

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Poynton

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111361

Headteacher: Mrs D Whitfield

Reporting inspector: Mrs J E Platt
11565

Dates of inspection: 18th to 20th March 2002

Inspection number: 197811

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:	Catholic Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Marley Road Poynton Cheshire
Postcode:	SK12 1LY
Telephone number:	01625 871960
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Ball ISO
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Registered inspector	English Music Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9928	Mr A Dobson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology	
29504	Mrs S Herring	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a voluntary aided Catholic Primary School situated in Poynton. It is smaller than most schools and currently provides full-time education for 97 boys and girls from four to 11 years of age. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (7 per cent) is below the national average. Eleven per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is well below the national average. Their needs include specific and multiple learning difficulties. The school has one formal statement of need. No pupils belong to minority ethnic groups. The area the school serves is socially and economically more favoured than the overall picture nationally. The attainment level of children on entry to the school is generally above that found nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school and enables pupils to make good progress. It provides a very good level of care for its pupils and for their personal and social development. The teaching is of good quality and standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science when pupils leave school. The headteacher, governors and staff co-operate successfully to create a positive climate for learning, where Christian principles are strongly emphasised. The school is well led and managed and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Teaching is good and leads to pupils being very willing to learn.
- Leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher is strong and there is a commitment to maintaining the school's successful practice and improving it further.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good. The older pupils have very positive and mature attitudes towards each other and their work.
- The school's Christian ethos is very evident in the every day life of the school and leads to a caring and happy community.

What could be improved

- The organisation of the curriculum to provide sufficient attention to all subjects. This is especially a shortcoming in history and geography when the time gap between topics being taught restricts pupils' progress.
- The planning of lessons to include more detail and a clearer focus on the different ages in each class.
- The use of day-to-day assessment to inform the planning of future work.
- The management role of staff with responsibilities for subjects so that they have a fuller understanding of the standards being achieved in their subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection in 1997 has been good. Apart from a dip in science in 2001, the school has sustained high standards in national test results and has received the School Achievement Award in recognition of improvement in national test results. The recent change of headteacher and deputy headteacher has delayed the progress in resolving the issues from the last inspection. Nevertheless, all have received attention. New planning guidelines have improved standards in information and communication technology and music. However, standards are below average in geography and history in Year 6 because the curriculum still needs refinement to ensure all aspects receive sufficient attention. Class sizes have been reduced and this has greatly improved the quality of teaching and learning, however insufficient use is made of assessment when planning future lessons. The school development plan now includes information on expenditure but outlines too many priorities for the school. These are clearer in practice and under the new leadership the school is in a good position 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	A	C	A	C
Mathematics	A	A	B	C
Science	A	A	D	E

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

These results show that when pupils leave school, standards are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and below average in science. The comparison with similar schools suggests pupils could be doing better and the results in previous years have been higher. The school has had some staffing difficulties which affected learning in 2001. An analysis of the results shows that the proportion of pupils exceeding the national average was below average in mathematics and science and this resulted in overall standards not being as high as English. Apart from the slight drop last year test results have been improving and have kept pace with the national trend. The school's targets for 2002 are challenging, but with the enthusiastic teaching in Year 6, the school is on course to achieve them.

Current standards in Year 6 show the school has acted swiftly to tackle the previous difficulties. With a more stable staffing situation and improved curriculum, results have returned to their previous high standards and are now well above average in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement. Numeracy and literacy skills are very good and are used effectively to support learning in other subjects.

At the end of Year 2 in 2001, results of national tests were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading and mathematics the results were in the highest 5 per cent of all schools nationally. When compared to similar schools, the results overall were well above average. These very high standards have been maintained for several years. Teacher assessments in science in 2001 were well above average. Inspection evidence shows these very high standards have been sustained and overall achievement is good.

Overall achievement in the Reception class is satisfactory. Children reach the learning goals expected for their age in their personal and social skills and their creative and physical development. Standards are above average in all other aspects of the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and make good progress to reach the targets set for them. Higher attaining pupils are making good progress. However, their needs are not always met in lessons when tasks are set that are too easy and this leads to an element of underachievement.

Standards in geography and history are below average in Year 6 because pupils do not have enough time to learn all of the topics to the required depth. Standards in all other subjects are average and achievement is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The children are keen to learn and enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils know what is acceptable in the school and behaviour is good at all times.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils treat adults and each other considerately and relationships are very good.

Attendance	Good. Attendance is better than in most schools.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All of the teaching seen was satisfactory and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

The teaching of English and mathematics is good. Numeracy skills are taught particularly effectively and this is boosting the pupils' achievements. Literacy skills are taught effectively. Pupils get off to a good start in reading and writing because letters and their sounds are taught thoroughly. Teaching of information and communication technology is good. Teachers are seeing more opportunities for pupils to use computer skills in other subjects and this is greatly enhancing their learning.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs are fully met because teachers make effective use of support staff. They are involved in planning and so are aware of the needs of these pupils and this enables them to be fully involved in all activities in lessons.

Good teaching was seen in most subjects and classes. The strong teaching in Years 5 and 6, which accounts for all of the very good teaching seen, is boosting pupils' achievement because much is expected of the pupils. These pupils show a heightened attitude to learning and this accelerates their progress. This level of expectation is not as high in other years, including the Reception class, and tasks are set that do not closely match the differing ages and attainment of pupils and this restricts the rate of learning of the higher attaining pupils. The major reasons for this are that teachers are not making effective use of assessment information and planning lacks sufficient detail about how the needs of all pupils are to be met.

A key strength in lessons seen is the positive management that leads to good behaviour. Teachers often use a range of activities that make the lessons interesting and enhance learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met with a focus on numeracy, literacy and personal and social development. Insufficient attention is given to geography and history and topics are not taught in sufficient depth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Effective help is provided in class which enables these pupils to participate fully in school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The Christian nature of the school is evident in all of its work. Provision for moral and social development is a strength in the school and contributes significantly towards the good progress made by pupils in their personal development. Cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides a very good level of care and teachers know and guide their pupils sensitively. Satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress, although assessment information is not always used effectively when planning future lessons.

The school enjoys the support of the parents and members of the church community. Parents make a very positive contribution to their children's learning especially by hearing them read at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together as a team and provide purposeful leadership. Subject co-ordinators do not always give enough attention to the standards being achieved in the subjects they manage.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive, carry out their duties in an organised way and meet their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Test results are carefully analysed and action taken to remedy any identified weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Extra funds are used well to provide additional adult support and this benefits all pupils. Resources are managed efficiently. The school gives good attention to the principles of best value.

The school is adequately staffed and resourced. Accommodation is satisfactory although facilities for dining are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high expectation the school has of their children. • They feel welcome in school and find it easy to approach school with any concerns. • Their children like school. • The good quality of teaching enables their children to make good progress and become more responsible. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside the classroom. • The amount of homework provided. • Information about the progress their children are making. • The partnership between home and school.

The inspection team endorses all of these positive views. Given the size of the school, the inspectors judge the provision for extra curricular activities to be good. The provision for homework is good. With the lack of a parents' evening in the spring term and inconsistency of information on how well a child is doing against national expectations in annual reports, inspectors judge that information on progress could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children start in the Reception class, most show knowledge, skills and understanding above those expected for their age. Their personal, social, and emotional skills are closer to average because few have had the experience of nursery education. They make satisfactory progress in all of the areas of learning that are recommended for the Foundation Stage.¹ Tasks set are not always high enough and this leads to an element of underachievement for the higher and lower attaining children. By the end of the Reception class, standards are good and the children have exceeded the early learning goal² in their communication, language and literacy, mathematical skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They get off to a good start in learning the letters of the alphabet and their sounds and using this knowledge in early reading and writing activities. They are confident counting and enjoy working out simple addition and subtraction sums. In response to good teaching and a variety of interesting activities pupils develop an enthusiasm to find out more about the area in which they live.

2. In their personal and social development, children achieve well and reach the early learning goal. Many are learning to concentrate for increasing amounts of time but a few find it difficult to accept responsibility for their own learning. In creative and physical development, the children make satisfactory progress and by the end of the Reception class have reached the standard expected.

3. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2, the school's results were well above the average of all and similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading and writing, results were in the top five per cent in the country. Most pupils reached the level expected for their age and a significant number are doing better. Results have been at this high level since 1998 and the school has been awarded the national Achievement Award for the most improved test results. Teachers' assessments in science in 2001 showed standards to be well above average with all pupils reaching the level expected and a significant number reaching beyond it.

4. Standards of the present Year 2 pupils show these high standards have been sustained. Pupils in Year 2 are reaching well above average standards in reading, mathematics and science and above average standards in writing. Overall achievement is good and pupils get off to a good start in their education. Many enjoy reading and have their favourite stories. They are confident writing in a range of different styles and have a legible style of handwriting. In response to very good numeracy teaching, pupils cope confidently with numbers to 100 and the higher attaining pupils well beyond this. They enjoy solving problems and explaining their methods of calculation. Standards are high in science and through practical activities and observations pupils have acquired a thorough understanding of the growth of plants and tadpoles.

5. The school's results of national tests at the end of Year 6 have also been generally high. There has been more variation in results but this is not unusual with small schools. Test results in 2001 were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and below average in science. Compared to similar schools results were average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. The results in 2001 were not as high as usual because of staff absences at this time and temporary staff who were less sure of the pupils' abilities. This most affected standards in science and mathematics. The higher attaining pupils significantly underachieved and the percentage of pupils exceeding the national average was well below average. These unusually low results also affected the overall trend in standards

¹ Foundation Stage starts when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the Reception Class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal and social development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

² Early learning goals are the expectation for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

since 1997 that is broadly in line with the national trend. Before the 2001 results, the trend was above the national trend.

6. Current standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The school was very quick to rectify the previous weaknesses and the more stable staffing situation has returned standards to their previously high levels. The school has set challenging targets for attainment in 2002 and is on course to achieve them. Overall achievement is good. Pupils in Year 6 are articulate, read a wide range of texts and write for different purposes in accurate, expressive and very well presented English. Pupils reach high standards in mathematics and their skills in numeracy are especially strong. They have good recall of their multiplication tables and use this knowledge effectively in mental calculations. Pupils have a very good grasp of many scientific concepts. They use correct terminology to predict and explain their investigations and record their findings in a variety of ways.

7. Throughout the school pupils make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers effectively promote these skills in other subjects and this is effective in raising standards. For example, in geography pupils have written about recycling aluminium cans and used labels and numbered points to explain their diagrams. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils use their numeracy skills when creating databases about their ages and shoe sizes.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive ample support in lessons. The school makes good use of assessment information to identify the needs of these pupils promptly so that they benefit from extra help at an early age. When necessary an individual education plan is drawn up that identifies the needs of the pupils with strategies to help. Individual targets are identified, pupils' progress is closely monitored and new targets are set that enable pupils to build successfully on prior learning. Parents are informed so they can help their children at home. The school also provides additional support in small groups for pupils needing an extra boost in English, science and mathematics. These sessions are having a positive effect on the results of national tests.

