

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST MARK'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Scarisbrick, Ormskirk

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119410

Headteacher: Mr T Ranson

Reporting inspector: Mr JJ Peacock  
25344

Dates of inspection: 22-25 May 2000

Inspection number: 197919

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Southport Road Scarisbrick Nr Ormskirk Lancashire
Postcode:	L40 9RE
Telephone number:	01704 880636
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Andrew Lee
Date of previous inspection:	October, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Joe Peacock	Registered inspector	English, science, geography, history, physical education	What sort of school is it?
		Special educational needs	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements
		Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught?
		English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
Joan Cross	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Josepha O'Hare	Team inspector	Mathematics, information technology, art, design & technology, music and religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
		Under fives	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mark's CE Primary School, opened in 1879, is in the original Victorian building with an additional temporary classroom erected in the grounds. It caters for pupils from four to eleven years of age and is much smaller than average, with only 72 pupils on roll, of which 43 are boys and 29 are girls. Numbers are higher than those at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds but, in this area, many parents are involved in market gardening and farming businesses. The attainment of most four year olds when they start school in September in the reception class is above average. All pupils are from homes where English is their first spoken language. Approximately seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The school has almost 17 per cent of pupils on its register of pupils with special educational needs, and this proportion is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. These figures are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. The mobility of pupils is not a problem for the school. Last year only three pupils were admitted and none left during term time.

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

The serious weaknesses found in the previous inspection have been eliminated. St. Mark's is now an effective school, where standards are rising across a range of subjects. This is largely because of the good leadership and vision provided by the headteacher, who was appointed shortly after the previous inspection. His dynamic approach, together with a strong determination to create a centre of excellence, has helped to restore parents' confidence in the school. As a direct result, teaching has improved and pupils in all classes show positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is of a very high standard. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well motivated, interested in their work and keen to do well. Throughout the school, pupils are working at or near to their capacity and achieving well. When all these factors are considered, along with the above average level of funding, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Most pupils do well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards in religious education, information technology and physical education are better than those normally seen.
- Provision for the under fives in the infant class is good. Children are given a very good start to school.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are provided with consistently appropriate activities to meet their specific needs.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. This enables effective learning to take place in lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good and this has a significant impact on their rate of progress.
- Relationships in this small school and the personal development of pupils are outstanding.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The school has very effective links with parents, church and the community.
- The school is very well led and managed.

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

- The standard of writing at Key Stage 1, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- The neatness and presentation of pupils' work throughout the school.

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

There has been a complete turn around since the previous inspection report. It is evident from the information above that the strengths of the school now far outweigh its weaknesses.

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

The previous inspection in October 1997 found serious weaknesses, most notably in the leadership and management. This badly affected many areas and the school was given seven key issues to address. Briefly, these were to raise standards, particularly in science and design and technology, improve all pupils' rates of progress, improve most aspects of leadership and management and the planned curriculum, monitor the quality of teaching, manage the finances more efficiently and build relationships within school and the

community. A new head teacher was appointed shortly afterwards and, as a result of his commitment, vision and professional skill, the weaknesses have been eliminated. A subsequent visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors was made in January 1999 to check on the development and improvement against each key issue. Satisfactory progress was reported on each in turn, with good progress on the issues relating to financial planning and relationships with parents and the community. The influential role of the head teacher, high staff morale and an increase in pupil numbers were found to be the key features reflecting a renewed confidence in the school by parents. The pace of improvement has been maintained and it is the view of the inspection team that this is now a good school with many strengths. It has the leadership, commitment, staff and expertise needed to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

Pupil attainment indicators gained from examining the school's test results and comparing them with the national test results or similar schools are unreliable, given the very small numbers in each age group in the school. Over the past few years the size of the year group taking the test has usually been around 10 pupils. In 1999 only six pupils in Year 6 were involved and 12 in Year 2. The results of one or two pupils may therefore alter the schools average results considerably and consequently no comparisons have been made with all school nationally or with similar schools. Comparisons of year by year national test results are unreliable, but in January 1999 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors noted a slight improvement from the standards achieved in 1997.

The quality of leadership and management and teaching, together with pupils' positive attitudes, are having a marked effect on standards. Work in lessons is demanding. As a result, the inspection team found much 'added value' from when pupils start at the school. By the time they are five, children exceed the standards expected of them in all areas of the curriculum for the under fives, except their physical development.

Inspection evidence indicates that in English, the standards achieved by most pupils are above average by the end of both key stages, with pupils making satisfactory progress. However, standards in writing at Key Stage 1 are below those expected nationally, with no pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Progress is generally unsatisfactory for pupils in this aspect of English. In mathematics and science, most pupils are attaining standards which are above average at both key stages. In science, for example, 50 per cent of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in 1999. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a marked effect on standards in English and mathematics, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. New targets, aimed at raising standards further, are realistic and achievable.

In information technology, standards are well above those normally seen. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection and shows pupils' interest in computers is developed well in school. In religious education, standards are above those expected in the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards are above average in physical education throughout the school and in history and geography at Key Stage 2.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good and pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes towards learning. The vast majority of parents indicate that their children like school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and around the school. Playtimes and lunch times are pleasant social occasions.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The school's motto, "Not just for ourselves but for everyone" is effectively borne out by pupils' actions. Pupils respect one another and show respect for all adults they come into contact with in school. Politeness and courtesy are commonplace and help to make relationships excellent.
Attendance	Attendance rates are satisfactory, with the level of unauthorised absence being minimal. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school punctually.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The quality has improved in the school immensely since the previous inspection and this is one of the factors which accounts for the improvement in standards. During the inspection the quality of teaching in one lesson was unsatisfactory (four per cent of the total). It was very good or excellent in 57 per cent of lessons, with every full time teacher delivering teaching of this high quality in some of their lessons. Good or better teaching was seen in 83 per cent of all lessons, which shows a remarkable consistency. In literacy and numeracy sessions, teaching was usually of a high standard in all classes and the skills that pupils gain are generally well promoted in lessons other than English and mathematics. However, pupils are given few opportunities in the infant class to write at length and this adversely affects the progress they make, which is currently unsatisfactory.

Teachers' detailed and thorough planning of lessons ensures that most pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Work is sufficiently challenging for all, including those of higher attainment and the small number of gifted pupils. The discipline and control in lessons is invariably very good and teachers make very good use of on going assessment to ensure that pupils build effectively on previous learning.

All teachers work hard to establish a good working atmosphere and to promote effective learning. Pupils enjoy lessons and concentrate well. Children under five transfer smoothly from the Desirable Learning Outcomes to the programmes of study in the national curriculum, usually well before the children reach their fifth birthday. Children are happy and confident as a result, and all are keen to learn. The use of homework to promote learning is good for all age groups.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. It provides a good range of worthwhile opportunities for learning which meet pupils' interests and particular needs. All subjects meet statutory requirements and are given the necessary time and value, with a particular focus on English and mathematics. However, a shortage of large equipment limits the physical development of children who are under five. There is a very good range of extra curricular sporting activities available to pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils have appropriate targets, are supported well in lessons and generally make good progress. Many achieve standards expected of all pupils in the national tests.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. A very good Christian ethos pervades all aspects of school life, contributing very effectively to the personal development of pupils. They accept responsibility very well and are encouraged to become independent from an early age. Parents are pleased with the values the school promotes.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is a caring community where people feel secure and are happy. Attendance and behaviour are closely monitored. The booklet entitled 'A way of life rather than a set of rules' clearly states what is expected of pupils. Procedures for assessing attainment and progress are good and teachers make very good use of assessment information in their planning.

Very effective links are now established between the school and parents, which is a dramatic improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The new head teacher has greatly strengthened the partnership between home and school. The welcoming manner of all staff has built up trust and enables parents to feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or concerns.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership and management are the key features accounting for the school's success. The headteacher provides very good educational direction for the work of the school. He has been instrumental in restoring parents' confidence after the school was found to have serious weaknesses in the previous inspection. Everyone is now committed to raising standards and to the continued improvement in all aspects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	All governors have the school's best interest at heart and work hard to make a substantial contribution to its effectiveness. They fulfil their statutory duties well with the exception of their annual report and prospectus. Spending is strictly controlled and constantly checked to ensure value and quality in aspects such as services, staffing and standards. Financial planning and budget controls are excellent as a result.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The work of the school is well monitored and evaluated. The commitment to improve and capacity to succeed are very good.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school's resources are satisfactory overall and used well to support the curriculum. The provision of computers and books is very good considering the number of pupils in the school, and both are used well to promote pupils' learning. Specific grants are used effectively for their intended purpose.

Staffing levels are good. Non teaching staff and voluntary helpers give good support to teachers. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although the lack of water in the mobile classroom causes problems from time to time. The lack of an enclosed play area for the under fives and few large wheeled toys adversely affects their physical development. Toilet facilities are inadequate for the growing number of pupils and in need of refurbishment. Care is taken to ensure the principles of best value are followed when the school is using its funds to provide services, staffing or resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The headteacher and staff are approachable.</li> <li>• Everyone who responded agrees that the school expects pupils to work hard.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• There was unanimous agreement that the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school is helping pupils to become more mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few are unhappy about the quality of work pupils are expected to do at home.</li> <li>• Some would like to be better informed about how their child is getting on.</li> <li>• A few feel the school does not provide an interesting range of extra curricular activities.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agree wholeheartedly with parents' positive views. The response rate for the questionnaire and level of agreement shows how much parents appreciate the improvement made since the previous inspection under the current leadership. Inspection evidence indicates that the quality, range and amount of homework for pupils is good and should not be of concern to parents. Similarly, the quality of pupils' reports and opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress is good. Moreover, the school staff work extremely hard to provide a very good range of activities, including sporting activities, for pupils after school. As with most schools, most of these cater for older pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 Children enter the reception class with levels of attainment which are generally above those expected nationally. They make good progress in language and literacy, mathematics and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Progress is also good in the development of their creative skills. Progress is very good in their personal and social development but in the development of their physical skills, progress is only satisfactory. This is mainly because there are few large wheeled toys for children to use and no freedom of access to a secure outdoor play area. In spite of this, most children have attained the desirable learning outcomes for children under five well before they are five. The good rate of progress is mainly due to the good teaching they receive, children's willingness to work and the caring support they receive from non teaching assistants and other adult helpers. An analysis of the inspection questionnaires returned by parents shows that 96 per cent believe that their children make good progress throughout the school. They unanimously agree that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.
- 2 Conclusions gained from examining the school's test results and comparing them with the national test results are unreliable given the very small numbers in each age group. Over the past few years, the size of the age groups has been around 10 pupils. In 1999, only six pupils were involved in the national tests at Key Stage 2 and 12 at Key Stage 1. The results of one or two pupils may therefore alter the school's average results considerably and consequently no comparisons have been made with schools nationally or with similar schools. The added complication of different proportions of pupils with special educational needs in each year group makes it impossible to find any pattern or trend in the school's test results over the past few years. However, in a visit to the school in 1999, following the previous inspection which found that there were serious weaknesses, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors reported slight improvements in standards. The current inspection team judge that standards have continued to improve mainly because of the tremendous impact of the new leadership, together with the good quality of teaching. Most parents have also noted, and appreciated improving standards.
- 3 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment overall, taking into account the quality of pupils' work, is above the national expectation in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is an improvement since the previous inspection in October 1997, which judged pupils to be achieving standards which were in line with the national average. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are achieving standards that are well above average in reading and above average in mathematics and speaking and listening. In writing, standards are below those expected nationally and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. This is mainly because pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to write at length or practice skills introduced during the literacy sessions in other subject areas. Standards in science, based on teacher assessments in 1999 show that every pupil achieved the required Level 2 but a below average number (20 per cent) achieved the higher Level 3. However, only 12 pupils were involved in these assessments. Inspection evidence indicates that most pupils are attaining at a level which is above that normally seen. The inspection team found that both boys and girls attain equally well in all areas.
- 4 The performance targets that the school has set for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are realistic and firmly based on the results of detailed assessments carried out at the end of each term. Pupils achieve standards which are well above those normally seen in information technology and above those normally seen in physical education. In religious education, attainment is above the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievements in art, design and technology, geography, history and music are in line with those normally seen for pupils of this age.
- 5 Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in the two Key Stage 2 classes. Inspection findings indicate that by the time they are ready to leave the school at the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is above the level expected for pupils of this age and well above in science. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds in 1999 are based on the performance of only five boys and one girl so comparisons with other schools nationally or the 15 pupils in the current Year 6 are meaningless. Last year, the six pupils did well in English, rather better in science with half achieving the higher Level 5 but their performance in mathematics was disappointing. Similarly it is impossible to

