

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ANTONY'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shadsworth Road, Blackburn

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119516

Headteacher: Miss A M Connor

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris
23696

Dates of inspection: 9th – 13th July 2001

Inspection number: 198799

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shadsworth Road Blackburn
Postcode:	BB1 2HP
Telephone number:	(01254) 54686
Fax number:	(01254) 54686
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Georgy
Date of previous inspection:	24 th November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23696	Mr J Morris	Registered inspector	The Foundation Stage Music Physical education	How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13706	Mrs G Marsland	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31963	Mr M Padmore	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology	
21563	Mr G Martin	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
2866	Mr R Battey	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities Science Art and design	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	8 - 10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	10 - 11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	11 - 13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	13 - 14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	14 - 15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15 - 16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17 - 18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19 - 22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23 - 35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Antony's is a voluntary aided primary school in Shadsworth, Blackburn. The school is average in size with 41 part-time children in the nursery, 25 children in the Reception class and 197 pupils in Years 1 to 6, of whom 103 are girls and 94 are boys. Numbers have fallen in recent years. All of the pupils except two are white. About 24 per cent of pupils have special educational needs and this is broadly average, whilst the three per cent figure for pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average, particularly in language skills. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The school is in an Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. The results of national tests in English, mathematics and science are well below average in comparison with both the national and similar schools' figures. However, this inspection finds that pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory in most subjects. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features and there are no significant differences between different year groups. Leadership and management are good overall and the headteacher is very effective. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching is good overall and there are some very good features. There are no significant differences between classes or year groups.
- Very strong leadership provided by the headteacher has been a major factor in the transformation of this school since its previous inspection.
- There are very good relationships between pupils and adults and amongst the pupils. The pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good.
- There are very good procedures to ensure pupils' health, safety and well-being and to promote good attendance and behaviour.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and the provision for their moral and social development is good.

What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough, particularly in English and mathematics.
- There are no whole school procedures to assess what the pupils know, understand and can do in the non-core subjects.
- The role of subject co-ordinator is not developed sufficiently.
- There are not enough support staff in the classroom. The school does not have a permanent deputy headteacher and the recruitment and retention of teachers has been difficult for some years.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement has been very good. The improvement in the quality of teaching has been exceptional. The school was last inspected in November 1997 and it was found to require special measures. There were six key issues and nearly 30 subsidiary points for action. In November 1999 two HMI re-inspected the school and it was taken out of special measures. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to further improvement but frequent changes in the teaching staff means that the capacity to succeed is only satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	E	E
Mathematics	E	E	E*	E*
Science	E	E	E	E

Key

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

E* means the school's results are in the lowest 5% nationally.

The national statistics do not reflect the progress made in the school. The school's results have remained at a low level both nationally and in comparison with similar schools at both age seven and 11. However, detailed analysis shows that standards have improved at least in line with the national trend and, in some areas, they have exceeded both the national and local rates of improvement. The school sets ambitious targets in the national tests and has been successful in achieving or exceeding them in English and science but not in mathematics.

Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, particularly in communication, language and literacy, but a significant percentage do not achieve the Early Learning Goals. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall at Key Stage 1 and they do so in all subjects, except for art and design where they achieve well and design and technology where there is insufficient evidence. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall at Key Stage 2 and they do so in all subjects, except for science and history where they achieve well, and design and technology where there is insufficient evidence. Many pupils have particular difficulties making progress in the key skills of literacy and numeracy and their low level of skills in reading and writing clearly affects their learning in other subjects. However, this is overcome in the better lessons because teachers successfully present tasks that are matched well to individual needs and capabilities.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils enjoy school and are keen to please their teachers and do their best in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in lessons and at other times. Pupils understand whole school and class rules and invariably comply with them. There is no evidence of bullying and there are no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Very good relationships between adults and pupils and amongst pupils throughout the school. Children in the nursery and reception class are well settled into school routines. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 willingly take on responsibilities.
Attendance	Good. A little above the national average.

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.

