordination and management of the subject are excellent

What could be improved:

- Standards in ICT are low throughout the school, particularly in the oldest classes where pupils have had too few opportunities to use computers in the past

161. Throughout the school, standards in ICT are below those expected nationally. Where standards are better than this, it is largely because the individual pupils have access to computers out of school. Pupils of all ages are generally at the very early stages of ICT competence. For example even older, more able pupils type laboriously, often with only one finger.

162. Standards are currently rising at a fast rate. This is for several reasons. The very good and much improved provision in the ICT suite means that pupils are currently having as much 'hands-on' experience in one or two weeks as they did previously in a term. Because the equipment is identical, individual pupils can use the same program at the same time whilst being taught. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from programs that enable them to see and hear key vocabulary at the same time. Those pupils whose special educational need lies in English acquisition, also benefit from these programs. All pupils benefit from the opportunity to work individually at the pace and level that is correct for them. Pupils make particularly good progress where the reasons and benefits for using ICT are clearly spelt out to them. For example, in Y4, excellent teaching of the advantages of ICT over manual methods when drafting and re-drafting text, enabled pupils to understand one of the important applications of ICT. They began to understand that ICT offers mankind important advantages in certain areas.

163. From a relatively low starting point, pupils are making rapid progress and are beginning to carry out basic functions more accurately. In Year 4 for example, most pupils, with reminders, save their work into their own file and shut the computer down. However, pupils' understanding of what ICT offers them is at an early stage. In Year 5, for example, pupils who struggle with spellings do not cut and paste from a vocabulary list. Rather, they move laboriously between the vocabulary screen and their own writing, checking and changing letter by letter. In Year 6, good use is made of a spelling program so that pupils can learn and practise independently at their own level. The program enables them to manage their own learning, whilst the teacher can view their progress and results later. Even so, these older pupils have not yet developed research skills to the right level. For example, when finding information from CD-ROM, many copy word for word rather than taking notes or précis.

164. The curriculum is very good. A great deal of time and care has been taken to produce a series of relevant and interesting activities, carefully matched to pupils' different ability levels within that subject as well as ICT, so that pupils can make real gains in learning. In the most effective lessons, such as a Year 4 science lesson, learning objectives for the main teaching subject are coupled with learning objectives for ICT. This is particularly beneficial because both teacher and pupils have a clear understanding of the skills and techniques to be acquired and practised. The very good relationships between adults and pupils are very beneficial to pupils' learning. Teachers are able to give individuals and small groups the extra support and guidance they need because the vast majority of the class are prepared to be patient, help one another and try to resolve any difficulties for themselves.

165. Teaching and learning are both of good quality. Teachers are making very good use of the new equipment available to them and offering their pupils relevant and stimulating activities. Pupils are responding very well, both to the equipment and the activities. They are keen to learn and apply themselves very well to the directions given by their teachers. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable with both the hardware and software they use. Difficulties are almost always quickly resolved. Pupils are given the support they need when they need it. This enables them to learn at a good pace.

166. Co-ordination and management of the subject are excellent. There is a very clear development plan for ICT which has already enabled the school to put in place the new suite and its equipment. Teachers' competence and expertise has been raised so that they are able to use this to the benefit of their pupils. Future plans are appropriate. More equipment is to be purchased to fill gaps in the curriculum and extend other areas. More staff training is planned, so that current skills can be built upon and extended. Once the school has passed through the present phase where staff and pupils are becoming comfortable and confident using the new suite and its equipment, a review of progress is planned. This is clearly appropriate. Beyond that, the school plans to extend the curriculum and offer pupils and parents further stimulating opportunities to learn together.

167. Although pupils' standards are not as high as when the school was last inspected, much has been done in the recent past so that improvement since then is generally good and standards are rising rapidly. In the ICT suite, there is much improved hardware and software giving much better pupil access to computers. Teacher confidence and skill have improved recently, too. Relatively, this represents very good improvement and bodes well for the future.

MUSIC

What is done particularly well:

- Extra-curricular provision is very good and offers pupils a rich variety of opportunities
- Singing is particularly strong

What could be improved:

- More opportunities in lessons for pupils to create and compose their own music

168. Throughout the school, standards are in line with national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection. In the lessons observed, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, made good progress and achieved well.