describe any reliable trend for the past three years. Parents reported at the meeting for parents that they can see an improvement in standards and, more importantly, in pupils' attitudes to their work. In other subjects at Key Stage 2, standards of attainment are mainly above those normally seen. This applies to geography, history, and physical education. In religious education their attainment is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In information technology, standards are well above those normally seen for pupils of this age but in art, design and technology and music they are in line with the average.

- 6 The quality of teaching is an important factor in the good progress most pupils make in English and mathematics throughout Key Stage 2. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has undoubtedly helped to raise standards. Effective daily mental mathematics sessions make a strong contribution to pupils' ability with numbers and calculations. Well chosen texts and the teachers' skill in drawing pupils attention to important differences in style, structure and content improve pupils' reading skills, informs their writing and widens their vocabulary. The partnership between home and school in reading is strong and this also contributes effectively to the good progress of pupils. Lower attaining pupils benefit from the additional support they receive in the classroom from their teacher or parent helpers. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have good opportunities to develop their reading skills, with the efforts of non teaching staff and parent helpers being particularly effective in helping to raise standards. Teachers in the junior classes provide many opportunities for pupils to put into practice the writing skills acquired in the literacy hour in other subjects of the curriculum. This effectively develops pupils' skills in planning, drafting and editing their writing. However, in the infant class, insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of writing skills and pupils' have few opportunities to write at length. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement in its development planning. The neatness of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work is generally below the standards normally seen in all classes.
- 7 Standards of attainment in science are well above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. The subject was highlighted for improvement in the previous inspection but standards appear to have continued to decline until 1999 when they dramatically improved. Standards have further improved with the appointment of the Year 5 and 6 teacher who has much expertise in the subject. Opportunities for pupils to investigate and conduct experiments are very good. In one lesson for example, pupils' tables were covered in a wide variety of flowers and they were attempting to dissect them to find parts such as the stamen or ovaries. Boys and girls both enjoy this practical approach and work hard in lessons to complete their work. As a result, there is no difference in the performance of girls and boys and most are achieving highly in the subject.
- 8 Attainment in information technology is well above the national expectation by the end of both key stages and all pupils make very good progress in the subject. Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection, when they were 'in line with the national expectation'. Many pupils have computers at home and this helps with the development of basic skills. Teachers' knowledge is generally secure and most provide good opportunities for pupils to use computers in all areas of the curriculum. However, there is a shortage of suitable programs for pupils to use and some of the school computers are becoming dated. Consequently, In some lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers to effectively support their learning.
- 9 In the school as a whole, the achievement of pupils is generally good. High expectations of teachers, very good discipline and control in lessons and extremely detailed lesson planning result in a good quality of learning in almost all lessons. Pupils' very positive attitudes and very good behaviour help to create a very good atmosphere for learning. This in turn helps pupils to make good progress. As a result, standards in most subjects have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs benefit greatly in this climate for learning. Most reach the levels expected for all pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, mathematics and science. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and the school makes good provision for them. Often they work alongside older pupils and the work they are given to do is suitably demanding. The good quality of teaching ensures that all pupils are given every chance to reach their full potential.

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

- 10 Pupils of all ages, including those who are under five have very positive attitudes towards their learning and the vast majority of parents indicate that their children like school. The youngest pupils, now all five years of age, are already confident learners who mix seamlessly with their older classmates in the Key Stage 1 class. They listen carefully to their teacher and support staff and try hard to please them, the most confident joining in class discussions in a mature manner considering their age.
- 11 As they get older, pupils remain well motivated and maintain a high level of interest in their work. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 religious education lesson on the Islamic faith, pupils' excellent values and attitudes helped to make the learning very successful. Pupils work hard both cooperatively in groups and independently. Their independent learning skills are much better now than at the time of the previous inspection when pupils too quickly sought help instead of trying to work things out for themselves. This was seen, for example, in Key Stage 1 music, in Year 3 and 4 physical education when games skills were improved by throwing and hitting balls with partners, and in a Year 5 and 6 art lesson involving printing.
- 12 Parents are correct in thinking that the pupils are generally very well behaved throughout the school day. In lessons this very good behaviour significantly contributes towards progress, because time is not lost waiting for pupils' attention. In assembly, pupils behave equally well and are reverent and respectful. Playtimes and lunch times are pleasant social occasions when mixed age and mixed gender friendships are very evident and pupils organise themselves well into groups to play various games. Two pupils who failed to meet the school's high expectations regarding their conduct were excluded for fixed periods last year.
- 13 Pupils' personal development and relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils respect one another and all adults who help them during the school day. Older children befriend younger ones and look after them well. Politeness and courtesy are much more evident than commonly found amongst pupils of this age range. Ultimate respect is shown for the different opinions and beliefs of others. This was apparent during a Year 3 and 4 personal and social education lesson when pupils considered the premise that 'we are all different and see things differently' and the need to talk through differences to resolve conflicts. In the Year 5 and 6 religious education lesson on Islam described above there was no hint of racism or sexism in pupils' responses. The school's motto 'Not just for ourselves but for everyone' is effectively borne out by the pupils' actions. They tidy away well at the end of lessons and willingly take responsibility for various minor duties around the school in their role as monitors. The older pupils who are chosen to be prefects and team captains also take their duties seriously and act very maturely.
- 14 Last year's attendance level of 93.9 per cent was satisfactory, being very close to the national average. This was uncharacteristically low for the school, which more commonly achieves good levels of attendance. The fall by more than one percentage point last year was significantly influenced by the absence of a single pupil whose family moved away from the area without notifying the school. The adverse effect of this on the attendance level was great because of the small number of pupils on roll. Unauthorised absence is minimal and the vast majority of pupils arrive at school punctually.

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

- 15 In the previous inspection, the majority of teaching was described as satisfactory. However, most of the teaching of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 was unsatisfactory and deemed to be impeding pupils' progress. Overall, 22.9 per cent was unsatisfactory and no very good teaching was seen. The quality of teaching in the school has improved immensely with the appointment of a new headteacher and Year 5 and 6 class teacher. It is judged by this inspection team to be good because of the high proportion of good and very good teaching which was seen in the lessons observed. The very effective planning by teachers, their very good control and discipline and the high quality of the assessment of pupils' progress are the key features which make teaching so good at this school.
- 16 During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in all but one lesson seen and it was very good or excellent in just over half of all the lessons, which is a marked improvement on the previous inspection. Examples of good, very good or excellent teaching were seen in 83 per cent of all the

lessons seen, which confirms that the quality of teaching has vastly improved and can now be considered as a strength of the school. High standards of teaching were seen in all classes throughout both key stages showing strength in depth. Teaching of the highest quality was seen most consistently in the two junior classes where the small class size and limited age range obviously helped. In the only unsatisfactory lesson, ineffective control of noise levels by the teacher meant that many pupils were unable to concentrate and finish their work.

- 17 The quality of teaching in the 'literacy hours' and during numeracy sessions was generally of a high standard throughout both key stages. Teachers use the skills that pupils have learned in these sessions well when teaching other subjects. However, in the infant class, pupils have few planned opportunities to write at length in order to consolidate their literacy skills. Moreover, the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are often untidy in all classes as teachers appear to put little emphasis on these aspects of pupils' work.
- 18 All teachers work hard to establish a good working atmosphere and to promote effective learning. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are a good feature of most lessons. The pace of learning in almost all lessons is also good, with little time wasted. Once pupils have finished the tasks set for them, teachers had additional activities planned and these extended pupils appropriately, particularly those of higher attainment. This shows that the concern over this expressed in the previous report has been fully addressed. All teachers have very effective strategies to maintain good behaviour and ensure that pupils keep working. As a result, noise levels are generally low and pupils of all ages concentrate very well on the tasks set for them. Pupils generally behave very well and have a very good attitude towards their learning. This results in a very good working atmosphere in most classes with all pupils making good progress. However, in one lesson taken by a temporary teacher this was not the case. The level of discipline was unsatisfactory and little meaningful learning took place as noise levels rose to unacceptable levels. This resulted in the quality of teaching being judged as unsatisfactory. There is very good use of ongoing assessment to guide teachers in planning work that gives adequate challenge to pupils of all abilities. All pupils' work is marked thoroughly and helpful comments give further guidance to them on how to improve. This was yet another area identified as weak in the previous report but it has been put right. Pupils identified as gifted or talented are allowed to work with older pupils and given appropriately challenging work. Planning is a strength in all lessons as all teachers clearly set learning objectives for lessons. In the infant class with three year groups to cover, the quality of planning was very good. It ensured that children under five made a smooth transfer from the Desirable Learning Outcomes to the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Lessons in all classes invariably build effectively on pupils' previous knowledge. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons with resources readily available for pupils. In most lessons, the variety of resources gives pupils the opportunity to use their initiative and choose suitable materials to use in their studies.
- 19 The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, music and physical education. As a direct result, standards in these subjects are better than those normally seen. In religious education and information technology the quality of teaching is good, resulting in standards which are well above those normally expected. In all other subjects, art, design and technology geography and history, teaching is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. All pupils respond positively to their lessons, showing interest, behaving well and sustaining concentration. As a direct result, effective learning occurs in virtually all lessons.
- 20 The quality of teaching for children who are under five in the infant class is good, mainly because of the teacher's secure knowledge and expertise, the very good planning and the quality of support from the non teaching assistant and parents. The high quality of support, provided by the classroom assistant is a significant factor, enabling children to do well in all areas of the curriculum. The quality and use of assessment is very good and ensures that children are given work which is closely matched to their capabilities and builds effectively on previous learning. Class control is firm but unobtrusive and expectations are high. Children are happy and confident as a result and all are keen to learn.
- 21 The teaching of literacy skills is good. In the literacy hour, teachers use whole class or group teaching sessions well to develop pupils' skills in reading, writing and spelling. Most use large print books effectively and all pupils read the text well. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high in literacy sessions. During individual work on letter sounds, spellings and the use of words in sentences, pupils are set tight time targets to complete work. They have to concentrate and work hard to complete them successfully. Most teachers provide worksheets for pupils to complete, but most pupils do not write

neatly on these. The teaching of basic literacy skills through other subjects of the curriculum is good throughout Key Stage 2, but few opportunities are provided in the infant class for pupils to write freely and at length. This slows progress in spelling, punctuation and use of adventurous vocabulary. In the junior classes, pupils often record the results of investigations in science, for example, and write down the similarities and differences they find between two contrasting places in geography. Pupils' technical knowledge, their use of full stops and other punctuation is generally accurate. Overall, work in other subjects of the curriculum in the junior classes contributes effectively to the development and application of literacy skills.