Fifty-nine lessons were seen during the inspection and the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent, good or better in 80 per cent and very good or better in 25 per cent of them. It was unsatisfactory in two per cent. The improvement in the teaching in this school since 1997 has been remarkable. In 1997, 32 per cent of the teaching was found to be less than satisfactory and, by 1999, this had reduced to 10 per cent.

Very good teaching and learning occurs throughout the school. Two excellent science lessons were seen in the mixed Year 5 and 6 classes. There are several common characteristics of this very good teaching and many of the good lessons seen. Teachers plan well in accordance with the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum programmes of study and their knowledge of the pupils. At its best, the planning very effectively meets the needs of different groups of pupils. English and mathematics are taught well because the national initiatives for literacy and numeracy have been fully implemented. There is a good emphasis on the key skills of reading and writing, numeracy and information and communication technology. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will want to learn at school and will succeed. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils in most lessons and the occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour are managed well.

These positive judgements of the quality of teaching and learning are supported by examination of pupils' work. Homework is satisfactory overall but not enough opportunities are provided to enable or encourage pupils to engage in other learning activities such as research at home. However, it is likely that frequent changes in the teaching staff have to some extent had a negative impact on pupils' learning. There are some minor concerns arising from the school's timetables.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school meets the statutory requirements and pupils' entitlements with regard to the National Curriculum. There are very good equal opportunities. Pupils are prepared well for transfer to High School.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers meet the needs of these pupils well but there are insufficient support staff to help them to learn well in some lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good, the provision for their moral and social development is good and the provision for their cultural development is satisfactory. Assemblies successfully foster a sense of whole school community and celebrate pupils' achievements and efforts.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The procedures for promoting and monitoring good attendance and behaviour are very effective. There are good arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science but they are unsatisfactory in the other subjects of the curriculum.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher is a very effective leader who has played a central role in the progress the school has made in recent years. The school's stated aims and values are very clear in day-to-day practice and there is a strong sense of Catholic mission.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have shown great resolve in supporting the staff through a difficult period and in trying to resolve staffing difficulties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Very rigorous analysis of tests results and teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Specific grants, including standards funds, Education Action Zone funds and funding for pupils with special educational needs, are used well in accordance with their stated purposes. The school uses available staff well, including subject specialists. The use of modern technology is satisfactory and improving.