169. Insufficient teaching was observed to make an overall judgement. In the lessons seen, teachers showed good knowledge and enthusiasm. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils responded to the challenges set by the teacher to share and extend their creative capabilities, as they worked in groups to create their own short piece of music. All pupils enjoyed the activity, which allowed them the chance to make different sounds with a wide range of instruments and to perform to the rest of the class. During singing practice, teachers provided very good role models and pupils responded enthusiastically. They sang clearly and with gusto. Pupils have good opportunities to appreciate music. They listen quietly to a good range and variety at the start and end of assembly. In a good Year 6 lesson, careful planning enabled pupils to develop a good understanding and appreciation of the relationships between lyrics and melody in song writing, by listening to songs from other parts of the world. For example, the teacher asked several specific questions whilst the whole class read and discuss the American song 'Lone Star Trail' which helped everyone gain a clear understanding of the story and of its setting and meaning. Pupils sang well throughout the lesson. A small group played descant recorders competently to accompany the singing, to convey mood and feeling through sound. Pupils' attitudes to music are very good. They listen and participate fully. In both music lessons observed, pupils were able to recall and build upon their previous work well. In discussion, Year 6 pupils recall their pleasure at writing their own songs as part of their historical study.

170. The curriculum is good and assessment is used to check how well pupils are doing. Pupils are interested and involved. Several very good opportunities are provided in school life generally, for pupils to sing and perform. For example, pupils in Year 3 to 6 can learn to play particular musical instruments and form part of an ensemble. Pupils sing confidently and to a good standard in the school choir. Currently, however, such experiences and learning opportunities do not extend to younger pupils.

171. Co-ordination is good. Teachers' plans are monitored and advice given. It is planned to extend this to include observation of teaching and learning, so that further advice can be offered. This is appropriate. Resources have improved recently and are good overall, but learning would benefit from more tuned instruments. The co-ordinator has correctly identified the need to further develop pupils' opportunities to create and compose their own music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

What is done particularly well:

- Very good use is made of specialist expertise to coach pupils in specific sports.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is good
- Co-ordination and management of the subject are very good

What could be improved:

- There are no significant areas needing improvement

172. Standards in physical education throughout the school are in line with those expected nationally. Currently, however, pupils are making good progress and achieving well in lessons. This is largely owing to the very good use made of outside specialists with particular expertise in certain games, such as tennis, and the very good co-ordination and management which has put in place a development plan for physical education that is already raising standards. Within physical education, swimming is a strength and the vast majority of pupils reach a good standard.

173. In Year 2, the vast majority of pupils can choose and hold a balance satisfactorily, although a small minority struggle to do so for any length of time. Most stretch with good extension. About a half are imaginative in their choice of ways to travel through, over and under equipment. Most sequences of movement are satisfactory, although a good number lack style or fluidity in movement and their sequences are consequently not smooth. Few land with sufficient control. Nearly all pupils know how to exercise safely, and have a satisfactory understanding of the effects of exercise upon their bodies. In Year 6, the vast majority of pupils can throw and catch to a satisfactory standard. Hand-eye co-ordination is of the expected standard. Most pupils can hit a tennis ball accurately on both fore and backhand.

174. Throughout the school, pupils are achieving well and standards rising. Specialist coaching in Year 6 for example, has produced a well organised range of activities that develop skills very effectively. Expertise is of high quality and gives pupils very good, clear instruction and guidance in skills and techniques. Very good use of resources, for example a ball that bounces unpredictably, are used to develop the specific aspects of physical education, in this case quick reaction and catching skills.

175. Teaching is good overall, and this is an important reason for the good progress pupils are currently making. Instructions are clear, good use is made of subject related vocabulary such as 'pathways'. Teachers have very good knowledge of techniques. They make very good use of pupils to demonstrate successful responses to the task, encouraging all and giving some ideas to the least able. During activities, teachers observe closely and their good relationships with the class in general enables them to spend time with specific individuals or groups needing extra guidance. This also ensures that the maximum time is spent on purposeful activity. Pupils respond well to their teacher's enthusiasm. They listen carefully and try hard to put their teacher's instruction into practice.

176. Provision is good and improving rapidly. The nationally recognised scheme of work is being used, with suitable adaptations to make it relevant to the school. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including football and netball, is offered. The curriculum is further extended by activities and events with other schools, such as athletics and swimming. In Year

5, pupils have the opportunity to participate in rock climbing and orientation activities that are both challenging and stimulating.

177. Co-ordination and management of the subject are very good. A recently appointed co-ordinator has already made significant changes that are making a positive difference to pupils' achievements. Teachers' plans are seen and advice given. Current plans, including training for staff, are appropriate. Resources have been audited and plans drawn up to prioritise improvements.

178. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The school now has a cohesive scheme of work which enables pupils to make good progress from year to year. The school has also begun to assess pupils' progress more methodically, enabling teachers to check that all are doing as well as expected.