- 22 The teaching of numeracy is good in all classes. Oral, mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of the daily numeracy hour are helping to give pupils of all ages more confidence with numbers. These sessions are conducted at a good pace, which helps to focus pupils' attention. Pupils enjoy the challenge and most try hard to be the first to answer. Pupils' positive attitudes, and work provided by teachers which is well matched to individual pupils' capabilities ensure that most pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills.
- 23 The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers take care to prepare work which addresses the targets set for pupils in their individual education plans. Learning support assistants and parent helpers provide valuable and effective additional support. As a result, pupils are well motivated, concentrate and behave well. All pupils make good progress and many achieve the levels expected in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Last year in science, for example, every pupil achieved Level 2 by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils who are gifted or talented in a particular area are identified and their special needs are met effectively by teachers.
- 24 Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were generally happy with the amount of homework their children were expected to do. However, a small proportion of those returning their questionnaire tended to disagree. Inspection findings support parents' views expressed at the meeting and those who responded positively in the questionnaire. The quality and amount of homework is generally good. The school has a clear home/school partnership policy and details about homework are included. Pupils are regularly given homework and, overall, it makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in reading and in information technology.

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

- 25 The school's curriculum provides a good range of worthwhile opportunities for learning which meet all pupils' interests, aptitudes and their particular needs. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. The allocation of time for subjects reflects the priority that the school gives to English and mathematics and to the acquisition of basic skills. Good policies are in place for all subjects, as well as for special educational needs. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. It includes sex education and awareness about drugs and the dangers of their misuse. These strategies are very effective in helping the pupils of St. Mark's School to become confident people with enduring values, able to contribute effectively to society. These values are promoted further through the active support of the local vicar and the school's frequent and regular participation in church festivals and activities.
- 26 Since the previous inspection report, the school has made significant improvements in the curricular provision for its pupils. All key issues from the previous report have been successfully addressed. There is a determination by all staff to improve standards and to move the school forward. Teachers use the current guidance from the Qualification and Curriculum Authority for subject planning. This arrangement ensures that all subjects are in line with national initiatives. There are good procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum, which include regular staff meetings where open discussions take place. There is a feeling among staff that all their contributions are valued by the headteacher and may be used in the school to effect further improvement. A very good example of this was the effective monitoring of teaching and learning in information technology by the coordinator. Following this evaluation, appropriate action was taken to ensure that maximum benefit was gained from using computers and the available programs. As a result, the pupils make very good progress and their subsequent attainment is well above average.

- 27 The curriculum provided for children under five is good. It reflects all the recommended areas of learning within the national guidelines and prepares children effectively for the National Curriculum. However, there is no large equipment, such as wheeled toys or balancing and climbing apparatus, to be used outside, and this limits the opportunities for children's physical development.
- 28 The school has effectively implemented the national strategy for mathematics. The overall implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is satisfactory, but writing skills are not sufficiently promoted in other subjects, mainly at Key Stage 1. As a result, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in this element of English. The provision for all pupils on the special educational needs register meets statutory requirements. All pupils in the school have equal access to the curriculum, which is generally matched to their needs. However, pupils with potential to become higher attainers are not always involved in the school's 'booster classes'.
- 29 There is an impressive range of extra curricular activities, including sport, to enrich the school curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to extend their interests and to develop socially include music, a computer club and joint activities with other small schools. Parents are pleased with these activities which the school provides for their children. The curriculum is further enriched by educational visits and through a programme of visiting specialists. For example, the school funds additional expertise in information technology, provided by the local education authority. This extra input has an effective impact and results in all pupils making very good progress in the subject.
- 30 The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and contributes effectively to the personal development of all pupils. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is very good. This is evident in subjects such as religious education, art, music and in assemblies. In these sessions, teachers encourage pupils to think about their attitudes and feelings, how they treat other people and about right and wrong actions. In assemblies, pupils are encouraged to reflect quietly on the themes of the day. Through well planned assemblies, the teachers give the pupils a good insight into citizenship and strengthen the sense of belonging to a community. For example, every Friday pupils participate in 'Community Time' when they are encouraged to share interests and to discuss various issues of the day. This provision is further enhanced through carefully chosen Bible stories which effectively extend pupils' understanding about how these relate to their own lives and their experiences. The school celebrates the richness and the diversity of British culture through a well planned programme of multi cultural education, not only during religious education but also through art, music and literature. As a result, pupils display a high level of respect for people's different faiths and practices. The well planned work in personal, social and health education supports the pupils' very good moral and social development. The pupils receive appropriate guidance in sex education and about drugs misuse. The wide range of extracurricular activities, which are well attended, further promote pupils' social development effectively.
- 31 The previous inspection report judged the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural to be satisfactory. The school has made significant improvements in its provision since that time. The new headteacher is instrumental in this development, ably supported by a committed and dedicated staff.
- 32 This is a school with strong and positive relationships and teachers use these skilfully to guide pupils towards good moral behaviour and positive attitudes. The school is particularly effective in teaching the pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. All staff lead by their good example. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere throughout the school, which is conducive to pupils' overall learning. The values of the school, based on the motto 'Not only for ourselves but also for others', are under-pinned by a very good Christian ethos which pervades all aspects of the school life. Pupils are polite and show a genuine high level of care and consideration for one another. Parents are justly pleased with the values that the school promotes.

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

- 33 The school's provision for pupils' academic support and guidance is good. The previous inspection report judged the systems for assessing pupils' attainment to be under developed. Since that time, the school has addressed this issue very successfully. Procedures for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress and attainment are now good. A careful and comprehensive assessment is carried out shortly after children enter the school. It is well used to inform teachers' lesson planning and is closely



linked to the learning goals for children under five. Regular and comprehensive assessment against National Curriculum criteria is well used to inform planning and, at regular intervals, to inform parents of their children's performance. Marking of pupils' work is kept up to date. There are good examples of useful comments that help pupils to improve their work. All teachers know their pupils well and give prompt feedback to them in lessons in order to give further guidance on improvements. The regular assessment information is well recorded. As a result, teachers know the levels of attainment of each pupil. Annual reports to parents are good. They are usefully informative and provide a good basis for the end of year discussions between parents and teachers.

- 34 Pupils' personal development is monitored and supported effectively through extra curricular activities, 'share and tell' sessions, personal and social education lessons, 'community time' and individual education plans. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school are supported effectively by staff and parents through work which is well matched to their capabilities. Targets are suitably set and regularly checked to monitor progress. Outside agencies such as the pupil referral unit are involved where appropriate.
- 35 The school has very effective procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour through the behaviour policy that has been introduced since the previous inspection. All families are given the policy, nicely titled 'A way of life rather than a set of rules', which clearly states what is expected of the pupils and outlines the school's methods of promoting good conduct. The emphasis is on rewarding positive behaviour and encouraging corporate responsibility through, for example, team points, stickers, class table rewards and slips which lead to certificates for good manners. When pupils misbehave all staff respond consistently and effectively to make clear that this is unacceptable. Parents of persistent offenders are suitably informed and personal and social education lessons are used to talk through incidents such as antisocial behaviour, as appropriate.
- 36 Good procedures are in place for monitoring and promoting regular and punctual attendance. Through the prospectus parents are told how important it is for their children not to miss school for reasons that are avoidable, such as family holidays in term time. The registers are monitored weekly and absences for each child are analysed on a half termly basis. This makes it easy to identify those with poorer attendance. Each pupil's end of year written report records their number of authorised and unauthorised absences and late arrivals.
- 37 All staff are very caring and promote pupils' well being, health and safety effectively. Child protection procedures have improved since the previous inspection. There is detailed and appropriate guidance for the staff that suitably stresses the importance of confidentiality, and a governor is nominated responsible for such matters. The designated teacher, however, has no recent training in child protection and this needs to be rectified as soon as possible. Appropriate first aid training has taken place and suitable safety, medication and emergency procedures adopted.

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

- 38 Very effective links are now established between the school and parents, a dramatic improvement upon the findings of the previous inspection. At that time relationships with parents and the wider community were strained and the need for further development was reported as a key issue for action. The new headteacher has greatly strengthened the partnership between home and school through better communication with the parents and resultant increased trust.
- 39 A key factor to the strengthening of relationships is the welcoming manner of all the staff which enables parents to feel very comfortable about approaching the school with questions or concerns. This is helped by the headteacher being in school very early each day and available to those parents who would find it difficult to pop in for a chat at the end of school. On a more formal basis, parents have termly opportunities to meet with class teachers to discuss their child's progress and they receive an informative written report annually. Those whose children have special educational needs are kept fully informed about progress towards the targets set for them.
- 40 Parents rightly have very positive views of the school with particularly strong appreciation of its new leadership and management and its expectations that the pupils work hard and achieve their best. An analysis of the questionnaires returned by almost 80 per cent of parents shows that they have no

significant areas of disagreement. The school values the opinions of the parents and has shared draft copies of the behaviour and homework policies with them for their comments. This very good practice raises parental awareness of what is expected by the school, enables them to feel a part of the decision making process as well as encouraging their full support. For example, the vast majority of parents are satisfied that the right amount of homework is set and they are supportive of the school if it is necessary to contact them about their child's unacceptable behaviour.

- 41 The very good information provided for parents enables them to get actively involved in their children's learning. Helpful guidelines are provided for those whose children are about to start school in the reception year. All parents are very well updated about the everyday life of the school through weekly newsletters, sponsored by local businesses, that comprise boldly headed snippets of relevant information. The core curriculum is also very well explained through the prospectus and meetings for parents, such as those held about changes in the way that literacy and numeracy are now taught. More recent government initiatives regarding the teaching of the foundation subjects are to be suitably shared with the parents when introduced in the autumn.
- 42 The school does everything possible to enlist the help of parents in lessons and to make them feel welcome. They are regularly sent documents that sensitively explain their roles, seek their confidentiality and thank them profusely for their assistance. Several volunteer adults, including parent governors, help regularly with various tasks such as hearing children read and with music lessons. The parent, teacher and friends association successfully organises social and fund raising events that are enjoyable and generate substantial income for the benefit of the pupils.