9. Over time higher attaining pupils and those identified as gifted and talented make good progress. However, in lessons teachers do not always plan tasks that match the differing abilities and ages in their classes. This restricts the progress of the higher attaining pupils who are occasionally set tasks that are too easy or are repeating work that is not extending their knowledge. For example, the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 complete the same worksheets on letters and sounds as other pupils although they are secure in this knowledge. In the infants and lower juniors the pupils work is not sufficiently adapted to their age in mathematics. This leads to the younger pupils being introduced to topics that are not building on previous learning and this restricts their progress. This is less evident in Years 5 and 6 where tasks are set that inspire and challenge pupils and this has led to more pupils exceeding the national average than was the case in last year's test results.

10. The school's test results suggest boys are performing better than girls in the infants which is against the national trend. In the juniors girls appear to be doing better than boys in English and the other way round in mathematics. The school does have classes with significant gender imbalance and occasionally the large numbers of boys in classes lead activities in the lessons. However, with small numbers this data is unreliable and during the inspection there was no evidence of inequality or attainment.

11. Standards have improved since the last inspection in mathematics in response to the on-going effect of the National Numeracy Strategy. The high standards in English and science have been sustained. Standards in ICT have considerably improved because the school has improved resources, staff skills and planning. Many pupils are now achieving well and reaching the level expected for their age and are using their skills to support learning in other subjects.

12. There are shortcomings in the history and geography curriculum and standards are below average in Year 6. The subjects do not receive enough time for pupils to acquire sufficient in-depth knowledge and the length of time between topics makes it difficult for pupils to build successfully on prior learning. Standards in all other subjects are as expected for the pupils' ages and achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The pupils' very positive attitudes to school life, their very good relationships and the way they grow in confidence have all improved since the previous inspection. Behaviour continues to be good. The attendance rate has dropped slightly since the previous inspection, but is still above that normally found in primary schools.

14. Pupils enjoy school: a point confirmed by parents and pupils alike. They are proud to be part of what they consider a good school. In lessons, pupils settle down very quickly and are alert. They are usually very eager to learn, keen to participate and generally work hard, although their involvement and interest is often dependent on the quality of the teaching.

15. Behaviour in lessons is good overall and improves noticeably as the pupils get older. In the upper juniors behaviour is often excellent, in reception many pupils are still learning how to co-operate with each other. Pupils, who were consulted when the home/school agreement was introduced, fully understand the rules and think they are fair. Movement around the school is orderly. Although the open plan arrangement inevitably results in some noise, the general atmosphere in the school is conducive to learning. Behaviour in assemblies is consistently very good. Pupils are very well behaved at lunchtime but the arrangements for eating restricts the social occasion of dining. Playgrounds have a happy friendly feel with many pupils making good use of the simple games equipment provided. No signs of oppressive behaviour were witnessed during the inspection and pupils reported that bullying, including name-calling, is not a problem. Pupils expressed confidence in the teachers' ability to sort out quickly any problems. There have been no exclusions.

16. There is a strong family atmosphere in the school. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are very polite, friendly and chatty. They open doors and say 'please' and 'thank you' quite naturally. They make visitors very welcome. Relationships between pupils themselves and with adults are very good. By the time they are juniors, pupils know to take turns, collaborate productively and listen well to each other's ideas and opinions.

17. Pupils are enthusiastic in helping to run the school, although opportunities tend to be limited to Years 5 and 6. The elected school council is well run and is very popular, in part due to it being instrumental in providing simple games equipment for playtimes. There is a very effective 'buddy' system for ensuring that older pupils keep an eye on younger ones, particularly in checking that nobody is lonely in the playground.

18. By the time the pupils leave the school they are polite, confident and sensible. They are a credit to the school and their parents. Their eagerness to learn is having a significant impact on the effectiveness of the teaching and the success of the school.

19. Attendance is better than that normally found in primary schools, however holidays in term time are a significant cause of absence. Over a quarter of pupils lost at least a week's schooling last year due to holidays. Unauthorised absence is negligible. Pupils are punctual, allowing an efficient registration and a prompt start to lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection, 29 lessons were seen and in 59 per cent of these teaching was good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Many of the previous weaknesses were linked to two large classes in the juniors. This problem has been resolved and classes are not as large. The school has also wisely

invested in providing additional adult support in every class. This means pupils no longer have to wait for attention and help.

21. Examples of good teaching were seen in every class and most subjects. The very good teaching seen was in Years 5 and 6 when the teaching often inspires the pupils and much is achieved in the final years in school.

22. In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are satisfactory. In 71 per cent of lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory and it was good in the rest. The teaching of language and literacy is effective and through a range of interesting tasks, children get off to a good start with their early reading and writing skills. Numbers are taught well through action songs although some activities do not match the children's ability and this restricts their progress. Planning includes the use of computers and children quickly grasp how to make items on the screen move. All staff celebrate good behaviour and encourage children to be involved in a range of experiences. The children benefit from the opportunities to invent their own stories in the very imaginative class 'rocket.' Sometimes, staff provide too much support or miss chances to allow children to choose resources or tasks and so a few children are not confident in accepting responsibility for their own learning. Expectations of attainment are not always high enough and this leads to higher and lower attaining children not learning as well as they are able.

23. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching seen was good in 63 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in the rest. Sixty nine per cent of teaching was good and better in Years 3 to 6 and 15 per cent of this was very good. This good teaching is the main factor contributing to improvements in the school.

24. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teaching of English, mathematics and science are good because teachers have a thorough understanding of the requirements of these subjects and ensure that the full range of required activities is taught in sufficient depth. In science, teachers are confident using scientific terminology and ask effective questions that encourage pupils to predict the results of their investigations. Standards in ICT have improved because teachers have benefited from training and are now able to offer effective advice as pupils work on the computers.

25. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good. The younger pupils quickly learn letters and sounds because of the interesting way these are taught. Puppets and games activities make this learning fun. Numeracy skills are taught very well. A rigorous and active approach to the subject is a significant factor in the attainment of high standards. Teachers' promotion of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is effective in increasing confidence in these subjects. The teaching of ICT skills is good in lessons in the ICT suite, as well, as in the planned opportunities to use these skills in other subjects.

26. Teachers' planning is satisfactory. Teachers are following the new planning guidelines to ensure the pupils cover all aspects of the curriculum. This is generally effective but teachers do not always plan in sufficient detail for the different ages and attainment in their class. For example, in a mathematics lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class, the focus of the tasks was too high for the younger pupils and was not giving enough attention to their previous learning. This led to confusion and restricted their learning in the lesson. Lesson plans are variable in quality and teachers do not always make it clear the overall outcome of the lesson. This is especially a shortcoming in English in Year 1 and 2 when the lesson plan refers too much to the tasks to be taught so pupils are unclear about the purpose of their activities. This is much better in Years 5 and 6 when the teacher explains clearly to pupils what they are going to learn in the lesson and this enhances their understanding of their own learning.

27. The planning of the curriculum restricts the attention teachers can give to history and geography. Topics are not being taught in sufficient depth and in Years 3 to 6 this leads to unsatisfactory progress.

28. The most significant feature that makes the teaching in Year 5 and 6 stand out from the rest is the high expectations of pupils' attainment. Tasks are set that challenge pupils of all abilities to work hard and produce their best work and learning accelerates in these lessons. This is less evident in other classes and expectations could be higher. This especially slows down the learning of the higher attaining pupils in

lessons when they have to complete work which is not fully extending their learning. In literacy lessons the shortcoming is often in the group work when photocopiable worksheets are used without sufficient attention to the needs of the pupils.

29. A good feature in many lessons is the range of interesting activities that make learning enjoyable. These often include discussions with a partner or a small group and are effective in extending pupils' speaking and listening skills. In history, effective use is made of local visitors who talk to pupils about their experiences in World War Two and this leads to a real understanding about the past.

30. In all lessons seen, teachers established effective learning conditions through good management of pupils' behaviour. The school's rewards and sanctions are consistently applied so pupils have a clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour in the school. Methods of discipline are based on mutual respect and an understanding of all pupils as individuals. This leads to classrooms being happy places where pupils learn eagerly.

31. Teachers use resources effectively. This includes the use of ICT in most lessons and this has been the major factor leading to improved standards. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace although occasionally the introduction is over long in Years 1 and 2 and pupils' interest wanes. Music lessons are too short for teachers to fully extend learning and leads to the time to listen and adjust performance being rushed. In the best lessons, teachers set time constraints so that pupils are clear about how much time they have to complete a task and this accelerates their learning.

32. One factor that has led to improved teaching is the increase in adult help. Support staff make a significant contribution to learning because they have attended training and are involved in planning so they have a clear understanding of their role in lessons. This is very effective for pupils with special educational needs. The overall quality of teaching for these pupils is good because all staff are aware of their needs. Tasks are set that match the targets in their individual education plans and these are adjusted regularly so that progress is good. Effective use of ICT also helps these pupils to play a full part in all aspects of the curriculum. When pupils receive additional help in small groups this is beneficial to their needs because of well planned and interesting activities. Teachers check that pupils do not miss any other learning while they are withdrawn from lessons.

33. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory but the shortcomings identified in the last inspection have not been fully remedied. Although lesson plans include a space to record on-going assessment the use of this opportunity is variable. Often no comments are made and this leads to tasks being set that do not build on prior learning. Marking of pupils' work is better with some good examples in English that clearly tell pupils how to improve their work. The school has started to set pupils' individual targets but these are not sufficiently referred to in lessons or marking and so are not yet having an effect on standards.

34. A few parents are critical of teachers' use of homework, but inspectors found that it is generally used effectively. Arrangements for pupils to practise reading at home with parents are good and older pupils are set tasks that they are expected to complete at home. This is mainly in mathematics and English but is effective in extending the work that pupils are doing at school.

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

35. The school provides a sound curriculum which meets all statutory requirements with a suitable focus on literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education. It also meets the Diocesan requirement for allocating 10 per cent of time to the teaching of religious education, reflecting the Catholic nature of the school. Curriculum provision is extended by additional lessons in literacy and numeracy when pupils are identified as needing extra help. The curriculum in the Reception class is appropriately planned to support the children's progress towards the nationally agreed early learning goals for each area of learning, though opportunities to develop independent learning skills are limited.

36. The last inspection identified three key issues for improvement, which related to the curriculum. There has been good improvement in the allocation of resources and the implementation of planning guidelines to raise standards in music and ICT. All aspects of ICT are now taught and standards have improved. Although standards in music have improved there still remains a shortcoming in the limited amount of time in lessons and this hampers the pace of learning. Class sizes have been reduced for all but the mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class and additional teaching assistants are used to support pupils' learning in small groups. However, a weakness still remains in the balance of the curriculum. There are shortcomings in the way the curriculum is planned. Geography and history are taught on a rolling programme over two years in such a way that pupils in the juniors do not receive any teaching in a particular subject for two terms. For example, at the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 had not studied any history in the first two terms of the school year. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 had not studied any geography, other than that which had occurred incidentally in the news. These long time gaps hamper the continuity in the teaching of skills, consequently standards in history and geography are below those required at the age of eleven.

37. All classes contain a mix of two age groups. However, planning does not always establish clearly the specific skills to be taught to different ages, for example in a Year 1 and Year 2 mathematics lesson, the topic of multiplication and division was planned for the whole class when younger pupils were not ready for the concept. Pupils in Year 1 are taught in two classes with either the Reception children or with Year 2 pupils. Scrutiny of work shows that these younger Year 1 pupils taught alongside Reception children do not have equal access to the curriculum as they follow a different programme of study in subjects other than English and mathematics.