Accommodation and resources are adequate overall and much improved but the library is under-stocked. The lack of a permanent deputy headteacher, frequent changes in teaching staff, difficulties with obtaining supply teachers and insufficiency of classroom support staff have all had a negative impact on pupils' progress and planned developments, for example in subject co-ordination. The school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Of those parents who responded, over 90 per cent think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best; the school is helping my child become mature and responsible; their child likes school; they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem; their child is making good progress; behaviour in the school is good; they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on; the teaching is good; and the school is well led and managed. 	<p>Of those parents who responded, 30 per cent think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> their child doesn't get the right amount of homework. <p>Of those parents who responded, 27 per cent think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. <p>Of those parents who responded over 15 per cent think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school does not work closely with them.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views of the school but does not share their concerns. Homework is satisfactory. Extra-curricular activities are good. The school's partnership with parents and the information it gives them are good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards are below the national averages overall but there is substantial evidence of pupils achieving at least satisfactorily and sometimes well, in Key Stages 1 and 2 in relation to their prior attainment and capability. Standards in the national tests and tasks have been well below average overall at the end of both key stages since 1997. Occasionally standards have been below average in mathematics at Key Stage 1. They have been consistently very low in reading at Key Stage 1 and, occasionally, they have been very low in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and mathematics and science at Key Stage 2. Standards in 2000 were well below average in comparison with similar schools at both key stages. The percentages of pupils achieving the higher than expected Level 3 at age seven and Level 5 at age 11 are often very low in comparison with national figures. Compared with the achievements of pupils aged seven in 1996, pupils aged 11 in 2000 made good progress in English, poor progress in mathematics and unsatisfactory progress in science.
2. The national statistics do not reflect the progress made in the school. Although the school's results have remained at a low level, both nationally and in comparison with similar schools, detailed analysis shows that they have improved at least in line with the national trend of improvement. The headteacher has carried out rigorous analysis of available data. National data and the headteacher's analysis show writing and mathematics to be the key weaknesses in pupils' achievements. The HMI report in 1999 instructed the school to give science a high priority. The headteacher's analysis shows substantial improvement at Key Stage 1 between 1997 and 2000 and that this is beginning to have an impact at Key Stage 2.
3. This inspection finds that the most significant factors having a negative impact on pupils' progress across the curriculum are the low levels of reading and writing skills of many pupils. Very few pupils demonstrate good skills of inference and interpretation of written text and many have considerable difficulty with the generalisation and transference of key skills between subjects or even activities in the same lesson. For example, in a mixed Year 1 and 2 numeracy lesson in the ICT suite, pupils who appeared to understand the mathematical concepts and skills during the whole class activity, using the electronic whiteboard, were unable to put this into practice in individual tasks.
4. The school asserts that there is considerable variation between different year groups and this is substantiated by inspection evidence. The current Year 3 and Year 6 classes have more significant weaknesses in the key skills of literacy and numeracy than other year groups in relation to their chronological ages and national expectations. This can be explained in part by the difference in numbers of boys and girls and the documented higher achievement by girls than boys, particularly in English, in the primary phase. The headteacher was unable to share the results of the 2001 tests at the time of the inspection because the school had asked for several papers to be re-examined. However, inspection evidence is that the current Year 5 cohort is considerably more able than the current Year 6. Nevertheless inspection judgements are that:
 - pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage from very low attainment on entry to the nursery, particularly in communication, language and literacy;
 - pupils achieve satisfactorily overall at Key Stage 1 and they do so in all subjects, except for art and design where they achieve well and design and technology where there is insufficient evidence;
 - pupils achieve satisfactorily overall at Key Stage 2 and they do so in all subjects, except for science and history where they achieve well and design and technology where there is insufficient evidence; and
 - pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. They receive good levels of assistance in their classes from the teachers and the few support staff. There is an appropriate emphasis on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Good attention is given to support and improve pupils' attitudes towards their tasks. Tasks are suitably matched to their needs, but their short-term progress is not always recorded.

5. This satisfactory and at times good, achievement is primarily because the teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Other significant factors contributing to pupils' increasing progress are their positive attitudes and good behaviour and the very good leadership and management.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils have good attitudes to the school. The great majority enjoy coming to school and they show interest and enthusiasm for lessons and other activities. The previous inspection found that attitudes to school were satisfactory but there has been a clear improvement in the pupils' attitudes since the last inspection. This improvement in attitudes has a positive impact on learning.
7. Although many pupils start school with poor social awareness and limited learning skills, the very good work by the teachers and support assistants in the nursery and reception classes makes a strong contribution to the growth of social and learning skills of children in the Foundation Stage. These children make rapid progress in their personal and social development. They grow in confidence and respond with great interest to the opportunities they have for learning. They choose their activities thoughtfully, they share equipment and play together well. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children respond well to instructions and they show responsibility for their classroom materials, such as when asked to tidy away. The children develop good learning skills in preparation for the demands of the National Curriculum.
8. Attitudes to learning overall are good at both key stages. The majority of pupils are attentive and they respond appropriately to the teachers' high expectations of their behaviour. They follow school and class rules well and concentrate on what they are being taught in whole class, group and individual teaching situations. When teachers ask them questions about what they have learned, they take turns to answer by waiting patiently for the teacher to respond to a signal showing that they think they know the answer, such as by raising a hand. In class discussions and debates, they listen thoughtfully to the views of others and then wait their turn to express their own views. When pupils in Years 5 and 6 debated whether or not the town centre should be closed to traffic, opposing views were carefully expressed and considered.
9. Most pupils take pride in their work, presenting their writing and illustrations neatly in workbooks and in work displayed around the school. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when the standard of presentation of work in most classes was unsatisfactory. The quality of presentation of work is better where the tasks given to the pupils are relevant and there is a clear level of challenge in the expectations of the teachers.
10. At the time of the last inspection concerns about the behaviour of some pupils were expressed to the inspection team by some parents. This inspection found that behaviour is good in and around the school and this is another example of improvement. There is no evidence of bullying or racism and most of the pupils show a good level of care and concern for others. The pupils themselves say that playtimes are fun. During playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils burn off lots of energy playing boisterous games, but there is no aggressive behaviour, nor are there unpleasant incidents amongst the pupils. The school aims to develop good attitudes and behaviour and to foster a strong Catholic ethos and it is largely successful in this. For example, the award of merits for good attitudes, manners and behaviour at lunch-time shows the pupils that they have met the school's expectations of their behaviour in the dining hall and on the playground.
11. During the great majority of lessons, pupils work conscientiously on the tasks and activities they are given. They co-operate well, both with their teachers and with each other. Teachers assert their high expectations of behaviour effectively and consequently there is little, if any, disruption in most lessons. In a small minority of lessons, however, an inappropriate level of