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

- 43 The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors are very good. In the previous inspection report, leadership and management were found to be seriously weak in a number of key areas. Since then, a new headteacher has been appointed and much has been accomplished. His dynamic approach and vision, together with a strong determination to create a centre of excellence has helped to restore parents' confidence in the school. Governors in particular value his sound professional judgement. These qualities and a relentless determination to raise standards ensure a clear educational direction for the work of the school. As a result, all weak aspects identified in the key issue relating to management have been properly rectified.
- 44 The newly appointed teacher and established infant class teacher are providing good support in the school's efforts to bring about improvement. Both are fully involved in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's published performance targets, for example, have been carefully set to take account of the capabilities of pupils currently in Year 6 and Year 2. Detailed action plans are in place to further develop the role of subject coordinators, raise resource levels in information technology, and update all subject policies to include the latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines. However, it is too early to see any impact of some of these changes at present. Subject coordinators, for example, have been working hard to develop new curriculum guidelines for all subjects, but most of these are still in the early stages of their development.
- 45 The delegation of responsibilities in this very small school is good. The responsibility for monitoring and evaluating teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, for example is delegated to subject coordinators and is carried out effectively. However, in most other subjects of the national curriculum the role of subject coordinators in this area is limited by the workload placed on so few staff. Time is allocated for each subject as part of a rolling programme for improvement only when it is the focus for review in the school management plan. All coordinators carefully monitor colleagues' termly lesson planning each term.
- 46 The governors are interested in the work of the school and are very supportive of it. Some have loyally served the school for many years. The governing body works hard to meet its statutory obligations and produces a detailed report for parents each year. However, information about attendance rates, required by statute, is missing from this report and the school's prospectus for parents. Most governors frequently visit school to work with pupils in class and in this way they are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a very strong commitment to improve and, with the present knowledgeable governors, an equally strong capacity to succeed. The governors responsible for

literacy and numeracy, for example, regularly visited classrooms to oversee the successful implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies.

- 47 The school has clear aims which are expressed in the prospectus. Generally they are strongly focused on what should be done to raise standards and improve the quality of education for all. Boys and girls have equal opportunities to take part in all areas of school life and this ensures that all pupils try to achieve their best and constantly strive to do better. Gifted or talented pupils are identified by class teachers using the good assessment procedures that are in place and effective provision ensures that their special needs are met.
- 48 The school has a very good commitment to improvement and this is clearly defined in the school development planning. The link between the budget and priorities for development is also very good, showing that the concerns over this in the previous report have been fully addressed. Specific grants from the Education Authority are used well for their designated purpose. For example, all teachers have attended training sessions for literacy and numeracy. Additional funds allocated to increase provision for pupils with special educational needs have also been used appropriately. The school secretary misses absolutely nothing when checking spending and the school finances and the extent to which the school applies the principles of 'best value' in its use of finances is outstanding. The chair of the finance committee and all governors carefully compare their own performance in a wide range of areas, including pupils' attainment, with other schools. They also compare the costs of teaching and the provision of non teaching staff. Every effort is made to ensure goods and services are purchased at competitive rates. The budget is monitored and controlled effectively by the headteacher and extremely conscientious school secretary. Good use is made of new technology. However, at present, the school does not have the facility to send and receive electronic mail. A surplus in the school's budget had been built up and was rising to levels which were above that normally expected. This surplus, currently standing at just below 10 per cent will be used to make additional changes to the internal accommodation once the new classroom has been built. There are plans to create a computer area and relocate the library, for example. An audit of the school's finances and procedures has not been carried out recently. However, after the previous audit, the few faults were immediately put right.
- 49 The school is well staffed with teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum, and all are deployed appropriately. All teachers share the management of each subject area or other aspect of the curriculum such as special educational needs. All are appropriately qualified and carry out their duties effectively. The good provision for special educational needs and for the under fives is mainly due to the commitment and devotion to duty of the respective coordinators. Job descriptions are in the process of being rewritten to clearly outline specific roles and responsibilities. Non teaching staff are well qualified and all are extremely conscientious, giving pupils and teachers invaluable support in class. The special educational needs coordinator is experienced and knowledgeable. Very good support is given to all teachers, particularly when formulating individual educational plans for pupils. The quality of these is good. All have clear targets for improvement, making it easy to measure individual pupils' progress. An up to date register of all pupils with special educational needs is maintained and gifted or talented pupils are also identified. The governor responsible for special needs has much background expertise and effectively helps to ensure the requirements of the code of practice in all other respects are fully met.
- 50 The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is satisfactory, overall. Formal appraisal procedures for staff have lapsed pending the development of a cohesive policy on the evaluation of performance for all aspects of the school's work. However, in this small school it is easy for the headteacher to visit all classrooms informally on a daily basis. This ensures that he is fully aware of the quality of teaching and learning in all classes. Deficiencies in the teaching of writing and improvements in information technology resources, for example, have already been identified as priorities for improvement. Under the guidance of the headteacher, all staff are working towards developing a secure system for performance management. Procedures for self appraisal and the appraisal of teaching by colleagues are embryonic at present. There are very good systems in place to support newly qualified teachers and the inspection team's judgement is that the school would provide a very good venue for the initial training of teachers.
- 51 The accommodation for the number of pupils on roll is barely satisfactory. The building is extremely well maintained by the caretaker and cleaned to a high standard. However, toilet facilities are totally inadequate, as 43 boys have to share one toilet and two small urinals. Both the girls and boys toilets

are in urgent need of refurbishment. Indoor facilities such as the very small hall, library and small computer area are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Classrooms are small, particularly the one for Year 3 and 4 pupils. The new classroom, which is shortly to be built for reception and Year 1 and 2 pupils will ease the situation. The lack of running water in the mobile classroom often means that pupils have to move into the hall when doing artwork. This wastes valuable curriculum time. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the internal learning environment. The school has spacious grounds that are more than adequate for teaching physical education. The playground is large and pupils who wish to be quiet have a designated seating area at break times. The provision for outdoor play for children under five is to be improved shortly to give children free access to a secure play area from the new classroom. The school is successfully developed an environmental area and pond, using pupils' ideas and designs. This will further enhance the school's learning environment for pupils.

- 52 Resources for most areas of the curriculum are satisfactory and this enables teachers to hold pupils' interest in lessons by giving them a range of equipment or materials to use by themselves. This has a direct impact on the rate of progress that all pupils make in lessons. In English, science and physical education, resources are good. Although the school has a very good ratio of pupils to each computer, it only has a limited range of subject related programs for pupils to use during lessons. This limits the opportunities for computers to be used effectively to support learning in all subjects. The quality and quantity of fiction and non fiction books to cater for the range of pupils' interests is very good.

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

The governors, head teacher and staff should include the following key issues in their post inspection action plan:

1. Improve the standard of pupils' writing at Key Stage 1 by :-
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length
  - planning to use and extend writing skills introduced during literacy sessions in all subject areas
  - providing suitably challenging work for pupils of higher ability

(paragraphs 3,6,17,21,64,68)

2. Improve the presentation of pupils' work throughout the school in all subjects.

(paragraphs 6,17,70,81,87,101,102,105 )

The improvement of writing has already been identified by the school as a priority in the school's development plan.

The following less important weaknesses, not included as key issues for action, should also be considered by the school:

- Outdoor play facilities and resources for the under fives.  
(paragraphs 1,27,55,59,124 )
- Statutory information in the governors' annual report to parents and the prospectus.  
(paragraph 46)
- Toilet facilities.  
(paragraph 51)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	48	26	13	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	72
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	12

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	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	3	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	6	9
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	11	9	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92(93)	75(86)	100(92)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	9
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	11	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92(85)	100(100)	100(100)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	5	1	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	2	4
	Girls	1	1	1
	Total	5	3	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83(60)	50(70)	83(70)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	1	1	1
	Total	5	5	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83(100)	83(100)	83(100)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	72
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.2
Average class size	24

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

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

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

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	146,847
Total expenditure	138,710
Expenditure per pupil	1927
Balance brought forward from previous year	6136
Balance carried forward to next year	14,273

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

79.6%

Number of questionnaires sent out	54
Number of questionnaires returned	43

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	28	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	44	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	56	2	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	42	9	7	0
The teaching is good.	53	40	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	42	16	0	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	23	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	30	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	49	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	28	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	35	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	37	12	0	2



## **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**

- 53 Children enter the reception class with generally above average levels of attainment, but there are some who have special educational needs. They are identified promptly and action is taken to provide them with suitably modified activities to meet their specific needs. The school is now exploring ways of ensuring that the higher attainers are also provided with suitably challenging work to meet their specific needs. At the time of the inspection, these pupils were provided with different activities in order to match the work more appropriately to their capabilities. Parents are concerned about the fact that all children under five and Years 1 and 2 are taught by one teacher, supported by a part time nursery nurse. This arrangement, although well managed by the teacher, puts an unacceptable level of responsibilities solely on her shoulders. The school is exploring financial implication of providing extra teaching assistance for this age group.
- 54 At the time of the inspection, all children had attained the age of five and were working towards the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Therefore, this report refers to the provision that the school makes for under fives in general, following a curriculum based on the nationally recommended Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- 55 The school does not have a separate nursery unit, but the provision made for the children in the reception class who are under five is good and a strength of the school. The children feel secure and valued and develop confidence and a sense of achievement in their learning. The previous report stated that the children made satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. This is now good, with the exception of their personal and social development, where it is very good, and their physical development, where it is satisfactory. The slower progress in physical development is due to the lack of large equipment such as climbing apparatus and wheeled toys. Furthermore, the school does not have a separate playing area for the children, but there are plans to rectify the situation in the building programme to be undertaken shortly. Nevertheless, all pupils attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all six areas well before they are five. The good teaching and subject expertise, combined with good understanding of the needs of younger children and careful assessments, all impact positively upon the good progress these children make. Consequently, by the time they are five, their attainment is above average.
- 56 The children's language and literacy skills are given a high priority. All staff and volunteer helpers use well planned activities to extend the children's vocabulary and understanding. Carefully planned work ensures that children acquire competencies in speaking and listening. Through 'role play' and individual and small group discussions, they learn to interact well with each other and with adults. They take turns to answer questions, extend their vocabulary and express their ideas with growing confidence. Their listening skills are carefully developed by explanations and instructions together with stories and rhymes, which they enjoy. The children are provided with a very good variety of books and understand that they tell a story. They recognise familiar letters and are beginning to read simple texts. They know that writing communicates meaning and with effective guidance, can use the words in writing.
- 57 There is good provision for children's mathematical awareness, which develops well. This is achieved through carefully selected activities linked to their experiences and through many practical tasks. They use appropriate mathematical language to describe shape, position, size and quantity. Many children can count, order, add and subtract numbers to twenty and beyond. They successfully use information technology to consolidate and to extend their learning in mathematics.
- 58 The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is effectively taught through a variety of experiences which encourage them to talk about where they live, their families and their environment. They show a knowledge of plants and animals through their studies of the school pond and through educational visits to places such as Southport beach where they collected samples for the class displays. The teacher seizes on any opportunity to extend the children's understanding. In one lesson for example, the teacher used a globe effectively to locate the holiday destination of one pupil. All know that Czechoslovakia is in Europe as they keep in touch with one of the pupils who has recently returned

with his parents for a visit to that country. Children are very competent in using the computer and most can use the programs with confidence. Their religious education is developed through a very good provision of appropriate activities where they learn about the Bible and the stories that Jesus told. Through carefully managed discussions, the children learn to appreciate and respect other people's views, which may be different from their own.