38. In all other aspects the school endeavours to check pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. Teachers are very aware that some classes have a gender imbalance and check closely to ensure all receive attention.

39. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school spends additional funding wisely to provide additional adult support. Support staff are involved in planning so that they are fully aware of their role in the lesson. This enables these pupils to take a full and active part in lessons. Arrangements comply fully with the Code of Practice³ and the school has already adjusted their procedures in line with new national guidelines. Assessment information is used effectively to identify pupils requiring extra help and when necessary an individual education plan is drawn up. These include relevant targets and identify small steps to achieve them. As a result these pupils make good progress.

40. National strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are fully in place and effective. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well in other curriculum areas. A good improvement is the way ICT is used well to enhance learning in other areas of the curriculum, for example in devising programmes to draw angles in mathematics and by pupils using the computers to redraft their work in English.

41. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education through specific lessons and through other subjects, such as science and religious education. The governors have approved the content of the sex education curriculum but there is not yet a policy for drugs awareness. Nevertheless, the school handles the subjects of sex education and drugs' awareness sensitively and within a moral and social framework appropriate to the maturity of the pupils. Circle Time⁴ lessons have only been introduced this term but are already being used well to discuss drugs misuse, moral issues and anti-racism.

42. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities to complement learning in lessons. These include a good range of instrumental tuition and a song club for all pupils from Reception to Year 6.

³ Code of Practice- this gives advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development.

⁴ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person will speak at a time. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any interference of interruption from other children.

A wide range of visits also enhances learning. These include, the theatre, Manchester Museum to see the Egyptian exhibition and older pupils took part in a record breaking performance in a Young World Concert in Manchester. Visitors are welcomed into school and make a good contribution to pupils' learning, for example, one visitor shared his experiences of life in the fifties and sixties with Year 5 and Year 6. On a larger scale, the school hosted visiting scientists on a science day when pupils learned from a good range of practical experiments, for example linking arms to demonstrate molecular links. During a visit by the Fire Brigade, older pupils learned how to survive the effects of fire by crawling through a smoke filled tent.

43. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good and leads to a very caring atmosphere and a real sense of community. This is a further improvement since the good provision identified since the last inspection and continues to be a strength of the school.

44. Spiritual development is very good stemming from the Catholic ethos which guides the work of the school. The daily morning prayer provides a calm start to the day and there is an area set aside in school for quiet reflection. Older pupils have the opportunity to experience a retreat to develop their self-awareness. Assemblies include exceptional opportunities for pupils to contemplate and to explore their own feelings and beliefs and to consider the choices they have in life. In one excellent assembly for the juniors, pupils were invited to meditate as they listened to music and pictured scenes from the natural world. They were invited to think how they would feel if they chose the wrong path in life, for example choosing hate instead of love. This successfully emphasised the fact that the choices pupils make have an impact on themselves and on others. There are many opportunities for pupils to experience the joy of life and learning. For example, after great effort and concentration, the instructions pupils had given to the computer resulted in the drawing of a perfect flower and led to spontaneous applause. Pupils have good opportunities to explore their own values and beliefs in religious education lessons, though the "Here I Am!" syllabus limits the amount of study of other faiths.

45. Provision for moral development is very good. The school provides a clear set of rules as a basis for behaviour and these are displayed prominently in each class. Positive behaviour is reinforced and the consequences for unacceptable behaviour are well known and consistently applied. Older pupils develop their moral awareness as they discuss issues from the news, such as the recent elections in Zimbabwe. Pupils gain an insight into the treatment of other people as they write to supermarkets to raise the issue of Fair Trade for farmers around the world. Themes within lessons encourage pupils to practise decision-making, such as in a literacy lesson when pupils consider the different ways in which certain tuna fish are caught and how this affects the dolphin population. There is a strong commitment to conservation and pupils are well aware of the benefits of recycling or reusing materials.

46. The school makes very good provision for social development. Pupils take responsibility for jobs in the class such as taking the register to the office or getting out pencils for their group. Older pupils are given the responsibility of getting the hall ready for assembly and also to read out prayers. There is a strong sense of community within the school and the good teamwork amongst the staff and the respectful way adults listen to pupils provide good models for pupils to follow. The school council provides pupils in Year 6 with a good chance to participate in the running of the school. For example, following discussions, new equipment was bought, for pupils to use at playtimes and they also produce a newsletter so that the rest of the school is kept informed. It also gives pupils an insight into the democratic process as candidates prepare their election information before voting takes place. Pupils help each other, and through the very good buddy system, nominated pupils in Year 6 keep a watchful eye to help anyone in need of a friend at playtime. Working in pairs or in groups is a planned feature of many lessons and older pupils learn the value of working in a team as they help each other "to cross the river" in an activity day in Lyme Park. Occasionally, learning is too directed by the teacher or is too prescriptive and this limits pupils' independent learning.

47. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils develop an appreciation of their own culture through theatre and museum visits. Visitors to school contribute well to cultural activities; the poet in residence involved the whole family in writing poetry and the Key Strings musician involved children in

making music. Pupils enjoy singing calypsos and sea shanties in the song club and learning country-dances in the summer term. There are positive images of different ethnic groups, For example, a time line in history marks the date when new immigrants were *welcomed* for the first time. An anti-racism policy is in place and is applied effectively when required. Preparation for life in a culturally diverse society is adequate. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of different faiths and cultures.

48. Pupils benefit from very good links with the community. These range from strong parish connections to the funding of science workshops by a local pharmaceutical company. Pupils study the local area and are involved in local community, for instance, performing to elderly citizens.

49. The school has very effective links with other primary schools in the area and the local high schools. Joint training sessions have been arranged and good use is made of the expertise in other local schools. The effective links with the local high schools enable pupils to experience a wider range of cultural pursuits, such as circus skills and drama workshops. Pupils' transition to secondary education has been improved by having a common format for the homework diary for Year 6 pupils at St Paul's and Year 7 pupils at the high schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. Procedures for the care and well being of pupils are very good. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection.

51. The first aim in the home/school agreement – *to provide a safe, secure, happy and stimulating environment* - is met very well. The school is a strong family community based on firm Christian principles. Adults and pupils are very friendly to each other and staff treat the pupils with respect. The pupils look upon the staff as friends. The headteacher has a high profile and knows all the pupils by name. Supervision is good at all times. However the dining arrangements fit uncomfortably in this close-knit community. Pupils eat in many different areas, often in their classrooms. The result is that dining lacks any sense of a whole school social occasion. Additionally, afternoon sessions often start with bits of food still on the classroom floor.

52. Procedures for child protection are very good. There is a high level of expertise on the subject amongst senior staff and governors. The person responsible ensures that staff are regularly reminded and all new staff are quickly familiarised with the school's procedures. Health and safety matters are treated very seriously. A governor is actively involved in the subject, all equipment is regularly checked and there is very good first aid cover. The recording of accidents is detailed. Healthy living is encouraged by giving pupils fruit in the Reception Class and in providing a ready supply of chilled water which is much appreciated by the pupils.

53. A key issue raised by the previous inspection was the need to implement whole school monitoring and assessment procedures that are linked to National Curriculum levels and form a basis for curriculum planning. Satisfactory progress has been made on resolving this issue. Improvements are now becoming more evident with the recent appointment of a member of staff with responsibility for assessment throughout the school.

54. The school has improved assessment procedures which are now satisfactory. They are better in English and mathematics and test results are providing useful information to monitor pupils' progress and predict future attainment linked to National Curriculum levels. Currently, some out-dated assessment procedures are still being used which are overloading staff with paperwork which provides limited useful information. Assessment in other subjects is linked to the school's new planning guidelines. It is intended to record pupils' achievement at the end of each unit of work but is unclear how this information is to be used in future planning. The school has improved the assessment of children when they start school and are using this information for planning work that matches pupils' ability. Assessment of the pupils with

special educational needs is good. Staff check on their progress towards their targets in their individual plans and adjust these when they are achieved so that they make good progress.

55. The school is making good use of assessment information to adjust the curriculum. Detailed analysis of test results is carried out and the curriculum adjusted when a weakness is identified. This has resolved some of the concerns from the previous inspection as assessment information is starting to lead the planning of the curriculum. For example, the school promptly identified the reason for the fall in standards in science in 2001 and has lifted the profile of some of the weaker aspects of the curriculum and standards have improved. Assessment information is also used effectively to identify pupils needing an extra boost in literacy, numeracy and science. Additional sessions are provided for these pupils and these are having a positive effect on standards.

56. Overall, assessment in lessons is not yet fully used in planning future work. Although teachers' plans include an opportunity for recording assessment teachers do not always make full use of this system. This leads to tasks not building on prior learning and hampers learning in lessons. Monitoring of work is not yet sufficiently developed to set pupils relevant individual targets. Targets are being set but the language used is not always understood by pupils. They often are not having an effect on standards because teachers are not referring to them sufficiently in lessons or in the marking of pupils' work. This is better in Year 6 and pupils are more knowledgeable of their targets but are not aware how these linked to their achievement in national tests.

57. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very effective. Registers are well kept and regularly monitored by the headteacher. Any absence without reason is rigorously followed up on the first morning by contacting the parents. The school's attitude to holidays in term time is made very clear to parents in the prospectus and in letters, however this is having little effect as holidays are a significant cause of absence. Relations with the educational welfare service are good. Parents are well informed of their child's punctuality by comments on the pupil's report.

58. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying are very good. Pupils understand that high standards are expected. Rules are clear and applied very consistently throughout the school. Good behaviour is recognised and pupils are constantly encouraged to develop self-discipline. This policy works as behaviour noticeably improves as pupils progress through the school. The provision of games at playtime has a positive impact on playground behaviour. Good records are kept of all significant incidents of inappropriate behaviour and bullying and parents are informed when necessary. Racism is not tolerated and is not a problem.

59. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Being a small school, staff know the pupils very well. Recently a more formal system has been introduced to record pupils' development ensuring that teachers new to the school are quickly familiarised with the pupils. The school council provides an effective forum for airing school-wide issues and raising matters that concern pupils. Very good records are kept of their meetings. The sections on personal development in the pupils' annual reports are of good quality and reflect a clear knowledge of each pupil by their teacher and the headteacher.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. The good links with parents observed in the previous inspection have been maintained.

Parents consider St Paul's to be a good school. They particularly like:

- the high expectation the school has of their child
- the approachability of the staff
- the fact that their children like school
- the good quality of the teaching
- the good progress their children make

- the way their children become responsible and grow in confidence
- the leadership of the headteacher

61. The inspection team endorse all these positive views.

62. A few parents have concerns about homework. The inspectors judge that the provision for homework is good. A few parents do not think there is an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Given the size of the school, the inspectors judge the provision for extra curricular activities to be good.

63. The quality of information for parents is good overall. The prospectus, newsletters and other documents for parents are easy to read and informative. Parents are given at the beginning of the year a broad outline of what will be covered that year together with details of topic work each term. However, parents lack sufficient detail on future work in English, mathematics and science to allow them to be fully involved in their child's learning. Many parents would welcome a formal opportunity to review their child's progress in the Spring term. The school is aware of this matter. Parents are well informed of their child's personal targets for improvement. The quality of pupils' reports is good overall. However, there is some inconsistency between classes. The best reports give parents a clear indication of how their child is doing compared with the national expectations for that age. The sections on personal development are consistently good as are the headteacher's comments. A few parents think that they could be better informed on their child's progress. With the lack of a parents' evening in the spring term and inconsistency of information on how well a child is doing against national expectations, inspectors judge that information on progress, whilst not unsatisfactory, could be improved.

64. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and their child's learning is very good. Parents are very supportive of homework, particularly the home reading procedure and this is having a significant impact on the pupils' learning. The parent teachers' association is active and successful in both organising social events and fund-raising. Governors who are parents carry out their roles with enthusiasm. In spite of regularly offering invitations to parents, the school has only a small core of helpers. These helpers make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. Parents can influence the way the school develops because they are regularly invited to complete a questionnaire and the school considers the responses when drawing up the annual school development plan. A few parents do not think that the school works closely with parents. The inspectors do not agree and judge the partnership to be effective.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The overall quality of leadership and management by the governors, headteacher and key staff is good. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher and deputy headteacher and this has inevitably slowed down the pace of change as the new management has settled in to their new positions. Nevertheless, the many strengths identified in the previous inspection are still evident. This is very clear in the reflection of the school's aims in the daily life of the school. This leads to a caring Christian community where pupils are encouraged to work hard and show a genuine concern for the needs of each other.

66. Management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is good and they have quickly established a working relationship which makes best use of their individual skills. They have promptly set about improving assessment procedures and making better use of assessment information to identify aspects of the curriculum requiring attention. Parents are virtually unanimous in their belief that the school is well led and managed.

67. Currently, the management role of subject co-ordinators is carried out effectively in supporting and advising teachers when a need is identified. This has been especially good in the management of ICT which has greatly improved since the last inspection. All co-ordinators carry out an audit of their subjects and these are incorporated in the school's development plan. These are linked to resources and arranging visits for pupils or the evaluation of policies. A shortcoming is the lack of focus on standards being achieved and how these can be improved. For example, the history audit includes liaising with ICT co-

ordinator, reviewing storage of resources and listing educational visits. It fails to identify the weakness in standards in Years 3 to 6 or set targets to remedy them. This is better in English and science when management is the responsibility of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher who have a more informed picture of overall standards in the school.

68. The management of special educational needs is good. The school has already adjusted their procedures in line with the guidance of the Code of Practice. Assessment information is used effectively so that pupils receive extra help promptly. Individual education plans are good and identify small, achievable steps to help pupils improve. Statutory requirements are fully met and regular reviews carried out to check on the progress these pupils make.

69. The contribution of the governing body is good. Governors carry out their duties efficiently through a committee structure and check all statutory requirements are met. They are linked to co-ordinators for literacy, numeracy, ICT, early years and special educational needs and are kept well informed about what is happening in school. They have a good understanding of the many strengths in the school. Governors review national test results and have an overall picture of standards in the school and are especially aware of the improvements being made in ICT. Governors are very aware of the difficulties the school faces because of the decline in the number of pupils attending the school. This has led to initiatives being put into place to raise the profile of the school in the locality. The pre-school group has been developed and attention has been given to improving the environment of the school.

70. A weakness identified in the previous inspection was the school development plan not fully guiding the future development of the school. This weakness has received attention but has not been fully resolved. The recent change of leadership led to a delay in prioritising targets for the current year. In its present format it does not make the school priorities clear. However, in practice the school has given good attention to the major needs of the school. For example, in the focus the school has placed on science in response to the low standards in national tests in 2001. The plan has improved in its link to the school budget and areas for development are clearly costed.

71. The school is giving good attention to monitoring its performance. This has improved with the new procedures to analyse all test results and so information is more readily available to forecast school performance. Comparisons are made with other schools to check the school is performing as well as it should be. School targets are agreed for the national test results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. These are challenging and show the school's determination to build on the current high standards.

72. Monitoring of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and the school now has good systems in place. The headteacher and key staff and local authority advisers carry out lesson observations and provide feedback that has led to improved teaching. Nevertheless, there is still scope for checking more rigorously on teachers' planning to check all the school's assessment systems are being used effectively.

73. Performance management procedures are in place. The school has effective links between staff training and identified need. Recent staff training has especially focussed on developing ICT skills and this has been most effective in raising standards. New staff settle quickly into the school because the school has a useful staff handbook and all staff are very willing to be supportive and offer advice.

74. The school offers placements for students on teacher training, nursery nurse and classroom assistant courses. Mentoring arrangements support these students and check the experience is beneficial for the school as well as the students.

75. Financial administration is good. The recommendations made by the most recent audit have been addressed. Day-to-day administration is effective and the school is expanding its use of ICT for administration purposes. The budget is set giving due attention to the priorities in the school development plan. In the past the school has accrued a large surplus because of its concern about staffing difficulties

and falling roll. Governors are now more aware of the need to spend the allocated budget for the pupils currently in the school and have started to use this surplus so that it is decreasing on year to year basis. The school makes good use of available resources including specific grants. Money is spent wisely on providing additional adult support for teachers and governors are aware this is good value for money because of the improvement in teaching. Parents are fully consulted via an annual questionnaire. Recent consultation with parents and pupils about recent spending on improving the outdoor environment has been effective as they are now very supportive of proposed changes. The school is also aware of the need to check that good value is obtained in any major spending. The governors and headteacher seek prices from at least three suppliers to check resources are economic and effective. Governors and the headteacher carry out close monitoring of spending and any discrepancies are followed up to check that best use is being made of all available resources.

76. Overall staffing is satisfactory. The school still has a large class in Year 5 and 6 and needs to consider how the available staffing could be used to reduce this size for literacy and numeracy lessons. However, the good number of trained and experienced support staff are a bonus and make a positive contribution to the smooth running of lessons and the good progress being made.

77. Accommodation is satisfactory. Facilities for ICT have improved with the new suite which is used effectively. As identified in the last inspection the lack of dining facilities means that procedures for lunchtime are unsuitable and not in keeping with the school's principles of providing a happy environment. Teachers plan carefully to minimise the disturbance to other classes caused by poor soundproofing.

78. Learning resources are adequate overall. The school has a good range of books and these are used effectively to create an enthusiasm for reading. Although ICT resources have improved they are still limited in number in the ICT suite and the school has plans to increase these. Outdoor resources for the children in the Reception class have improved but current planning means they are not used on a regular basis.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

79. In order to continue the improvement and further raise standards in this good school the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Improve the balance of the curriculum so that all subjects receive sufficient attention and reduce the amount of time between topics especially in history and geography in the juniors.
Discussed in paragraphs 12, 27, 31, 36, 137, 138, 140, 141, 143, 144, 146, 147, 155.
- (2) Improve teachers' planning so that more attention is given to the different ages and abilities in each class.
Discussed in paragraphs 9, 26, 37, 109, 112, 117, 121, 124, 137, 148.
- (3) Improve the use of assessment in lessons to check that experiences build upon each other and tasks are set that more closely match pupils' abilities.
Discussed in paragraphs 1, 9, 22, 28, 33, 56, 72, 86, 102, 110, 118, 125, 130, 136, 148, 154, 160.
- (4) Further extend the role of subject leader so that they are more aware of the standards being achieved and these become a clearer focus in the school's development plan.
Discussed in paragraphs 67, 118, 131, 136, 142, 148, 160, 166.

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

- Look for ways to make lunchtime a more social occasion.
Discussed in paragraphs 51,77.

- Improve the information parents receive by extending the opportunities for formal meetings and including comments in reports that make it clear to parents how well their children are doing against national expectations.

Discussed in paragraph 63.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

29

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	15	12	0	0	0
Percentage	0	7	52	41	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	97
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	9	7	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	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	6	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (84)	94 (84)	94 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	17	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (74)	100 (84)	94 (79)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

- figures not included because they are ten or less.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	97
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3
Average class size	24.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	266632
Total expenditure	255488
Expenditure per pupil	2411
Balance brought forward from previous year	24262
Balance carried forward to next year	35406

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	97
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	39	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	42	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	48	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	45	16	0	0
The teaching is good.	59	41	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	45	17	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	13	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	90	10	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	42	13	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	45	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	42	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	65	16	3	3

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

80. As at the time of the last inspection, the school makes satisfactory provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

81. Children start school in the September of the school year in which they become 5 years old. Currently, there are ten Reception children on roll. They are taught alongside seven Year 1 pupils in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class.

82. Almost all of the children have attended part-time at a private playgroup, which is situated on the school site. There are strong links with the playgroup which help children settle quickly into school. Good procedures are in place when children start in the Reception class. These include well-organised opportunities for pre-school visits and for parents to talk with school staff. These procedures establish good home/school links from the outset.

83. The curriculum for Reception children follows the nationally recommended curriculum for children of this age. This consists of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or *Stepping-Stones*, from which progress and standards can be measured.

84. Assessments made soon after the children start school confirm that attainment on entry is generally above average. However, a high percentage of children start school with skills in personal, social and emotional development, which are less well developed and are closer to the average.

85. Due to sound teaching and an appropriate curriculum the vast majority of children achieve satisfactorily from above average beginnings. Children are on course to reach standards higher than those expected in their communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world and reach the early learning goals in other areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Children with special educational needs are identified early and supported well so that they make good progress.

86. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are particular strengths in the high quality teamwork between the teacher and the teaching assistant, and in the well-organised teaching of reading skills. Teaching is less effective in enabling children to make choices and decisions about their learning and in developing confidence and independence. Teacher expectations are not always high enough and this results occasionally in the provision of tasks, which do not fully meet the children's needs. This restricts the progress of both the higher and lower attaining children. The lack of focus to some activities noted on the last report has been positively resolved. Assessment is used to plan further work, especially in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics.

Personal, social and emotional development

87. Most children are working within the third *Stepping-Stone* and are likely to reach the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. They enjoy coming to school and joining in activities as members of the community. They take part enthusiastically in action and singing rhymes. However, a significant number have difficulty co-operating with others and waiting their turn and they call out at inappropriate times. They are only just gaining an awareness of the boundaries set. They play co-operatively in the *Space Ship* or *Post Office* but have difficulty sharing tricycles and balls in outdoor play. They are learning to concentrate for increasing lengths of time at directed activities but many are not confident or

purposeful in selecting an activity for themselves. They are becoming aware of other cultures through learning about festivals such as Divali.

88. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good opportunities are provided in Circle Time⁵ for children to reflect and explore feelings like happiness and misery. However, children's interest wanes when the choice of story is unsuitable and goes on too long and this prevents teaching points being made effectively. Good and consistent use is made of the school's positive behaviour policy to make clear what is expected and to establish class routines. Good behaviour is celebrated to encourage the others. All staff deal well with challenging behaviour. They take the time to take a child quietly to one side and explain why their behaviour is not acceptable and this enables the children to understand what is acceptable in the classroom. The organisation of structured play sessions, where children are directed to particular activities, restricts their ability to make decisions for themselves.