challenge in the tasks leads to disruption from some pupils, either because they do not understand what they are expected to do or they have lost interest in tasks that are too simple.

12. There has been very good improvement in pupils' personal development since the last inspection; it is now good and was previously found to be unsatisfactory. Relationships amongst the pupils and between the pupils and their teachers are very positive. In lessons, the great majority of pupils organise their time and their work well. They show good levels of initiative when working independently or organising a group activity.
13. Some older pupils conscientiously help to organise the separate play area on the playground for the children in the Reception class, giving these older pupils a sense of responsibility. In an assembly, Year 5 and 6 pupils took responsibility for organising and presenting their work for the benefit of others, reading and displaying their work with confidence and showing a mature ability to keep their audience interested.
14. The pupils show a keen interest in the opportunities for them to develop socially and take responsibility around the school. The 'Pyramid Club', which is run by volunteers and helps Year 3 and 4 pupils to become more confident socially, is supported very well and pupils enjoy attending. There is also good support for other extra-curricular activities, such as the successful and talented choir, all of which makes a strong contribution to the overall personal development of the pupils.
15. Attendance is good, with an attendance rate that is a little above the national average, representing an improvement since the last inspection. The rate of unauthorised attendance is a little above the national average, while the rate of authorised absence is below the national average. The school has an active policy, clearly stated in its prospectus, of discouraging absence for family holidays during term time. Most pupils are punctual. There is a brisk start to the school day when the registers are taken efficiently and lessons begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some very good features. Fifty-nine lessons were seen during the inspection; the quality of the teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent, good or better in 80 per cent and very good or better in 25 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in two per cent. This was in a Key Stage 1 art and design lesson where pupils learning was unsatisfactory, because the task set was too difficult for them and very few of them understood what they were trying to achieve. The improvement in the teaching in this school since 1997 has been remarkable. In 1997, 32 per cent of the teaching was found to be less than satisfactory and, by 1999, this had reduced to 10 per cent.
17. Very good teaching and learning occurs throughout the school. It was seen on three occasions in the Foundation Stage; science, music and geography lessons in the mixed Year 1 and 2 classes; English and mathematics lessons in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes; and mathematics, science and physical education lessons in the mixed Year 5 and 6 classes. In addition, two excellent science lessons were seen in the mixed Year 5 and 6 classes.
18. There are several common characteristics of this very good teaching and many of the good lessons seen. Teachers have good knowledge of the Early Learning Goals in the Foundation Stage and National Curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2. They plan well in accordance with the programmes of study and their knowledge of the pupils. At its best the planning very effectively meets the needs of different groups of pupils. For example, in the excellent Year 5 and 6 science lessons, the teacher provided different tasks for different pupils based on an accurate assessment of their literacy skills. In this way, the lessons successfully promoted the development of the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in science. Pupils with learning difficulties in literacy successfully discussed the work with the teacher and completed partly prepared sentences with good levels of understanding and accuracy. This support enabled them to complete science work at the same level as the pupils in the rest of the class who write complete sentences unaided.