- 59 While the current facilities and equipment for children's physical development is unsatisfactory, nevertheless, the teacher provides suitable activities for them to acquire a range of coordination skills both in indoors and outdoors. For example children have plenty of opportunities to use small bats and balls, malleable materials and construction kits. Most show increasing confidence and control when using these.
- 60 Provision for children's creative development is good. In all aspects of their curriculum, they demonstrate their creative skills. Through activities such as drawing, pencil rubbings, painting, responding to music and stories, the children use their imagination, listen and observe. Drama is well used as they participate in creative 'role play' in all areas of their learning goals. At the time of the inspection, children were completely absorbed in their roles of shopkeepers and shoppers, or, on another occasion, they portrayed the fear that the apostles must have felt during the storm while they were fishing. In music, the children develop an awareness of rhythm and pulse when singing in unison and playing percussion instruments. All these activities impact positively upon the good progress that these children make.
- 61 Provision for children's personal and social education is very good. Through a wide range of suitably planned activities and the well managed discussions, the children learn to work cooperatively or independently, as required. They readily take turns and share resources generously with others in the class. They are polite and courteous to adults and to each other, and take responsibility for tidying away at the end of sessions and treating resources and materials with care. Children are provided with ample opportunities for independent learning by being provided with activities where they can initiate ideas and to solve practical problems. This was observed at the time of the inspection, when they played in their 'Seaside Shop', making up problems for others to solve.
- 62 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Children are encouraged to think and talk about their learning and to develop self control and independence. All the adults work well as a team and are clear about the aims and content of the curriculum. They carefully assess children's progress and achievements. These are appropriately recorded and communicated to parents. The school offers a well planned programme that effectively promotes children's intellectual, social and personal development and prepares them well for the next stage of education. Together with carefully planned induction arrangements, this ensures that children's first experiences of school are happy ones.

## ENGLISH

- 63 Conclusions drawn from the school's performance in the national tests are likely to be unreliable because of the small number of pupils tested. Over the past few years, the size of the age groups has been around 10 pupils, but in 1999 there were only six pupils who completed the national end of Key Stage 2 tests, and there were 12 pupils who completed the national tests for seven year olds. The results of one or two pupils may therefore considerably alter the school's average results and consequently no comparisons have been made with schools nationally or with similar schools at both key stages.
- 64 Pupils generally enter the school with above average skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. They make satisfactory progress in most aspects except writing at Key Stage 1. This is an improvement over the previous inspection, when progress was reported as unsatisfactory. The results of the 12 Key Stage 1 pupils who completed the national tests in reading in 1999 clearly show that an above average percentage of pupils achieved the expected Level 2, but none managed to achieve the higher Level 3. In writing, the percentage achieving Level 2 was below average and again no pupils achieved the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence indicates that in reading, all of the 16 pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving Level 2 and one third are achieving Level 3, which is well above the national average. This improvement is largely as a result of the emphasis placed on the acquisition of reading

skills by the school. Parents provide good support by hearing their children read at home and adult helpers, such as parent governors, regularly listen to pupils reading their books in school. The successful implementation of the literacy hour has also had a beneficial impact on standards. However, standards in writing at Key Stage 1 have not improved significantly. All pupils achieve the expected level, but no pupils were found to be achieving the higher Level 3 in their work. The skills pupils are taught during the literacy sessions each day are not being fully exploited, as few opportunities are provided for them to write at length. Most of the writing observed involved pupils retelling stories that had been read by their teacher, or writing out nursery rhymes or short poems. Work sheets provided by the teacher to support pupils' learning usually require pupils to write just one word or a short sentence. Few give pupils the chance to express their views or opinions more fully. As a result, the standard of pupils' written work by the end of Key Stage 1 is below the level expected for pupils of this age and progress is unsatisfactory. In speaking and listening, pupils do well and by the end of the key stage their level of attainment is above that normally expected.

- 65 The results of the 1999 national end of Key Stage 2 tests in English show that most of the six pupils achieved the expected Level 4 and one achieved the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence shows that standards are improving, as 12 out of 15 of the current Year 6 pupils achieve the expected Level 4 and four are achieving at the higher Level 5 in their writing. The standard of reading and speaking and listening for most pupils is also well above average. The progress for most pupils overall in English is good and this represents an improvement from the previous inspection. This improvement is mainly due to the quality of teaching throughout Key Stage 2 and the impact of the literacy hour. In addition, pupils in the junior classes are provided with more opportunities to write, not only during English lessons but also in other subjects such as history, geography and science. In geography, for example, pupils are asked to write persuasively about conservation issues in the campaign to 'Save the Grove', an imaginary area under threat, or send letters requesting new school gates, when trying to improve their school environment. They write factual accounts about Queen Elizabeth I in history and record the results of investigations in science.
- 66 There are high standards of speaking and listening at both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils give articulate answers and use adventurous vocabulary. They substantiate their opinions by giving reasons and take account of others' views. When using a text from a World War II anthology, for example, pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class were encouraged to speculate and offer their opinions on how people were feeling at the time and why they behaved as they did. In Year 3 and 4, pupils express their views clearly on the disposal of waste and pollution. Pupils' command of spoken English makes a valuable contribution to the quality of discussion in other subjects such as history, religious education or science. Opportunities for pupils to answer questions in assembly or read out prayers are influential in building their confidence in speaking to an audience. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils ask and answer questions confidently and enjoy reading out loud work such as riddles that they have written. All pupils readily engage adults in conversation and answer questions sensibly.
- 67 Standards in reading are generally well above average throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read both fiction and non fiction books accurately and fluently for pleasure and for information. They know how to use the library to find books on different topics and confidently locate information in them using the index page. The range and quality of books in the library is good for the number of pupils in the school. The simple classification system and ease of access helps to encourage pupils to use the library effectively. Pupils read fiction with understanding and refer to the text when explaining their views about the plot or different characters. The range and quality of fiction in classrooms is good and this promotes pupils' enjoyment of reading. However, some of the books belonging to published reading schemes are becoming old and dated. Nevertheless, pupils enjoy reading the stories in these books, often choosing texts which are too easy for them, simply to read a favourite story again. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 read very well independently. They have a good range of strategies to help them with unfamiliar words. Higher attaining pupils read challenging texts, adding expression to make their reading sound interesting. Most pupils correct themselves when errors obscure the meaning, indicating that they are taking note of what they are reading. All express preferences for types of stories they prefer and most can name favourite authors. Pupils' reading diaries indicate a good level of support by parents at home, and this contributes significantly to their good progress.
- 68 Standards of writing are above average by the end of Key Stage 2 with pupils making good progress. Pupils use their writing skills for a range of purposes, including formal letters, reports, evaluations and

expressive writing. Most use accurate spelling and punctuation and structure their writing appropriately. In the sample of work provided, for example, it was noted that virtually all pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class used speech marks, apostrophes and paragraphs correctly in their writing. There are many opportunities provided for pupils to write at length in English, creating interesting stories about topics such as 'the big earthquake' or 'the grey old lady'. Most undertake research about their pets, using books or the computer and write factually about boxer dogs or caring for a pony. Opportunities are also provided frequently in other subjects, as pupils write about Elizabeth I in history, or why they should not tell lies in personal and social education sessions. However, much of their work is often untidy, with words scribbled out and writing of uneven size. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils write simple nursery rhymes, riddles or short passages about stories they have heard read by their teacher. Most have learned to join their writing, but the standard of handwriting and the neatness of their work is well below the standards expected for pupils of this age. Most use capital letters and full stops appropriately and spell common words correctly. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to develop interesting vocabulary and some include inverted commas when writing speech. Very few examples were found in the scrutiny of pupils' work of pupils to write for different purposes such as making lists or writing letters or imaginative stories. The narrow range found is having an adverse effect on the standards pupils achieve in writing. There was also little evidence of pupils' skills in writing, gained during the literacy sessions, being developed effectively in other subjects of the curriculum. Much emphasis is currently being placed on pupils' reading skills, but insufficient emphasis is being given to developing their writing skills at present. As a result, no pupil in Year 2 was found to be achieving at the higher Level 3 in writing. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection report, with limited opportunities for writing and unsatisfactory progress overall. Since then, the quality of teaching, teachers' planning and the use of assessment have improved standards of writing at Key Stage 2, but not at Key Stage 1, where this aspect of English remains an area for improvement.

- 69 Overall, the quality of teaching at both key stages is good. Teachers' planning, their control and discipline in lessons and effective use of assessment are strong features, ensuring a good quality of learning for all pupils in English. Lesson plans clearly indicate what pupils are to learn, and the objectives for each lesson are shared with pupils so that all know exactly what is expected of them. Basic skills of reading, speaking and spelling are taught well throughout the school. Pupils in the reception class make a good start, and from then on skills build steadily both in lessons and from year to year. This enables pupils to tackle increasingly challenging work as they get older, and results in high standards, particularly in reading. Pupils are encouraged to use dictionaries to check spellings and older pupils use the thesaurus well to find alternative vocabulary for their stories. The quality of teachers' marking is good, and often provides pupils with information on how they could improve the content of the work. However, all teachers accept work which is untidy without comment.
- 70 Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils usually meet these expectations. Little time is lost in managing pupils or in organising tasks. This enables teachers to provide good support for groups and to make useful teaching points as pupils work. As a result, pupils work productively and all lessons proceed at a good pace. All pupils at both key stages have positive attitudes to their learning and try hard to do their best. However, many show little pride in the presentation of their work.
- 71 All teachers have a good understanding of the subject and of the National Literacy Strategy. They use the structure of the literacy hour to good effect, using texts and teaching methods in the whole class part of the lesson that interest and challenge pupils. This ensures that learning is effective. Pupils in both key stages have a good understanding of punctuation and sentence structure. In the junior classes, good opportunities are provided for independent work so that pupils can consolidate and extend new learning. However, in the infant class, most of the writing activities are teacher-directed and pupils have few opportunities to express themselves freely in their writing. This has an adverse effect on the development of their skills. Teachers regularly provide homework, including reading, spelling and research tasks. Most parents support homework well and when this occurs it boosts pupils' progress.
- 72 Assessment and its use was a key issue for the school to put right after the previous inspection. In English, teachers use the information they have gained from assessing pupils to match work closely to the needs of different groups. This successfully provides work that is challenging for all and ensures that pupils are well motivated and concentrate well. Higher attaining pupils are often provided with additional work to further extend them once they have finished set work. Pupils who are identified as gifted or talented regularly work with older pupils, ensuring they make good progress. Pupils with

special educational needs receive good support and appropriate tasks that give them time to consolidate each step of their learning. Teachers are aware of their targets in individual education plans and ensure all pupils make good progress towards them.