Communication, language and literacy

89. Most children are working confidently on the fourth *Stepping-Stone*, and are well placed to exceed the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. Some higher attainers are already beginning to work towards the National Curriculum in reading. They are keen to contribute to class discussion, and communicate with their peers with confidence. Almost all speak clearly and audibly in extended sentences. Their listening skills are less developed but when interested, they listen well and show by their response that they understand. All of the pupils enjoy listening as the teacher reads a story from a big class book. They follow the text from left to right and find clues in the pictures to help them make sense of the story. Almost all recognise many letters by shape and sound and make good use of their knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. Higher attaining children recognise small words in longer ones, such as carnival. Writing skills are not so advanced. Most children compose their own sentence and copy beneath the teacher's writing with varying control. They are beginning to use letter shapes to communicate meaning in their own informal notes. Higher attaining children can spell simple regular three-letter words correctly.

90. Teaching and learning are good in literacy lessons. The National Literacy Strategy is skilfully adapted to meet the children's needs. Lessons are planned with very clear focus on the systematic development of skills. The teacher effectively models reading strategies, such as using picture clues, very effectively as when she asks, 'How do you know they're tired?' so that the children notice the yawning figures in the picture. A variety of teaching approaches are used. For example, a soft toy is used as a puppet to hold the children's interest and motivate them to learn. For instance, when the soft toy cannot pronounce the end of words like church, chatch and chetch, the children are delighted to help. Occasionally the pace of learning slows when children do not listen well and management strategies are slow to work. The conclusion of lessons is not always used effectively to review and consolidate learning.

Mathematical development

91. Most children are working within the fourth *Stepping-Stone*, and are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. They recite numbers backwards and forwards to 20. They count reliably up to ten objects, and in practical activities are beginning to add by counting up the objects in two or three groups. When singing songs like *Ten Green Bottles* they carry out simple subtraction by taking away one bottle at a time. Almost all use mathematical language accurately to compare *longer* and *shorter*, *full* and *empty*.

92. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Planning builds carefully on what pupils know through a range of well-organised practical activities. This enables the children to learn concepts soundly. Resources are well prepared and children waste no time in getting on with their tasks. Questions are

⁵ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

used skilfully to check on understanding and extend children's thinking. A good variety of action rhymes and jingles consolidate learning effectively. Expectations of pupils are inappropriate when children are given a recording task which does not consolidate learning but causes confusion. Occasionally, instructions lack clarity and are not specific enough to make teaching points clearly. For instance, when teaching addition of groups, the teacher does not talk through the process clearly enough or provide a demonstration to enable the children to understand that addition involves counting-on not just counting.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

93. Pupils are working securely on the fourth *Stepping-Stone* and are beginning to work towards the first level of the National Curriculum. They enjoy making things with reclaimed materials or construction toys. When designing a car for teddy, they draw their design before sorting, selecting and assembling components from a construction set. The children use their senses enthusiastically to explore the world, for instance, on a sound walk. Through practical experiences like planting and growing seeds, they are beginning to realise that certain things are necessary for life. They know, for instance, that few plants grow in the desert because there isn't any water. They identify their likes and dislikes in the environment as they take a walk around Poynton. All are interested in ICT and use the computer confidently to support their learning.

94. Teaching is good and pupils are enthusiastic learners. The careful organisation of the class and the deployment of the teaching assistant enable a good level and quality of purposeful adult and child interaction to take place. For instance, when the class teacher works with three-quarters of the class and the teaching assistant works with one group at a time to plant seeds, much valuable discussion about seeds and growth takes place. All adults including volunteers are well briefed and deployed so that they know what is expected of them and provide high quality support. Lessons have clear objectives and tasks are carefully focused to support learning. Good use is made of the school grounds and of the local area. The computer and the language masters are used very well as tools for learning.

Physical development

95. Pupils are working on the third and fourth *Stepping-Stone*, and are appropriately placed to reach the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. They run confidently around the hall with good awareness of others. They show control as they change the shape of their bodies to stretch and curl. They use imagination in floating gently like a balloon and then moving quickly as the balloon is deflated. They know that exercise is good for them and makes them warm. In daily outside play sessions, they control large wheeled toys using the space sensibly. With adult support, they co-operate in pairs to practise throwing and catching small balls. Some children have difficulty in co-ordinating their actions to follow instructions. In class, they explore malleable materials and use tools like glue spreaders and scissors with some skill.

96. Teaching is satisfactory and learning reflects this. Children are generally managed effectively, but not enough use is made of praise and encouragement to keep all children on task and prevent the development of challenging behaviour. Physical education lessons have good structure with lively warm up sessions and suitable cooling down. Teachers make effective use of demonstrations to show children clearly how to improve their movements. All staff are aware of safety aspects. The planning of a very limited range of activities for outdoor play on a half-term basis does not give pupils enough variety of experiences to develop their skills widely.

Creative development

97. Children are working at the third *Stepping-Stone*, and are on target to reach the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. They work collaboratively on class collages and individually at the painting easel. When given the opportunity, they select materials, for instance, they cut and stick shiny pieces of card to make an Easter Egg picture. Their choice is often limited when tasks are too directed and children are not encouraged to use their own ideas or even choose their own colours. For instance, in

a finger painting activity, children were expected to make a *growing* picture in dots in the style of Seurat. Whilst they enjoyed exploring the media, they were unable to complete the set task. Most found the task very restricting, and adapted it to their own needs to create patterns using dots and stripes. The children sing a wide repertoire of songs from memory. They move rhythmically and clap in time to the music. They co-operate in pairs with some imagination to take a *dangerous* journey in the *space ship*.

98. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The use of demonstrations is effective so that children know what is expected, but does not give sufficient time for children to explore their own ideas and develop their imagination. Relationships are good and positive attitudes to work are established.

ENGLISH

99. The current standards of work are well above average in Years 2 and 6. These standards reflect the results of national tests that have been well above average since 1998, apart from when they fell slightly in Year 6 in 2000. This variability is not uncommon with small schools.

100. In the 2001 tests at the end of Year 2, the results in reading were in the highest five per cent in the country. Writing results were also well above the national average. When compared to similar schools the results were also well above average. These high results indicate pupils are doing very well in the school. In reading, 63 per cent of pupils exceeded the national average and this is very high. Although not as many pupils reached higher levels in writing the results were still well above the national average. Current standards are higher than those identified in the previous inspection and reflect good improvement in response to the on-going effect of the National Literacy Strategy.

101. National test results in English at the end of Year 6 showed most pupils reached the level expected for their age. Compared to similar school standards were average. Although a good proportion exceeded the level expected for their age when compared to similar schools this figure was average and suggests more pupils could be exceeding the national average. In response to challenging teaching in Year 6, more pupils are now working at higher levels. The high standards identified in the previous inspection have been sustained in reading and standards in writing have improved. Improved planning and more opportunities to develop writing in other subjects have brought about the improvement. The school has set challenging targets for 2002 and is on course to achieve them.

102. Test results indicate that boys have been outperforming girls at the end of Year 2. Also at the end of Year 6 there is evidence that girls are doing better than the boys. However, this variation is not uncommon when the sizes of groups are small. Some classes have a significant gender imbalance but during the inspection there was no evidence of disadvantage to either gender. Pupils with special educational needs are identified promptly and benefit from effective support from classroom assistants. When necessary pupils are provided with an individual education plan. These include clear, small steps that are monitored and adjusted and as a result pupils are making good progress. These pupils often receive extra individual support linked to learning letters and sounds. The practical activities used are effective in making these sessions fun and much new learning takes place. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support older pupils so that they are able to complete tasks similar to their peers. This does much to promote their self-esteem and consequently increase the progress they make. Higher attaining pupils are making good progress in the school. However, in lessons they are not always learning at a good rate because teachers are not keeping a close check on their on-going progress and so set tasks that they find too easy. This is less evident in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching is often very good and tasks are set that inspire pupils and the learning of pupils of all abilities accelerates.

103. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. This reflects good achievement for many pupils. Pupils in Year 2 listen attentively to teachers and gain information and follow instructions. When responding they use grammatical English and have a wide vocabulary to express their ideas. When talking about the life cycle of a frog they enliven their comments with technical terms and give details to

support their answers. Most have a good understanding of the need to take turns in conversations but in class discussions a few still call out and disrupt the sessions. Pupils in Year 2 are confident in asking questions and putting forward their own ideas. For example, they suggest in music how a game can be improved.

104. Good progress is made in the juniors and standards are well above average in Year 6. Pupils are articulate and use well-expressed lively English in class discussions. Collaboration is very good because teachers plan many opportunities for group work not only in English but also in many other lessons. For example, in music pupils share their ideas and their responses reflect the opinion of the previous speaker. Pupils understand the power of language because the topics covered include persuasive language. During the inspection they prepared arguments for and against building a supermarket on the school's playing fields. These revealed a good understanding of speaking appropriately to suit their audience. Phrases were suitable for debate and included, 'surely you don't want to damage children's education.' The Year 6 teacher consistently reminds pupils to be respectful listeners and consequently pupils are very good at listening to one another and to adults. Pupils in Year 6 are confident speaking in a range of situations, including publicly in assembly.

105. Standards in reading are well above average in Years 2 and 6 and overall achievement is good. Parents make a very positive contribution to standards achieved in Years 1 and 2 because of the good number of books that children read at home. Literacy lessons include a focus on letters and their sounds and pupils use this knowledge very effectively to tackle new words when reading. Many have favourite authors and types of stories and can retell these in great detail. Higher attaining pupils can predict the ending of a story and explain how the plot will be developed. All pupils who read to the inspectors could distinguish between factual and fiction and were aware of how to locate information. Reading records do not always include sufficient detail on the pupil's on-going progress and as a result pupils' books are not always closely matched to their skills. Parents' comments identify this when a pupil is reading a book of their own choice at home in preference to the books sent home. This is more evident for the higher attaining pupils who could be further challenged in their reading. This improves in Year 3 to 6 as pupils have a wider choice of texts. In Year 6, many pupils derive pleasure from their books and are discerning readers. This contributes to their cultural development and a few pupils discuss their previous work on Macbeth. Pupils understand how writers use language in different ways to capture the readers' interest. Many have enjoyed the Harry Potter stories and can discuss the characters with reference to the author's intention. For example, Hermione is described as a 'know-it-all' but is still a good friend to Harry because she uses her knowledge to help him out of tricky situations. Pupils' research skills are well developed and the great majority can quickly extract information from books. Higher attaining pupils are confident in making deductions when reading.

106. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. This reflects good achievement for all pupils. The great majority of pupils in Year 2 are confident expressing their ideas in writing. Pupils write for a variety of purposes and when writing about the life cycle of a frog understand the importance of keeping items in the correct sequence. The higher attaining pupils link items with suitable language for the reader. For example, 'In a while' and 'After' and use numbered points to make their writing easy to follow. Most pupils are writing in sentences and understand the purpose of capital letters and full stops. Writing shows increasingly accurate spelling and pupils make good use of their knowledge of sounds to attempt new words. Handwriting is a legible print although few are starting to join up their letters.

107. Good progress is made in the juniors and standards of writing are well above average in Year 6. Handwriting shows much improvement and most pupils have a well-formed, neat handwriting. Pupils are confident jotting down their ideas as well as producing longer pieces of writing. The average and above average pupils use paragraphs correctly to structure their writing. They produce finished pieces of work that are accurately spelled and punctuated, grammatically correct and in a style that matches its purpose. Imaginative writing is of very good quality. A very strong feature of the higher attaining pupils is the use of interesting vocabulary. For example, 'Above all, I could feel the biting cold.' Pupils recognise the importance of appealing to the reader's senses and one story concludes, 'I've got no tears left to cry.'