19. English and mathematics are taught well because the national initiatives for literacy and numeracy have been fully implemented. There is a good emphasis on the key skills of reading and writing, numeracy and information and communication technology. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will want to learn at school and will succeed. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils in most lessons and the occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour are managed well.
20. The school uses teachers' subject expertise, for example in science and mathematics, well and teachers make good use of available support staff and learning resources. Teachers appropriately modify their teaching methods and resources and, as a result of this support, pupils with special educational needs learn effectively alongside their fellow pupils in class. These pupils have good opportunities for small group or individual work. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive good support outside the classroom in literacy work from a local education authority specialist. There are insufficient support staff to help teachers maximise the learning of less able pupils and those with special educational needs.
21. There are some minor concerns arising from the school's timetables. Many lessons in physical education are only thirty minutes long. These arrangements generally result in lessons, which have many other good features, that are in a sense incomplete because there has not been sufficient time to discuss and evaluate the pupils' learning. Some activities take place at times which result in some lack of structure to the pupils' learning. For example, the hymn practice in the middle of Wednesday afternoon results in disjointed lessons in some classes.
22. Homework is satisfactory overall. Reading, spelling, writing and number tasks are given throughout the school but there is some variation between classes. Not enough opportunities are provided to enable or encourage pupils to engage in other learning activities such as research at home.
23. These positive judgements of the quality of teaching and learning are supported by examination of pupils' work. However, it is likely that frequent changes in the teaching staff have to some extent had a negative impact on pupils' learning. In most lessons in most classes, pupils are taught in groups formed on ability in English, mathematics and science. The school has considered and rejected the use of setted groups, particularly in mathematics. However, the school has not fully considered or tried different ways of grouping pupils within classes or year groups and in different subjects.

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

24. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection in line with the recommendations in the last report. National Curriculum requirements for art and design and for information and communication technology are now well met. Most policies are now in place. The national guidelines for art and design are to be fully implemented in the autumn term and the draft geography policy is awaiting approval by the governing body. National guidelines and/or commercial schemes are used in planning in all subjects. In music, a new commercial scheme has been purchased for implementation in the autumn term. Monitoring of the quality of the planning of the curriculum is effectively carried out by the headteacher, satisfactorily aided by the subject co-ordinators.
25. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been successfully implemented for children in both the nursery and the reception class. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully and this is starting to have an impact on pupils' achievements. Pupils use word-processing effectively to enhance the presentation of their work. Good, well-presented displays throughout the school illustrate the pupils' written achievements. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is providing a clear structure and basis for improving standards in mathematics. This is evident in the pupils' growing mental and arithmetic skills. Pupils are encouraged to use and apply their mathematical skills in problem solving and handling data, both in mathematics and in other subjects, such as science and geography.

26. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum. In subjects such as English, mathematics and science, pupils have modified tasks to meet their discerned needs. This provides effectively for all pupils across the range of abilities. The policy for inclusion of all pupils, in particular for those with special educational needs, is very well implemented.
27. Since the last inspection there has been a big improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and it is now good. The special educational needs co-ordinator has received appropriate training and this has aided her very effective management of the provision. Effective procedures are in place to identify pupils with special educational needs. Teachers effectively carry out their roles in identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs. They regularly monitor the pupils' progress through the correct review procedures. Parents and specialists from outside agencies, are appropriately invited to make their contributions to these reviews. Individual education plans express pupils' needs well. All class teachers and support staff follow them closely to ensure pupils are effectively supported. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average at 24 per cent. The percentage of pupils having a statement of special educational needs is above average at about three per cent. Through its good identification procedures, the school is aware that an increasing number of pupils have special educational needs. The standards achieved historically strongly suggest that some pupils with special educational needs, or the degree of their difficulties, have not always been correctly identified. There are insufficient support staff to enable these pupils to learn well in all lessons and, therefore, their progress over time is inconsistent.
28. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of activities such as choir, rounders and other seasonal sports, recorders, French club and after-school support groups. The choir takes part in festivals and it has been successful in competition with other schools, coming towards the top in performance over a number of years.
29. The school has a satisfactory range of links with the community and partner institutions. The weekly Pyramid Club, an EAZ supported initiative run by volunteers from the local community, provides participating pupils with a good range of social experiences. A range of class visits are made, for example, to a Mosque, a retreat centre in Manchester, the theatre and musical ensembles. Visitors to school bring in their own culture and experiences through, for example, a Viking workshop. For example, African, Asian and British musicians have worked with pupils and a recent visit by an artist has improved the standards of pupils' collage work. A number of parents, supported by a local college, use the school to further their own qualifications. There are good links with the Church and neighbouring High School.
30. Personal, health and social education is satisfactory and supports pupils' personal development. Pupils are successfully encouraged to be independent and confident in their learning. Older pupils look after younger pupils at lunchtime and during breaks and willingly take on responsibility for tidying up classrooms and taking care of school equipment. Teachers plan lessons in personal development effectively and pupils express mature, reasoned opinions. Sex and drugs education is taught well according to the policy of the governing body and in consultation with parents.
31. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The provision for pupils' social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection. Teachers fully meet the school's aims of developing pupils' self-esteem, tolerance and respect for each other's opinions and beliefs. There is a high level of mutual respect between teachers and pupils. Pupils work very well together, supported by the very good relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves.
32. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Acts of collective worship, both whole school and in class, are very carefully planned and build on agreed themes. Pupils and staff gather for daily assemblies, which are conducted in a way that makes the occasion very special. Excellent whole school assemblies were seen where pupils thought about special moments in their lives, how they could improve themselves and realise the individual talents, which they all have. Individual and group successes were celebrated in a very positive

manner. Pupils' comments were invited and they responded sensitively and confidently. Both in assemblies and in class discussions, pupils reflect on their understanding of the lives of others, the beauty of natural objects, the importance of caring relationships and the spiritual aspects of their lives. Every assembly ends with a prayer connected to the theme of the day and pupils are asked to think ahead by being given the next day's theme or to find out about something. Activities in religious education, art and music successfully develop pupils' spiritual awareness.

33. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong and are encouraged to be polite and helpful. This is strengthened by the quality of considerate behaviour seen around the school. Pupils readily celebrate each other's successes and take care of each other and school property. As a community, the school has high expectations of the moral and social attitudes of its pupils and communicates its values well. Pupils talk with pride about their school and greatly value the education and opportunities provided for them.
34. The provision for pupils' social development is good. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. The wide range of opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities and out of school visits and the wide range of people they meet in and out of school, enhance their social maturity. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities for managing and running their own community, working very harmoniously together. All pupils have a good level of social maturity for their age. At lunchtimes, the wide range of games, organised by the lunchtime supervisors, aids pupils' social skills.
35. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. It has been strengthened since the last inspection through an extended range of relevant opportunities for pupils, both within and outside school. Pupils develop a good understanding of their own locality and further afield. Teachers bring first-hand experience of their lives into the school. Pupils' awareness of the western European cultural heritage is often good. They study aspects of its music, art and language. The art and design of other cultures, such as Aboriginal art, are successfully studied.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. This is a caring school in which the wellbeing of pupils is given a high priority. The staff know the pupils well. Most pupils know that they are valued by their teachers and respond accordingly. This confirms the view of the parents who have said that the school helps the pupils to mature, take responsibility and distinguish right from wrong.
37. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good and have improved since the last inspection. There is a designated teacher and assistant responsible for child protection. There is a suitable policy in place and staff are aware of procedures and training is reinforced annually. The school follows the procedures in the governing body's health and safety policy. The pupils gain an awareness of health and safety issues during visits from the fire brigade, safety quizzes and competitions managed by the police. Fire precautions, electrical checks and whole-school risk assessments are carried out regularly. Staff supervise pupils carefully during breaks and lunchtimes. There are good arrangements in place for dealing with accidents and two members of staff are fully trained in first-aid procedures. A school nurse visits the school every week to carry out health checks.
38. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The secretary carefully monitors attendance each day with the help of the class teachers. The headteacher is informed if a pupil's attendance is causing concern. The school takes a firm line on attendance matters and requires parents to telephone the school or write an absence note when a pupil is away. The secretary rigorously monitors punctuality and medical appointments and all absences are recorded correctly. The educational welfare officer is available to visit the school if requested, but attendance throughout the school is good. Full attendance is promoted through the awarding of annual certificates and weekly 'birthday bags'. These 'birthday bags' have been successfully used to reward children for attending school on their birthday, in an area where it has been customary for parents to allow their children to have a day off school.