- 73 The implementation of the literacy hour has been closely monitored by the subject coordinator and by the governor with special responsibility for literacy. Assessment information is analysed to provide helpful information in planning future learning for pupils and to set targets for each year group to achieve. The quality of teaching is monitored mainly on an informal basis in this small school or through work produced by the pupils. However, a more formal system is ready to be implemented, which will contribute effectively to the school's self evaluation. Resources for English are good. Pupils at key Stage 1 make good use of tape players to listen to stories. The concern expressed about this in the previous inspection has, therefore, been addressed.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 74 Attainment in mathematics is above the standards expected by the end of both key stages. The statutory assessments for 1999 are based on the results of relatively few pupils, 12 for Key Stage 1 and only six for Key Stage 2. On the basis of these results, attainment was found to be in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 1 but well below average by the end of Key Stage 2. Comparisons with similar school indicated that standards were below average and well below average by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, respectively. However, numbers are too small to make a comparison with the national average, statistically significant or viable. For this reason, trends over time cannot be sensibly evaluated and all of the above comparisons should be treated with some caution.
- 75 The previous inspection report judged the attainment to be average by the end of both key stages. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils achieve above average standards by the end of both key stages. The school, therefore, is successfully improving the standards the pupils attain. The staff feel that the National Numeracy Strategy is beginning to make a significant impact upon the pupils' progress. A stronger focus on mental calculations and on using and applying mathematics, both make a good contribution to pupils' overall progress and subsequent attainment. The pupils' progress is further enhanced through the very good teaching they receive at Key Stage 2. In these classes, the teachers make high demands on their pupils, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and there is a sense of urgency to move these pupils' learning on. 'Booster classes' and effective use of homework all make significant contributions to the pupils' overall progress. There is evidence that, since January, older pupils at Key Stage 2 have made particularly good progress and this is directly attributable to the appointment of a very competent and skilful teacher. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress through appropriately modified work to meet their specific needs in mathematics. However, the teachers make high demands on these pupils to ensure that they make the progress of which they are capable. The higher attaining pupils generally make good progress, particularly when they are provided with suitably challenging work to extend their learning.
- 76 In number, attainment is above the national average by the end of both key stages. This is achieved through good programmes of activities in which pupils can use and apply mathematics in problem solving. For example, in the reception class, younger pupils were presented with the 'real life' problem of calculating change from 50 pence, while older pupils were challenged to find costs of three different totals from a shopping list. They correctly calculated their totals and began to find short cuts to their calculations by using multiplication instead of a sequence of additions. In this way, the pupils began to understand the relationships between the various mathematical operations. In this lesson, there was a very good balance between teacher input and pupil activity. As a result, these pupils made very good advances in their learning. The teacher sensibly used real money for problem solving. The pupils' overall progress was further enhanced through careful use of information technology to consolidate and to extend her pupils' learning.
- 77 Pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress in number and, at the end of the key stage, their attainment exceeds national expectations. Younger pupils can work out addition and subtraction numbers mentally to 100. When working with angles, the pupils can use a variety of mental calculations to give answers correctly to problems on compass directions. They can explain clearly methods of calculations, indicating good mathematical understanding. Older pupils are confident in working with both vulgar and

in decimal fractions. For example, they can convert fractions correctly and give percentage equivalents. They can explain lucidly and clearly how these answers have been achieved. In Year 6, almost half the group consists of pupils with special educational needs, but they also make good gains in understanding of number.

- 78 Throughout the school, very good attention is given to mental mathematics through well planned activities which start each lesson. Consequently, in each year group, the pupils indicate that their knowledge of table facts and the use of the four operations in number, money and measure problems is secure through regular revision and consolidation. This is achieved without losing pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.
- 79 At both key stages, the pupils learn about shape, space and measure. Key Stage 1 pupils consolidate their understanding through use of computers. Key Stage 2 pupils, progressively build on their previous learning and indicate that they are secure in their understanding of measures by correctly converting one metric unit to another. By Year 6, pupils approximate metric equivalents of common imperial measures. They know and use appropriate mathematical vocabulary in their lessons through teachers' good examples of using these precise terms.
- 80 Pupils in all year groups produce accurate and detailed graphs of information they have gathered and devise questions for other pupils after studying the data. At Key Stage 1, pupils carefully classify the materials collected from the beach. Younger pupils at Key Stage 2, undertook a 'word count' as part of their topic about newspapers. They wanted to find out which newspaper was easiest to read. They collated and recorded their findings and showed through their analysis, that they were able to interpret the data. Year 5 and 6, using information technology, collected data on plants and posed questions based on the information gathered.
- 81 The quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good lessons observed at Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, the staff are enthusiastic about teaching mathematics. Their enthusiasm is infectious. The pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their achievements. They consequently listen to their teachers, stay on task and persevere with their activities. Teachers use other subjects such as science, geography and information technology, to link mathematical problems successfully. Literacy skills are particularly used well at Key Stage 2 where pupils write conclusions to their problem solving. Occasionally, pupils do not present their work to the best of their ability and most of the work in pupils' exercise books appears untidy. Teachers' planning is very good. It builds progressively on what the pupils know and understand. There are different activities to extend all ability groups. In lessons, the teachers make questions progressively more difficult. For example, in Year 5 and 6, the teacher asked her pupils to *'find an obscure fraction that would give them a very small and a very large example'*.
- 82 There is a very good coordinator for mathematics who has ensured the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy in all classes. Staff regularly meet to evaluate the effectiveness of their work and to consider improvements when required. In this way, the teachers have successfully adapted the national strategy to accommodate the school's particular needs. Very good assessment procedures are in place and teachers make effective use of the information they give to plan their future lessons exceptionally well. Resources are good and readily accessible in classrooms. This enables pupils to work well independently. Clear guidance provided for teachers in detailed schemes of work ensures that pupils build progressively on their previous learning and that all statutory requirements for mathematics are met. These measures are beginning to improve standards the pupils make. Therefore, the school is now well placed to make further and greater improvements in pupils' progress and their subsequent attainment.

## SCIENCE

- 83 Conclusions gained from examining the school's test results and comparing them with the national test results are unreliable given the very small number in each age group, six at Key Stage 2 and 15 at Key Stage 1 in 1999. The results of one or two pupils can alter significantly the school's average results and consequently no comparisons have been made.
- 84 In the previous report, attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 was reported to be in line with the national average and at Key Stage 2 it was below the nationally expected standard. Raising standards in

science was a key issue for the school. In the 1999 national tests for seven year olds, the results of teacher assessments in science show that every pupil achieved the expected Level 2 but, bearing in mind the small numbers involved, a below average number achieved the higher Level 3. In the national tests for eleven year olds, three of the six pupils achieved the higher Level 5.

- 85 Inspection evidence indicates that standards overall at the end of Key Stage 1 are above the national average and by the end of Key Stage 2 they are well above average, with pupils making very good progress. This represents a significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection. However, detailed comparisons with last year or the previous two years are meaningless, as the size of the year group, ability levels within it and gender balance vary so much from year to year. For example, last year there were five boys and only one girl in the year group and no pupils on the school's special educational needs register.
- 86 A detailed scrutiny of pupils' completed work suggests that achievement throughout the school is good, with pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class doing particularly well and attaining standards which are well above average. This is mainly because of the level of expertise and enthusiasm for the subject shown by the class teacher, who is also the coordinator for science. Many opportunities are given for pupils to investigate and carry out experiments for themselves. For example, in the Year 3 and 4 class pupils set up an experiment to measure the effect of light and water on plant growth. All pupils were encouraged to predict the outcome and knew the need for a 'control' set of plants. The work covered in the Year 5 and 6 class on the topic of plants is much more advanced, showing good progress in pupils' knowledge. In this class, pupils use magnifying lenses to carefully dissect flowers and examine the different parts. All recognise and name petals, stamen, carpel, stigma and ovaries. Pupils' knowledge of the reproduction of plants is very good, with most able to define the difference between pollination and fertilisation. The knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils in the infant class is generally above the level expected. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently name the external parts of the body, classify materials by their properties and can describe the best growing conditions for plants or seeds. All know about a healthy diet and have a secure knowledge about electrical circuits and 'push or pull' forces. Pupils complete worksheets to record their findings, but many of these require little writing, with one word answers being the norm. The neatness and general presentation of work from all but the highest attainers is untidy and well below the standards expected. This is an area, which requires some improvement.
- 87 The quality of teaching seen in lessons at Key Stage 2 during the inspection was good. Taking into account teachers' planning and the quality of work produced throughout both key stages, the quality of teaching overall in science at Key Stage 2 is good. Pupils' rate of progress is helped by teachers' high expectations and the good pace of lessons. Worksheets, produced to support pupils' learning in lessons are effective with a good balance between those copied from commercial schemes and those created by class teachers. Pupils approach their tasks conscientiously and try their best to keep within the time targets set by class teachers. However, in their haste to finish on time, the neatness and presentation of much of their work suffers. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy the challenges set, particularly in practical sessions and respond well. For example, in the Year 5 and 6 class all pupils concentrated well on the task of dissecting the many different flower heads. Their cooperation with each other and their behaviour was very good. Teachers' expertise in science is evident from their detailed lesson plans, which clearly set out what pupils are to learn by the end of each lesson. A strong emphasis is placed on learning scientific skills and how experiments should be carried out. Work completed by pupils on solids, liquids and gases, separating mixtures of materials, electrical circuits, insulation and conductivity show a good attention to detail when recording results following a practical approach to their learning. Pupils' command of English is above average and this is further enhanced by teachers' insistence on using the correct terminology at all times. When studying the internal organs and functions of the human body, for example, pupils know the names of the different bones on a skeleton, how blood moves in veins and arteries and the components of the human heart.
- 88 The school's guidelines for the effective teaching of the science curriculum are good, enabling all pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding at an appropriate level and pace. Teachers carefully and regularly assess pupils' progress and use the results very effectively to ensure all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are given work which is sufficiently challenging, but within their capability.

- 89 Science has been a priority for development since the previous inspection and the recently appointed coordinator provides good leadership and is determined to raise standards further. The headteacher and coordinator regularly monitor teachers' planning and offer advice on how to improve any perceived weaknesses. Statutory requirements in respect of the science curriculum are fully met. Teachers use computers well to support learning. In the Year 5 and 6 class for example, pupils use a data base on plants, created by the class teacher, to answer questions or to produce graphs from data collected as a result of investigations into the number of seeds from different flowers or fruit. Resources, described as barely adequate in the previous inspection, are now satisfactory, enabling pupils to carry out investigative work independently.
- 90 The curriculum is enhanced by trips to places of interest, such as the seashore to study the habitat of different animals, and good use is made of the school grounds to enhance environmental science. A pond and conservation area is being developed as a valuable added resource.