108. Throughout the school, pupils make effective use of language and literacy skills in other subjects. Teachers effectively promote these skills in religious education when pupils in Years 3 and 4 write prayers using very sensitive language. In science, in Years 1 and 2 pupils describe how beans grow and label diagrams using the correct terminology.

109. Teaching and learning are good. The best teaching seen was in Year 6 when the teachers' own enthusiasm shines through and inspires pupils and accelerates their learning. Teachers throughout the school use a range of practical activities that make lessons interesting. This is very effective when teaching letters and their sounds and the games and practical activities mean these skills are learnt effectively. The puppet used in the sessions that are provided for pupils who need a boost to their literacy skills is effective in keeping the interest of these pupils. Support staff offer effective help in lesson because they are included in planning and so have a clear understanding of their role in the lesson. Resources are used well and often relate well to the pupils' own experiences. For example, in Year 2 the use of a newspaper quickly developed the idea of report writing. Teachers make effective use of ICT to extend literacy skills. Management of pupils is a strong feature in most lessons and so behaviour is good. Planning follows the guidance of the National Literacy Strategy and this is leading to the introduction of a good range of activities. Lesson plans are variable and do not all follow the same format. In Years 1 and 2, it is clear which letter and sound is to be taught but it is less clear which range of writing is the focus of the lesson. For example, during the inspection too many different styles of writing were introduced rather than consolidating one particular style. Learning outcomes are not always clear or shared with pupils to enable them to understand the purpose of the lesson. Although most planning sheets include a space for on-going assessment these are not always completed with information about the progress pupils are making. As a result, tasks are set that do not always match the needs or ages of the pupils. This is more of a problem for the higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 when they complete photocopiable worksheets on letters and sounds rather than extending their skills of independent writing.

110. Management is good because the co-ordinator also has responsibility for assessment in the school and so has a very good overview of standards throughout the school. Test results have been closely analysed and the curriculum adjusted when a weakness has been spotted. For example, to make better use of time in literacy lessons the school includes reading at another part of the day. This has been effective in improving the range of books being read in the school. Assessment data is being used effectively to set the school overall targets. Pupils are also being given individual targets but as yet these are not having any significant effect on standards as teachers are not always referring to them in lessons or in the marking of pupils' work. Pupils in Year 6 have a clearer understanding of their targets but are unaware of how these are linked to their performance in national tests.

MATHEMATICS

111. Standards of work at seven and eleven are well above average. This is similar to the high standards attained by seven-year-olds in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 and is an improvement on the results attained by eleven-year-olds last year, which were above the national average. The improvement in current standards is due to the increased challenge for higher attaining pupils in Year 6 leading to more pupils achieving higher levels. There has been a good improvement in standards and provision for mathematics since the last inspection. This is due to the good teaching of mathematics throughout the school and to the school's detailed analysis of test results to identify areas of weakness and make the necessary adjustments to the curriculum.

112. Overall achievement is good because of the good support pupils receive in small groups from the teacher and the skilled classroom assistants. However, work is not always suitably planned to take account of the needs of the mixed age groups in the infants and lower juniors, and this sometimes leads to unsuitable topics being taught to the lower age group. This restricts the progress they make in lessons. Tasks are more closely matched to the different ages in the upper junior class, for example when teaching fractions at different levels to the two year groups. As a result, learning accelerates in this class. Pupils

identified as having special educational needs achieve well through the good level of individual support they receive. Those pupils identified as being gifted and talented are generally allocated suitably challenging work and make good progress.

113. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive effect on the standards of teaching and learning. The teaching of numeracy is very good and introductory mental sessions are generally brisk and well focussed leading to a good improvement in problem solving skills. Explanations are clear so that pupils know what is expected and this enables them to start their work quickly. The system of having a number partner to work with helps pupils to sort out problems together. Activities are generally interesting, promoting good attitudes to work, but sometimes, insufficient time is allocated to finish tasks. This was seen in a lesson in the lower juniors when too many diverse activities had been prepared for work on angles, reducing their effectiveness. The time at the end of the lesson is generally used well to reinforce the main teaching points though there are few opportunities for pupils themselves to assess what they have learned. Good use is made of numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, upper juniors draw a chart to compare the calorific values of different breads in design and technology. On an adventure day in a nearby park older pupils co-operated well in teams to work out how they could determine the height of a tree. This shows a good improvement since the last inspection and the extensive use of mathematics in other subject areas has helped to raise standards.

114. In a very detailed analysis of last year's test results the school identified problem solving as an area for development. It is apparent in all the lessons observed that teachers are focussing clearly on this aspect, and this has been a factor in improving pupils' confidence and understanding. Good use is made of ICT to support learning in handling data and in working out angles. It is used less consistently to practise and develop number skills.

115. By the age of seven, pupils are developing a good understanding of numbers to 100, with higher attaining pupils working beyond this, including reading numbers to a million. Pupils are clear in identifying odd and even numbers, with higher attaining pupils projecting the rule to numbers up to a thousand. Most pupils have a sound understanding of multiples of 2, 5 and 10 but do not have a ready recall of the associated tables. Good use is made of patterns to help pupils' numeracy skills and pupils can use this to establish how many ways they can make 20 using addition and subtraction. Pupils are able to explain their methods to each other and share their ideas. Lower attaining pupils develop their counting skills through a good range of practical counting activities and using a number line and this helps them to achieve the expected level for their age. Pupils measure in centimetres and tell the time using the digital and analogue clock. In their shape quiz they show a good understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes and their properties. They sort them using different criteria, such as number of faces and place them in the appropriate sets. However, the use of graphs to present information is limited.

116. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good understanding of place value, including decimals, and explain the effect of multiplying or dividing by ten or a hundred. They are developing a sound understanding of the meaning of equivalence through graphic reference to money. For example, pupils understand that £1 has the same value as two fifty pence coins even though they do not look the same. They are developing their problem-solving and numeracy skills through investigating, as in exploring numbers with an odd number of factors. Most have a ready recall of tables up to ten through regular practice throughout the juniors. Higher attaining pupils can check numbers for divisibility and lower attaining pupils can work out fractions of amounts, through good use of practical resources. Most pupils show a good understanding of shape and are confident when working out the area and perimeter of shapes using the correct formula. Most pupils draw and measure angles with reasonable accuracy and higher attaining pupils predict that they cannot draw a quadrilateral with four acute angles. Pupils have the opportunity to draw a good range of graphs in their books and on paper, for example comparing resting heart beat with the rate after exercise and can work out the average rate. Pupils have some experience of probability as they throw a dice to work out the odds of a getting a six.

117. Teaching and learning are good overall. Number skills are developed systematically through regular counting practice in the infants, with pupils showing their hands as they count in tens, and by

practising tables and learning facts by heart in the juniors. New work is explained very clearly enabling pupils to develop new skills. For example, in Year 2 the teacher explained the meaning of multiplication by drawing five lots of three on the flipchart. There are good opportunities for pupils to explain how they work things out. In one lesson seen, one boy described multiplication as when you keep adding the same number, and this helped pupils to clarify their thoughts. Some good questioning challenges the higher attaining pupils as in a lower junior lesson on right angles, some pupils were asked to work out the number of degrees between five past and ten past. Learning is enhanced in lessons by the good support from classroom assistants, and this has particularly helped lower attaining pupils to achieve the required level. In the less successful lessons, the group activities lack clear focus and are insufficiently focussed on the needs of different groups of pupils, whether by age or prior ability. Planning is brief and does not always address the needs of the different age groups, leading to some mismatch of activities especially for the infant pupils.

118. The subject is effectively managed and a programme of monitoring teaching and learning has produced fruitful discussion on areas for development. This has led to an improvement in the use of numeracy skills not only in mathematics but also across the curriculum. There are sound assessment procedures in place though these are not sufficiently related to National Curriculum levels to track progress, therefore the subject leader is not sufficiently aware of the standards at the end of the infants and juniors. There are targets at the front of each pupil's book, but at the moment they are too general to be a useful tool to help individual improvement.

SCIENCE

119. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average and have improved since the last inspection. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

120. Trends in the school's performance in statutory teacher assessment in Year 2 and in national tests in Year 6 show that the school has maintained high standards since 1998. In 2001, however, test results in Year 6 indicated a drop in standards. Whilst almost all pupils reached the expected level the percentage reaching the higher level was well below average when compared with most schools and fell into the lowest five per cent in the country when compared with similar schools. In the 2001 teacher assessments in Year 2, standards were well above average for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age. (100 per cent). The percentage reaching the higher level was average overall. However, no pupils reached the higher level in the areas of *materials and their properties* or *physical processes*. The dip in standards is attributed in part to disruption in staffing which interrupted pupils' learning and to deficiencies in the curriculum. Staffing problems have now been resolved. The school has carefully analysed its performance and has identified areas of the curriculum, for example, investigative skills for development.

121. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is above average. As a consequence of the school's actions to improve standards, the vast majority of the pupils achieve well. However, there are still a few instances where the teachers' planning does not provided specifically for the potentially higher attaining pupils to work at the higher National Curriculum levels. Whilst good progress is made over time, in these lessons the progress of higher attaining pupils is limited. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported and make good progress alongside their peers. In the infants and the juniors, particular emphasis is put on the development of skills of scientific enquiry. Pupils make particularly good progress in using investigative skills across the curriculum to find out about life processes, materials and physical forces.

122. In Year 2, pupils learn about living things through well-organised practical experiences. Through planting beans and watching them grow they have learnt to describe conditions basic to plant survival. Higher attaining pupils investigate the best growing medium by planting beans in stones or sand or soil. They explain how their test is fair. All pupils are aware from their studies of a pond, the open school field and a wood, that different living things are found in different habitats. They set reasonable criteria for grouping specimens. The pupils explore the properties of a range of materials. They investigate which is

the best material for an umbrella, or which paper is most suitable to wrap a parcel. With help from the teacher, they collect data, simply record their observations and draw relevant conclusions. Their knowledge of how some materials are changed by such processes as heating or cooling is not yet well developed. All pupils have good awareness of the dangers of electricity. They construct their own circuits to make a bulb light up or a burglar alarm work and most pupils link cause and effect to explain that the bulb does not light up when the circuit is open. Building on their experience, they predict outcomes accurately when investigating magnets.

123. In Year 6, almost all pupils demonstrate detailed knowledge of the major organs of the body. They investigate the effect of exercise on the body and record results in bar and line graphs to compare pulse rates before and after exercise. They know that mixing materials can cause them to change. When mixing salt, sugar and water, they predict accurately and set a fair test to prove their hypothesis. They know that some changes are reversible and some are not. Pupils have enough knowledge to generalise about physical phenomena. For instance, through their investigations on how sound is transmitted, they conclude that the more energy there is in the vibration, the louder the sound. Higher attaining pupils suggest various changes to alter pitch or loudness. All show good awareness of fair testing as when investigating to find the best soundproofing materials. They predict with confidence and use a range of tables, charts and graphs to record and compare results and identify patterns and trends. Higher attaining pupils draw conclusions based securely on their evidence and linked to scientific knowledge and understanding.

124. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding to provide an interesting curriculum based on first-hand experiences. This enables the pupils to build skills step-by-step over time. Teachers take care to use language precisely. For instance, in Years 5 and 6 the teacher introduces words like *tension*, *proportion*, *expand*, *elasticity* and *compressed* to help pupils discuss and understand the way forces are acting on a stretched elastic band. Lessons are planned with clear objectives, which are usually shared with pupils so that they know what to do, and make every effort to succeed. This successfully promotes positive attitudes to learning as pupils' confidence grows. All teachers use questions effectively to extend pupils' thinking and help them make considered judgements. Whilst most teachers promote a problem solving approach, occasionally too much direction is given and pupils are not allowed enough opportunities to become independent learners, for instance, in selecting their own equipment or planning their own investigations. Practical group work is well organised and provides excellent opportunities for pupils to collaborate successfully as they follow the guidance in their investigation planner. The class is frequently drawn together as experiments proceed so that the teacher can make teaching points clearly and relevantly as the evidence emerges. Whilst there are excellent examples when teachers set time limits and pace is brisk, from time to time group work proceeds at a leisurely pace and learning slows. Work is not always planned to meet the full range of age and ability in each class. In particular, opportunities are missed to extend the learning of the higher attaining pupils specifically to higher levels of the National Curriculum. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson on the life cycle of the frog, the teacher did not specifically plan for the higher attainers in the class to learn how the frogs and tadpoles are each adapted to their differing environments. Teaching assistants work very closely with the teachers and provide very good support, which has a significant effect on pupils' learning.

125. Management of the subject is good. The curriculum co-ordinator has a good overview of the school's performance through careful analysis of the results of standardised tests. Challenging targets have been set and clear action taken to achieve them. Assessment systems are built into teachers' plans but not always used consistently in planning the next steps in learning. The curriculum is enriched by visits to science museums and by the close involvement of local industry in providing workshops, funding and role models for young scientists. Progress in Year 6 is supported successfully by extra weekly booster classes in the spring term. Information and communication technology is used particularly well to support learning in science. For instance, in Year 2, pupils consolidate their learning by using the computer to sequence events graphically in the life cycle of the frog. In the juniors, pupils record and compare their findings in line and bar graphs using information technology. Cross-curricular links with mathematics in counting, timing and measuring as well as drawing and interpreting tables and graphs

support learning successfully. Links with literacy are effective in promoting factual report writing and extending the pupils' vocabulary and speaking and listening skills in discussion. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development especially in the opportunities it provides for pupils to feel wonder at the patterns in nature, and in the co-operative attitudes generated in group work.

ART AND DESIGN

126. Due to the school's arrangement of the timetable, it was not possible to see any lessons in art and design. Judgements are based on a review of pupils' work in sketchbooks and on display, photographic evidence and discussion with teachers and pupils. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average. In Year 6, standards are not as high as those identified in the last inspection. This is due in part to staffing difficulties (now resolved) and to the school's concentration on other priorities. Standards in Year 2 have been maintained. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school.

127. In Year 2, pupils have sound skills of close observational drawing. Their pencil sketches of different leaves show good attention to shape and line. They build on their sketches to compose pastel drawings of plants exploring colour by blending pastels to make a range of shades of green. The teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding to introduce pupils to the work of famous artists. In their own pastel drawings, pupils demonstrate that they have an awareness of the style of Monet. When considering what they like about Monet's work, higher attaining pupils express clear opinions such as 'I like the bright yellow of the flowers'. Most pupils just know they like the picture, 'because it's good'. Few are able to suggest improvement to their own work. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning. Year 2 pupils reflect their sound knowledge of the style of Mondrian as they use *drag and fill* techniques to create colourful geometric patterns on screen.

128. In Year 6, pupils explore a range of techniques and media with appropriate focus. For instance, from studying the work of famous photographers and artists they identify ways in which the impression of movement is created. They explore techniques like overlapping lines and shapes and creating blurred edges to improve their own work. Teachers make good links with other subjects, particularly with literacy and cultural development, which enable pupils to learn purposefully. When producing a play based on an Indian story, pupils in Year 6 communicate the ideas and feelings of the characters through designing masks to reflect their personalities. They carefully select materials to produce appropriate tactile and visual effects such as using feathers to represent the sun's rays. Their sketches are clearly annotated to show the effect planned. Pupils try out their finished products and evaluate their suitability for use during the performance. Most are perceptive in noting what works well and what can be improved.

129. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. However, teachers' planning reveals that pupils are encouraged to explore a wide range of media and that skills are built up step-by-step through practical activities. Examples of pupils' work are carefully displayed in school and pupils know their work is valued. This is reflected in their confidence and their positive attitudes to the subject. The curriculum is enhanced by whole school projects, such as the workshops on collaborative sculpture led by an artist in residence. The art club promotes learning for some pupils at particular times of the year.

130. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development and are not yet used consistently to plan the next steps of learning.

131. The curriculum co-ordinator is only recently in post and also has two other subjects to manage. As yet insufficient attention is given to monitoring standards throughout the school.

132. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in promoting opportunities for spiritual development through appreciation of the pattern of the

natural world. A good example of this is the work done by Years 3 and 4 pupils in their studies in line and tone of pinecones and pebbles. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced by their appreciation of the work of artists from a diversity of cultures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

133. Due to the school's arrangement of the timetable, it was not possible to see any lessons in design and technology. Judgements are based on a review of pupils' work, photographic evidence and discussion with teachers and pupils. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are similar to those expected for their age. The standards identified in the last inspection have been maintained. The weaknesses noted in the area of 'design' have been remedied by careful planning in the new scheme of work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily.

134. Pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic to talk about their work. They particularly enjoy the making aspects of the curriculum. In Year 2, pupils observe and consider different types of buildings before designing and making model houses. Their labelled designs show individuality and reflect the way they have adapted ideas to their own purpose. They practise different ways of joining materials before selecting a suitable method to assemble their model. They take a pride in their work. Most pupils are pleased with their finished products and find it hard to suggest improvements. They are becoming aware of the role of mechanisms like wheels and axles when making toy cars. In Year 6, pupils investigate a range of musical instruments from different cultures to find out how different notes are made. They consider the properties of several materials as to their suitability, before setting out to make their own instruments. In their detailed annotated plans they clearly identify their purpose and how this will be achieved. They work out their own plans of action showing appropriate understanding of the step-by-step process involved. Using everyday items, they select tools and techniques to make their own instruments. They are realistic in evaluating their product against their original intention and in identifying what worked well and areas for improvement. Pupils are not skilled in using ICT or electrical circuits to control their models. Pupils' skills and knowledge of food hygiene is developed well through a topic on bread. Pupils compare different types of bread before making their own. They have a good awareness of health and safety factors.

135. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching. Pupils' work on display indicates that appropriate attention is given to the provision of a wide range of practical experiences, through which pupils learn skills of designing, making and evaluating systematically. The organisation of the curriculum to include intensive 'Design Weeks' and to make best use of outside expertise in design workshops supports learning well and contributes significantly to pupils' enthusiastic attitudes to the subject.

136. Assessment is in its early stages with the introduction of end-of-unit evaluation. This is not yet used consistently to plan future work. Management of the subjects is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is newly appointed and as yet the role in monitoring standards is not yet fully developed. The subject makes a good contribution to literacy and numeracy development in the opportunities provided for practising skills, for example, in writing instructions and evaluating work or in measuring and calculating accurately. The frequent organisation of collaborative group work and the giving and receiving of constructive criticism amongst older pupils support social development well. Not enough use is made of ICT to model ideas or control mechanisms.

GEOGRAPHY

137. Standards of work in geography match those expected for pupils in Year 2 but fall below this level in Year 6. Standards in geography were judged to be a weakness in the previous inspection and changes since then have been slow and not had sufficient effect on standards. Standards were below average in both Years 2 and 6, because of insufficient curriculum time and resources and the lack of planning guidelines. Resources are now satisfactory and the school has implemented a nationally

recommended scheme of work. Whilst the time allocated to the subject remains comparatively low, it is used effectively in the infants to enable reasonable coverage of the curriculum so that pupils achieve an acceptable standard. However, in the juniors, the planning of the two-year rolling programme is such that in some years geography is studied for only one term out of three. For example, the current Years 5 and 6 have not studied geography, other than with incidental reference to the news, for the first two terms of the year. This long time gap inhibits the progressive teaching of skills and the coverage of the curriculum in sufficient depth, so pupils do not achieve the required standard.

138. Achievement of pupils in the infants is satisfactory overall. However, achievement and progress in the juniors is unsatisfactory, with topics studied in insufficient depth. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as their peers because they experience the same curriculum.

139. Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of different environments such as the seaside and the town through examining information about different places. They identify significant features of the seaside, such as the soft sand and the white lighthouse and know that it is different from a town or city such as Manchester. They look at various locations and use the computer to draw a graph of their favourite seaside places around the world. They develop their observational skills well as they look at a map of the fictional island of Struay and find a similar island, Coll, off the Scottish coast. They can identify the main features using simplified mapping co-ordinates and learn that fishing and farming are the important industries. In comparing the island to their own locality, they conduct a traffic survey in Poynton and recognise that there are far more cars on the roads locally than on the Scottish island.

140. Year 6 pupils have a sound understanding of the effect of pollution on rivers. They learn that this affects the lives of many people in some countries, as the water has to be filtered and in some areas it has to be carried long distances for domestic use. Looking after the environment has a high priority in the school. Pupils develop a good understanding of the consequences of the ever-increasing amounts of litter and are aware of the need to recycle and reuse as much as they can. Pupils develop a good understanding of many social issues related to importing food from poorer countries and write to supermarkets to promote the idea of Fair Trade. Discussion with older pupils indicates that they have used the Internet to find maps of different countries though they do not understand the meaning of scale. Whilst they remember hearing about Peru and Bangladesh they are not sure about where the places are and their understanding of people's lifestyles is limited, though they know that in both cases they are different from their own.

141. Teaching and learning in lessons are satisfactory. The unsatisfactory progress in the juniors is due to the way curriculum time is allocated rather than the quality of teaching. Scrutiny of work in the infants shows that work is suitably planned to enable pupils to compare and contrast features of different locations. There are high expectations of the way in which pupils record their work enabling pupils to develop their skills. The one lesson observed in the lower juniors was satisfactory with good questioning enabling pupils to appreciate the effect of so much rubbish on their environment. However, there was insufficient time for pupils to consider alternative methods of disposal in their groups. Whilst learning within the lesson was acceptable, the large gaps between study in some years means that learning over time is unsatisfactory. There is ongoing discussion in the upper juniors related to places in the news, for example the Zimbabwean elections, and whilst this is a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of world events it is insufficient to develop their geographical skills. Teachers promote numeracy and literacy skills effectively. For example, pupils conduct a survey on litter and develop slogans such as "Think before you throw it away!" Computers are used effectively to find information and to generate graphs.

142. Management of the subject is satisfactory and has led to the weakness in resources identified in the previous inspection being tackled. However, more current atlases are needed to help pupils find information and gain a better understanding of the location of different countries in the world. Although the new planning guidelines have been introduced their effect on standards has not been closely monitored to check that the curriculum is being covered in sufficient depth. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each topic. However, this is not yet used to plan for the next stage of learning.