## **ART**

- 91 By the end of both key stages, standards in art are similar to those expected nationally for pupils aged seven and eleven. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained its standards.
- 92 Throughout the school, the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in art. At Key Stage 1, pupils work confidently in printing, painting, observational drawing and in collage work. They experiment with different shades to paint the different moods of the sea. The pupils use information technology to draw and paint abstract pictures to good effect. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on their skills and learn to use these to produce printing based on Islamic patterns which they had previously designed.
- 93 Teachers make good use of the skills that pupils learn in art to enhance work in other subject areas. For example, in Key Stage 1 the teacher linked the visit to Southport beach as part of a science topic, by exploring the way sea was portrayed by other artists. She showed pupils carefully chosen prints by artists such as Van Gogh and Kokoschka to inspire their own work. In English, pupils used their increasing vocabulary to think of words to make their posters for Southport inviting and attractive. Pupils used crayons effectively to decorate these. Year 2 pupils made beach flags, which they decorated with paints to good effect. Older pupils at Key Stage 2, researched Islamic patterns, looking through books, posters and accessed CD-ROMs to construct their 'magic carpets' and to print patterns.
- 94 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features, such as good management of pupils, clear explanations and instructions and good subject knowledge. In the two lessons observed, pupils showed much enjoyment with positive attitudes in evidence. They tidy up after themselves and help others to replace resources in appropriate containers. All work well independently or in pairs as appropriate, behave sensibly and show courtesy to adults and to one another.
- 95 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to observe how other artists depict what they see and observe. They make careful sketches using different shading skills to good effect. These were seen at the time of the inspection in Years 5 and 6, where the pupils made careful drawings of spoons. They learn about other artists such as the Impressionists and try to paint in similar styles. For example, older pupils at Key Stage 2 experimented with different colours to try to emulate the style of Modigliani. Pupils' work is assessed well and teachers use this information to ensure a good progression of skills and knowledge from year to year. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. However, the lack of water in the mobile classroom means that pupils have to waste valuable lesson time by moving all the things that they need into the school hall.



## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 96 By the end of both key stages, standards in design and technology are average and pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. In the previous inspection report, the design element of the subject was judged to be unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching was also unsatisfactory because inspectors felt that teachers' subject knowledge was inadequate. Since then, the school has addressed these issues adequately.
- 97 Due to time tabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe lessons in the subject. Judgements therefore are based on the quality of displays, discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of records. The quality of work seen was generally of a satisfactory standard throughout the school.
- 98 At Key Stage 1, pupils designed and constructed houses for St. Mark's Street as part of their geography lesson. They decorated these with paints of different textures to make them attractive. In the reception class, art lessons are combined with design and technology as pupils design and make flags or create seascapes using fabrics. Younger pupils at Key Stage 2 made catapults, following their visit to Chester, as part of their history topic about the Romans. They used wood, nails, and plastic containers to good effect. Older pupils designed and constructed scrolls for the Ten Commandments for their religious education topic. By the time they are in Year 5 and 6 pupils use computers effectively, for example when revising patterns for their Greek pots.
- 99 While it was impossible to judge the quality of teaching overall, nevertheless, there is evidence that teachers use the national guidance for planning work in design and technology appropriately. They make sensible links with other subjects for economy of time and to make the subject relevant to their pupils' learning. Satisfactory procedures are in place to assess pupils' progress. The school has a suitable variety of materials and tools to enable all elements of the subject to be taught to the required standard.

## GEOGRAPHY

- 100 At the time of the previous inspection standards were reported to be in line with the national average at the end of both key stages. This judgement was based on the quality of pupil's work as only one lesson was seen during the inspection. The recent relaxing of national curriculum requirements for some subjects to allow for the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy hours has meant that there has been a low emphasis in most schools on the teaching of geography over the past two years. There were no geography lessons on class timetables during this inspection period. However, it was possible to undertake a detailed scrutiny of pupils' books and work on display. On the basis of this evidence, standards overall are in line with those expected for pupils at Key Stage 1 and above the standards expected at Key Stage 2. The judgement for Key Stage 2 was helped by the greater volume of work completed by pupils in the junior classes where geography is more often taught as a separate subject.
- 101 Throughout the school, pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of a range of places. They can compare their own environment with contrasting localities in the United Kingdom and the wider world. For example, in their study of the River Rhine and River Spey, Year 5 and 6 pupils confidently used the correct technical vocabulary associated with river systems such as tributary, estuary and erosion. They wrote persuasively about 'Saving the Grove', an imaginary area threatened with development. When studying Liverpool as a contrasting area to their own, most use maps well to identify land use. Progress is easier to see in the junior classes mainly because of the amount of written work that pupils produce. The content of this is good, but most pupils' books appear untidy with words scribbled out and a mixture of work completed in pencil and ink. In Year 2, pupils successfully draw their route to school, adding features which they pass on the way. Most suggest ways in which their environment can be improved and, following a survey of their school grounds, they successfully persuaded the authorities to provide new school gates. Older pupils use maps and an atlas confidently to locate the places that they are studying. Good use is made of CD ROM programs on the class computer to assist them in their work.
- 102 The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning geography. This includes pupils with special educational needs who achieve standards appropriate to their level of ability. This is because the worksheets prepared for lessons are of a good quality and very

good planning ensures that different work is provided for pupils of higher or lower attainment. The links with other areas of the curriculum such as information technology, English and mathematics ensures a valuable learning experience for all pupils. In the Year 5 and 6 class for example, pupils carefully entered information about the amount of rainfall for different areas of the British Isles onto charts before analysing their findings. Comments by teachers on marked work are mainly supportive and related to the content. Teachers are very thorough when marking pupils' books or completed work on worksheets. However, there was no evidence of teachers' comments designed to help pupils to improve the neatness of their work. The presentation of work is below the standards expected for pupils of all ages with untidy writing and words scribbled out carelessly.

- 103 Management and coordination of the subject is satisfactory overall. The scheme of work of geography, which effectively sets out what needs to be taught from one year to the next, is based securely on the latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines. There are no formal procedures in place to monitor teaching but standards achieved by pupils of all ages are regularly evaluated by the headteacher. Teachers' planning is also thoroughly evaluated by the coordinator for geography. Class teachers assess pupils' progress very carefully on a termly basis and use this information well to plan future lessons. Detailed annual reports inform parents about their children's progress. Resources such as atlases, maps and globes have been improved since the previous inspection found them to be inadequate and are satisfactory for all aspects of geography. They are readily accessible in classrooms and are used effectively by pupils. However, the number and range of computer programs is limited and this restricts the opportunities for pupils to use a computer to support their learning. Visits to places of interest such as the local shops, Liverpool and the seashore greatly enhance pupil's learning in geography.

## HISTORY

- 104 During the inspection, no history lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 and only one was observed at Key Stage 2. Judgements are made from an accumulation of evidence taken from a variety of sources which include pupils' recorded work, the school's policy and long term curriculum plans, wall displays and a list of educational visits made recently. On the basis of this evidence, attainment in history is in line with the standard usually expected at the end of Key Stage 1 and above the normal expectation for pupils by the end of Key Stage 2. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection when standards were judged to be in line with the national average at the end of both key stages.
- 105 Pupils generally make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of historical periods and important people from those periods in the infant class, but progress is good throughout the junior section of the school. This is because history is more often taught as a separate subject to geography. Moreover, junior pupils are encouraged to undertake more independent research often using computers to help, and they produce more written work. At Key Stage 1, pupils often study topics which involve history and geography. The recent topic theme on houses is a typical example. Pupils observe how houses have changed in style over time, examine old maps of the area to identify the oldest and describe the lifestyle of people in the past. All list comparisons with modern day life such as electric lights replacing candles and the use of tin baths when there was no running water. Some pupils ably describe features at the seaside in Victorian times such as bathing huts. In the only lesson observed at Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 and 4 could name the main buildings to be found in a Roman town such as the amphitheatre, forum or baths and appreciated why towns were fortified. When recording their answers on a worksheet, few produced neatly written work. Very good links are forged with a variety of other subjects. In design and technology, for example, pupils design and make Roman mosaic patterns, while older pupils in Years 5 and 6 use computers well to find out information about Ancient Greece and Greek Gods. All pupils remember historical facts and details very well, showing that they listen carefully in lessons. It is evident that pupils enjoy their history work. In the Year 3 and 4 lesson, pupils were keen to ask questions about Roman baths. An analysis of pupils' history folders shows that work is often well researched. This answers a concern from the previous inspection where pupils were not provided with sufficient opportunities for developing skills of enquiry and investigation. However, the presentation of their work is often untidy and shows a lack of care.
- 106 The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. In the lesson observed, the teacher had clear expectations of what pupils were to learn. However, noisy and antisocial behaviour was not controlled effectively and this adversely affected the quality of learning for most pupils. As a result, many lost interest and produced little work and of a poor quality. Overall, the quality of teaching in this lesson was

unsatisfactory. A careful scrutiny of work from all classes shows that a higher quality of teaching is typical for the subject. All teachers regularly assess pupils' progress and use the results to effectively plan future lessons. The quality of teachers' planning is a strong feature in all subjects, including history. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are set tasks which are challenging yet appropriately matched to their capabilities.

- 107 The management of the subject is satisfactory. As each teacher is responsible for a number of curriculum subjects, a strategic plan, covering each subject in turn during the three years is securely in place. This ensures that when the subject is reviewed, it is given the appropriate time and resources to make it an effective process. This is an improvement in response to the comment about a lack of active leadership in the previous report. The school now effectively uses the latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines to assist teachers in their lesson planning. Termly plans are monitored by the coordinator and, when the subject is the focus for development, time is allocated to monitor formally the quality of teaching. A satisfactory range of resources are readily available to promote learning and sustain pupils interest in lessons. The school adds to these with loans of historical artefacts from local museums. There are relatively few CD-ROMs or appropriate computer programs to support pupils' learning in history at present. However, the school has identified information technology as an area for development in its current management plan and fully intends to improve these resources. Museum visits and trips to historical places of interest make a significant contribution to pupils learning.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 108 Standards of attainment in information technology are well above the national expectations at the end of both key stages. Since the previous inspection, when it was judged that the pupils' overall attainment was in line by the time the pupils were seven and eleven, the school has made very good improvements in the subject. This is attributed to the very good leadership of the subject coordinator and the teachers' own very good knowledge and understanding of information technology and how to teach it. However, there are continuing problems with some of the computers, in that not all are yet connected to the internet. The school is also short of suitable software, but plans are in hand to rectify the situation. Nevertheless, the staff make very good use of the present resources and extend these further by buying into the small schools' consortium expertise. This arrangement successfully updates the teachers' knowledge, which is then shared with the pupils to their great benefit.
- 109 Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in information technology. This progress is influenced by their access to computers at home. Another factor impacting upon the pupils' very good progress is an after school computer club, through which, the pupils learn to extend their skills successfully. Furthermore, the staff make computers available to pupils during breaks and before and after school sessions. At the time of the inspection, there were groups of pupils working on computers, sending each other messages successfully. One pupil with special educational needs was able to demonstrate his information technology skills by writing a letter to his mother, which he subsequently sent to her electronically.
- 110 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' word processing skills are very well developed, with pupils working confidently and independently employing a range of skills. They can save and retrieve information without support. The pupils effectively use such devices as mobile programmable toys that they can control with considerable success. They are competent in the skills of entering, analysing and presenting data. The use of computers to support and enhance other areas of the curriculum is evident, as seen in the presentation of art, science, mathematics and to consolidate writing skills. Furthermore, pupils successfully research information as seen in their topic about the seashore.
- 111 By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' attainment is well above the expected levels in communicating and handling information and in controlling, monitoring and modelling. The pupils are able to draft and redraft their work in literacy and successfully use information technology in other subjects. At the time of the inspection, the pupils showed confidence and competence in using a database to help them with a topic on plants. In this lesson, the teacher successfully used pupils in Year 6 to help pupils in Year 5. The pupils demonstrated that they were able to interrogate information that has been stored. Most pupils in this class are able to use the internet successfully. They access it at home, if necessary, which influences the very good progress that they make in the subject.

112 Teaching of information technology is very good. The teachers use a scheme of work based on the national guidance. All staff attend training to enhance their own information technology understanding and skills. Through the teachers' enthusiastic approach to the subject, the pupils are keen to develop their own skills and to extend these by successfully using them at home. There are very good systems in place for assessing pupils' progress and very good use is made of this information by teachers to ensure all pupils build effectively on their previous learning. All these factors have impacted positively on the very good progress the pupils make.

## **MUSIC**

113 It was only possible to observe two lessons in music during the inspection. Judgements are based not only on these lessons, but on evidence gained from assemblies and from discussions with staff and pupils. Teaching quality is good at both key stages.

114 Standards in music are in line with those expected for pupils at the end of both key stages and pupils make satisfactory progress. Since the previous report, standards have been maintained.

115 At Key Stage 1, in what was judged to be a very good lesson, pupils kept accurate rhythm when playing their instruments. They sang tunefully, with clear diction and could maintain good pitch when singing. All started and finished on time. Pupils respond well to the mood of recorded music, recognising changes in rhythms. They are able to recreate musical effects using hand, voices and untuned musical instruments to a satisfactory standard.

116 At Key Stage 2, the pupils' singing is of high quality, with very clear diction and good pitch. In the very good lesson observed in the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils composed percussion accompaniment for their song very well. They practised it conscientiously to improve their performance. Pupils listened carefully to one another and maintained their rhythmic patterns while singing the song. This was achieved with considerable success. For the final performance, the pupils successfully adopted a performing mode, where they listened to one another's playing and singing to ensure a successful performance.

117 The teachers in both lessons used a recorded programme, which they successfully adapted to the lessons. They showed good subject knowledge. A strength of these arrangements was the way in which they assessed the pupils' work. Moreover, they gave their pupils opportunities to evaluate their work and that of others, which they managed to do with considerable sensitivity but with honesty. The pupils suggested ways of improving their performances. For example, in the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils discussed ways of overcoming the problems of sustaining accompaniment, singing and of repeating a musical pattern (ostinato) in their performance.

118 Music contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is well used in assemblies to create a suitable mood for quiet reflection and for pupils' worship. Through playing and singing together, the pupils learn to cooperate in groups or in pairs as required. They learn about music from other times and cultures, such as songs sang during World War 2 or learning to perform 'rap'.

119 The previous report stated that the role of the coordinator was not sufficiently developed. Since then, new procedures have successfully been introduced to improve the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' planning and the effectiveness of teaching. The coordinator is unable to monitor teaching and learning in the subject directly but through regular discussions and use of the new national guidelines for music, the subject is effectively led.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120 Standards at the end of both key stages are above those normal expected of pupils of a similar age. This is an improvement on the previous inspection in October 1997 when pupils were judged to be attaining at national expectations. Pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class attain high standards in games skills, for example. On the playing field, they practice throwing and catching and hitting a ball with a rounders bat. All show a good control with many able to catch using one hand only. Most know the

effects of exercise on their body and sustain energetic activity well. They show confidence when demonstrating for the whole class and sensibly evaluate the performance of others. Pupils throughout the key stage display similarly high standards during playground activities at break times. When playing football, for example, boys and girls all show a good competitive spirit and very good sense of fair play. The school reports that every year, all pupils achieve the expected standards in swimming by the end of the key stage. A scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that pupils have good opportunities to take part in dance or gymnastic activities.

- 121 Younger pupils show equal determination to do well in physical education lessons. In an infant class games skills lesson for example, pupils worked hard to practise and refine their dribbling and catching skills. They developed good hand to eye coordination and improved their accuracy in these skills that will eventually be used in games sessions. They are establishing good routines at this early age. All listen carefully to instructions and respond well to signals for attention from their teacher. Pupils of all ages realise the importance of warming up before strenuous activity and how to relax their bodies at the end of sessions.
- 122 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers plan their lessons very well. Before and during lessons they give clear instructions to pupils, which means that all know exactly what is expected of them. Tasks are sufficiently demanding in their content and their pace to keep all pupils sufficiently challenged and interested. Demonstrations were used effectively to illustrate skills and to encourage pupils to improve their own performance. As a result, the quality of learning in all the lessons seen was good or very good. Pupils' attitudes to games sessions are very good. They change quickly and quietly and listen well to instructions. All sensibly obey rules to safeguard their own and others' safety. Behaviour is very good, which means that little time is lost during lessons waiting for pupils' attention. Pupils of all ages and abilities are motivated, hardworking and keen to be involved. There was no shortage of volunteers to demonstrate skills in the infant games lesson, showing that all had confidence in their own ability. Pupils with special educational needs and those of higher attainment compete equally in lessons. All show a good sense of responsibility and fair play. For example, all pupils wait patiently for their turn without 'queue jumping' in the rounders game and work well together in small groups during lessons.
- 123 The breadth and balance of the curriculum provides a good range of activities for pupils. The school uses a good range of commercial schemes of work to guide teachers in their planning from year to year and the coordinator is currently incorporating the latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines with these. This ensures that all teachers have good guidance to help them plan work that builds progressively on pupils' previous learning. A wide range of well attended extra curricular sporting activities enhances the curriculum. All pupils have the opportunity to play football, netball and rounders on a regular basis. Girls and boys have the opportunity to join in with team games and frequent football, netball, athletics, rounders and swimming events are arranged against other schools. This helps to give pupils a sense of fair play and sharpens up their spirit of competitiveness in sport.
- 124 The management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The subject has not featured as a priority in the school development plan in the last two years and so few opportunities have been provided for the coordinator to monitor or evaluate standards or the quality of teaching. However, the coordinator regularly and carefully checks teachers' planning. This answers a criticism in the previous inspection report about a more developed role for the coordinator as part of the duties now involve ensuring a coherent approach to curriculum planning. The accommodation, which is satisfactory overall, is to be improved shortly with the addition of a new classroom. At present the small hall is used for storage and this further cramps the limited amount of space available, particularly for older pupils. This was also reported as a problem in the previous report. Fortunately for the school the outdoor facilities are very good with a spacious playground and playing field. Pupils use the extra space outdoors well, but during inclement weather, activities have to be cancelled or moved indoors where the space is really inadequate. Although there is no enclosed outdoor play area specifically for the under fives, a factor which restricts their physical development, plans to include one with the new classroom are well advanced. The level of resources is good for all other aspects of the curriculum. The school is successfully raising standards in this subject area.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 125 By the end of both key stages, standards in religious education are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus and all pupils make good progress. Since the previous report, which judged the standards to be above the expected levels, the school has maintained its high standards. The pupils' understanding of learning from religion is particularly good. This is achieved through the very well managed discussions in lessons and in the overall provision the school makes for this subject to be taught. The new headteacher has been instrumental in this development. This is enhanced further, by the consistently good teaching throughout the school. In addition, there are very good links with the local church, which greatly contribute to the pupils' overall learning. The vicar of St. Mark's makes regular visits, through which pupils learn about church practices and ceremonies. There is an active participation in the church festivals, which deepens pupils' understanding of Christianity. For example, at the time of the inspection, the pupils were learning about Ascension, as part of their work about Christian festivals.
- 126 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed a good understanding of Christianity and of other religions such as Judaism and Hinduism. They learn about Christian worship through listening to Bible stories and discussion and through assemblies. They know of Christian traditions and beliefs through carefully chosen Bible stories and through visits to the local church. They show considerable maturity in their thinking as exemplified in their discussions about Jesus and His disciples. The pupils showed understanding of 'faith' by expressing it as 'trust'. They said that the disciples had trust in Jesus when they were in sea storm with Him. Their understanding was reinforced through the medium of drama, where the pupils re enacted their feelings of fear from the disciples' perspective. The pupils begin to learn how religion and faith guide people's lives.
- 127 By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils build on their knowledge and understanding of other faiths to include Islam. They have very good knowledge of these religions and can discuss them without confusing the different elements of each. A very good example of this was observed in an excellent lesson in the Year 5 and 6 class, where they demonstrated their understanding of the Muslim faith, the rules governing these faiths and their own experiences. Through the teacher's challenging questions, the pupils were able to make thoughtful comments and compare ideas and questions which are difficult to answer. The teacher created a climate of openness, where there was mutual respect for opinions which may have been different from theirs. This is excellent preparation for living in our multicultural society for the pupils at St. Mark's School.
- 128 The pupils at Key Stage 2 are familiar with the church calendar. They know about the different festivals which are celebrated. They understand the significance of Easter for Christians and can recall Old and New Testament stories. The pupils know about special books of other religions such as the Torah and the Qu'ran. In a discussion with the pupils, they showed understanding that these special books '*teach believers how to live*'. They added that non believers also have a code by which they live.
- 129 Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school. Through a well planned programme for the subject, the pupils learn to wonder, to question and to seek answers to difficult questions of life. They begin to make links between values and commitments, including religious ones and their own attitudes and behaviour. These links are reinforced in assemblies and in careful planning of activities to deepen pupils' understanding. Parents will receive a separate and more detailed report on the effectiveness of pupils' spiritual development as the school is having a diocesan inspection covering this aspect.
- 130 Pupils at Key Stage 1 incorporate the school motto 'Not only for ourselves, but for others' very well into their own behaviour: this includes being helpful, thoughtful, sharing, and being friendly. Pupils learn to appreciate their own cultural heritage through studies about patron saints of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. They learn about people who make a significant contribution, such as Florence Nightingale. Year 6 pupils also understand that laws governing this country are based on Christian values. Through exploring other religions, the pupils learn to appreciate the richness and the diversity of British culture. Teachers value pupils' contributions in and out of lessons. There is mutual respect for ideas and opinions of others. As a result, there is a harmonious, caring and Christian ethos that pervades all aspect of school life.