HISTORY

143. Year 2 pupils attain standards which are average for their age, maintaining the standards identified in the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6, achieve standards below those expected for their age. This is due to the way the subject is planned over two years, with large time gaps between pupils studying the subject. As a result, pupils in the lower juniors have not been taught any history for the first two terms of the current year. This is a deterioration in standards since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be average.

144. Achievement of pupils of all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs, in the infants is satisfactory, with work planned well to take account of pupils' literacy skills. The limited amount of time allocated to the subject prevents standards and achievement being better. Achievement by pupils of all abilities in the juniors is unsatisfactory. Topics are studied in insufficient depth, and the gaps between history lessons inhibit the progressive teaching of skills. This means that over time pupils do not build up their historical knowledge and skills.

145. Pupils in Year 2 are developing a good sense of chronology as they learn about the meaning of Remembrance Day and understand why the Queen visits the Cenotaph. They relate this to their own area as they discover where the local memorial is situated. They learn how to find out about the past from different sources. For example, they hear excerpts from Samuel Pepys's Diaries when learning about the Great Fire of London. Higher attaining pupils use their knowledge to describe how they might feel if they witnessed the fire from the other side of the river. They also realise that paintings are a good source of information about the past. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to compare every day life in the past with the present day.

146. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of how life has changed since the end of World War 2. They refer to different sources, such as books and the Internet to find information about changes in entertainment from decade to decade. They benefit from hearing a first hand account of life in the 1950s and 60s from a visitor and know this is a useful source of information about the past. They use this knowledge to conduct their own research into developments in home life and transport. There are good links with personal development as they consider the causes of change. For example, they relate the appointment of the first black England football captain, Paul Ince, to the passage of time since the first post-war immigrants were welcomed to this country. They recognised this meant their children could qualify for the national team by being born in England. Discussion with pupils show that their understanding of people and periods in the past is somewhat vague and they have little understanding of past civilisations, such as the Romans, though they do remember visiting the Manchester Museum to see the Egyptian exhibition.

147. Teaching and learning in lessons is satisfactory overall in the infants and the juniors. The unsatisfactory progress in the juniors is due to the way the curriculum time is allocated rather than the quality of the teaching. Scrutiny of work and a lesson observation show that enquiry skills are promoted well through good questioning to help understanding. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 consider the importance and meaning of an eyewitness as they describe witnesses to traffic accidents or seeing the events of September 11th unfold in America. Good use is made of stories in the infants to teach pupils facts, such as the events surrounding the Gunpowder Plot. Teaching is enriched by visits to places of interest, and talking to pupils reveals that these have a lasting effect on pupils' learning. Where possible, attempts are made to include some history in other subject areas to make maximum use of the available time. For example, in a geography lesson on pollution, lower juniors looked at how different inventions over the last century, such as the plastic bag and cardboard box, had contributed to the increase in litter. Teachers promote literacy skills in history and pupils report on what they have found out and describe events. They make good use of numeracy skills in looking at time lines, and the computer is used to aid learning as pupils create a scene of the great Fire of London using a paint program.

148. Overall the management of the subject is satisfactory with new planning and assessment procedures being introduced. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each topic, though this is not yet used to plan the next stage of learning. Sufficient consideration is not always given to the planning of work for the different age groups within a class, for example more independent research skills are required for Year 6 pupils when studying the same topic as Year 5. In addition, younger Year 1 pupils, in the class with Reception children, study different topics from those in the class with Year 2 children and are not getting the same coverage of the National Curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

149. Standards in ICT match those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below the expected level in both years. This is due to improved resources, an improvement in teachers' confidence following staff training, the introduction of new planning guidelines and good management of the subject.

150. All pupils, including those with special educational needs are achieving well. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs not only to improve their computing skills but also to use computers to support other areas of learning. The comparatively small amount of time allocated specifically to the subject is used effectively to demonstrate skills and procedures, with good use made of the overhead projector for older pupils. A positive feature is the many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in the infants use a paint program to create pictures of the Great Fire of London in a history lesson and pupils in Year 4 use their word processing skills to write letters in connection with their Fair Trade project.

151. By the age of seven, pupils are developing their word-processing skills well as when they write simple letters to the author of 'The Lost Cygnet' to say how much they had enjoyed his book. They know how to delete errors and change the size and style of their print. Pupils show good mouse control as they label parts of the body accurately in a science lesson. They can plan instructions to make the programmable floor robot move and higher attaining pupils can follow instructions to program the robot to draw a shape. Having created a picture in the style of Mondrian, pupils know how to save and print their work.

152. By the age of eleven, pupils have developed their word-processing skills sufficiently to be able to draft and redraft their writing using paragraphs. They use different fonts and colours effectively to produce election leaflets for the school council and match pictures to the text when producing a magazine. Pupils are becoming proficient in using e-mail to transmit information as an attachment and can use the Internet for research. They co-operate well when working in pairs on the computer and discuss which angle they might need to instruct the turtle to draw to make a hexagon. When using this shape to instruct the computer to draw a flower, they are confident to return to the memory to edit their work when it is clear they have made an error. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that all aspects of the subject are now covered, though there is a comparative weakness in data logging and using sensors for older pupils. Pupils throughout the school routinely use a good range of equipment such as listening centres and older pupils operate the overhead projector and the music system in assembly.

153. Teaching and learning are good overall in specific lessons and also in the way ICT is planned to support learning in other subjects. For example, in mathematics to handle data and in art and design to create colourful patterns. Teachers have worked hard to improve their skills and confidence through training and through seeking advice from colleagues and from external agencies. This improvement in teachers' knowledge is helping to raise standards because teachers are able to offer guidance and correct errors as pupils are using computers. The very good relationship between pupils and adults provides good mutual support for new learning where staff have only recently received training. Skills are taught effectively through clear explanations and demonstrations. This was seen in a lesson in Year 3 and Year 4 when the teacher demonstrated how to instruct the turtle to turn a right angle to draw capital letters.

The overhead projector is used effectively so that all pupils are involved and judicious use of praise and encouragement gives pupils the confidence to try and not to be afraid of making mistakes.

154. The subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of what is happening in school in ICT and of the necessary next stage for development. Simple assessment procedures have been introduced and staff are beginning to relate these to National Curriculum levels. However, the results are not yet used to plan the next stage of learning for groups or individuals. The subject is used well to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

MUSIC

155. Standards in music are average by the ages of seven and eleven. This reflects satisfactory achievement for pupils of all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included and make satisfactory progress. Improvement since the previous inspection is good and has been brought about by new planning guidelines. All of the required elements of the curriculum are now taught. However, lessons are still too short and this prevents teachers fully extending pupils' learning.

156. The school places great emphasis on singing and this is very evident in school assemblies. Pupils especially enjoy action songs. A feeling of belonging to a community is developed as staff and pupils join in energetically with 'To build community'. Pupils are able to maintain their own part when singing in different parts. In hymn practice, it is not always made clear to pupils how they can improve their singing by controlling their breathing. Although the singing is tuneful, pupils do not always give sufficient attention to the quality of their singing. For example, when singing quieter more sensitive songs, such as 'Father we adore you' many sing with too much gusto and the spirituality of the words is lost.

157. Year 2 pupils are confident using musical terminology and know that pitch refers to high and low sounds. They listen carefully to the singing of 'hot cross buns' and identify correctly when the pitch of the singing changes. They sing showing an ability to maintain a simple beat. Early composition skills are being introduced and pupils understand that symbols can represent sound. For example, pupils play percussion instruments in response to a word written on a card. Evidence from school photographs show the pupils have explored sound by making their own musical instruments and in response to a given signal have played slowly, loudly, rattly and scratchy sounds.

158. Pupils in Year 6 make sound progress in their composition skills. They enjoy working in small groups and are developing the skills of adjusting their work. Many can recall a popular tune in their head while trying to fit their own lyrics to the melody. They appreciate the need to maintain a rhythm and that some notes are longer than others. However, few are at a level to suggest how symbols can be used to show how their lyrics fit into the music.

159. The teaching of music is satisfactory and leads to a satisfactory rate of learning in lessons. Lessons include opportunities to sing and play instruments and pupils show an enthusiasm for music. The new planning guidelines are giving teachers more confidence which was a weakness identified in the previous inspection. Management of pupils is good and in Year 6 led to very good attitudes to learning as pupils collaborated and appreciated the efforts of other pupils. Teachers are not always fully challenging pupils by taking them on to the next step of evaluating and improving their ideas. This is restricted by the short amount of time available.

160. Satisfactory management has led to the successful introduction of the new planning guidelines. Monitoring of standards is limited and so areas for development lack a focus on improving areas of weakness. The school has recently put assessment procedures in place to check on pupils' progress at the end of a unit of work. It is unclear how the information gained from these assessments is to be used in future planning. The formal curriculum is extended by opportunities to sing in the school's popular song club and to take part in the school productions. Instrumental tuition is also available for pupils who wish to improve their musical skills. These activities are effective in extending pupils' social development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

161. It was only possible to see one dance lesson in the infants and gymnastics in the juniors. Standards broadly match those expected nationally for the pupils' ages. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs are achieving satisfactorily. Since the previous inspection, the available evidence indicates that standards have been maintained.

162. By the age of seven, pupils control their movements as they twist and turn and make good use of the space available. Most can adapt their movements to the music but a few run freely regardless of any musical changes. They understand that movements can be used to represent images and enjoy making heavy movements to represent a lion and contrast these with fast, light skips for a rabbit. A few start to adapt their movements to those of a partner but others find this more difficult and simply follow the other person. When given the opportunity for more freedom of movement, pupils listen more closely to the music and make up some lively dance steps.

163. By Year 6, the pupils have a secure understanding of the effects of exercise on the body and appreciate its importance to good health. In gymnastics, many show good co-ordination of their movements as they balance, jump and roll. They are able to join their movements into a short sequence. A few give due attention to planning their movements so that they include all of the required elements. However, others give insufficient attention to pupils' demonstrations and repeat their actions without considering how they can be made better. The pupils' collaboration and organisation when getting out the large apparatus is impressive. This resolves a weakness identified in the previous inspection. The arrangement of the apparatus means that no time is wasted and pupils keep up a good level of energetic action throughout the lesson. Many pupils attempt to transfer their sequences onto the apparatus but this is not always easy. They are inventive with their movements and find a variety of ways of getting on and off the apparatus. A few of the more agile pupils give good attention to finishing off their work with a flourish.

164. Pupils go swimming in Years 3 and 4 and the school's records show good standards with the great majority of pupils already able to swim 25 metres.

165. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. Teaching was better in the juniors because the pace was brisk and pupils were challenged to try out new ideas and many rise to this challenge and produce some high quality movements. This was less evident for the younger pupils when a commercial tape was followed without sufficient adaptation to the ability of the pupils. Lessons follow a suitable structure and include a warming up opportunity and a chance to cool down. As a result, pupils are growing in an awareness of the principles of exercising safely. Effective use of pupils' demonstrations raises pupils' self-confidence. However, teachers do not allow pupils to practise the demonstrated skill and this restricts the development of adjusting and improving performances.

166. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to improve standards in dance although this is not made clear in the school's development plan. Currently, no monitoring of lessons takes place and the audit of the subject focuses on reviewing planning and resources rather than on improving standards. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development as they learn to collaborate and help each other. This is particularly beneficial for the pupils with special educational needs who are fully involved in the lessons. Pupils also benefit from the opportunities to take part in clubs for netball and tennis.