39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and have improved since the last inspection. There is an effective behaviour and anti-bullying policy in place and pupils respond well to the school and classroom rules. Class teachers and support staff have attended behaviour management courses and behaviour throughout the school is managed well. An appropriate scheme of sanctions is in place that is clearly understood by the pupils. Some pupils are asked to complete a behaviour journal recording their actions, stating what they did wrong and why. This enables them to understand the effect of their actions on others and accept responsibility for improving their behaviour. The pupils are rewarded with bookmarks, certificates and silver badges for good behaviour and work. Every week there is a good work assembly, where achievements are recognised and celebrated, and there is an assembly taken by an individual class attended by parents. Relevant issues such as behaviour and bullying are discussed in the classrooms and assemblies. No bullying was seen during the inspection and the very occasional challenging behaviour was dealt with swiftly and effectively. Serious incidents of challenging behaviour are recorded by the headteacher, who informs parents and takes action as necessary. There have been no exclusions from the school since 1998.
40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The procedures are founded on the very good relationships between the staff and pupils. This makes the pupils feel secure in school and develops their self-esteem. Personal, social and health education is mostly integrated within other lessons, such as religious education and science. A discussion period, called 'circle time', is used in some classes to talk about relevant issues such as emotions and friendship. Sex education is taught in accord with the governing body's policy. The structured teaching of drug awareness is to be developed. Pupils set and review their own targets for improvement, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills, in co-operation with the teachers. This helps them to evaluate their own learning and gives them insights into the progress that they make. The school maintains effective links with outside agencies, such as health service professionals and the police, helping to support the academic and personal development of the pupils. The success that the school achieves in the support and guidance of the pupils has a good effect on learning and contributes to the school's efforts to raise standards.
41. The procedures for assessing the performance of pupils in English, mathematics and science are good. The headteacher keeps assessment procedures under constant review to evaluate their effectiveness. Attainment on entry to the school is assessed using a nationally approved scheme. All areas of learning are covered. From this point, the school continues to gather relevant assessment information at appropriate, regular intervals. It makes good use of this mass of information and analyses it in depth and produces a very good picture of the progress of individual pupils, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in performance. Teachers use this information to place pupils in groups formed on prior attainment and to plan work in English, mathematics and science, throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school has made good progress in improving assessment procedures. Despite this, assessment overall is unsatisfactory because in all subjects, apart from English, mathematics and science, procedures are underdeveloped and assessments have been largely left to individual teachers. The school recognises the importance of bringing consistency and quality to the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects and has started the process of developing the relevant procedures. Procedures to assess performance in information and communication technology for example, are at an advanced stage of development and will be implemented in the coming academic year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The quality of the school's partnership with parents is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when partnership was an area of concern. The headteacher and staff have worked very hard to successfully improve the relationship between the parents and the school. The issue from the last inspection regarding the lack of information for parents, particularly about their children's progress, has now been addressed. There was a good response to the parents' questionnaires. Three issues were raised by a significant number of parents. Some parents indicated that they would appreciate more after-school clubs. At present the school activities include the choir, recorders, rounders and the lunch time library club. There are

other activities throughout the year, including different sporting activities each term and overall the range of after-school activities is good. The team agrees with parents that the quality and consistency of homework is variable throughout the school but the provision is satisfactory overall. The school works well with parents and inspectors found no evidence to support the parents who expressed dissatisfaction with this.

43. The school maintains good links with parents who have confirmed that the headteacher and staff are easily accessible. Regular newsletters keep the parents informed of events and achievements. Parents are invited to two formal parents' meetings each year and attendance is improving. Over 80 per cent of parents attended the meeting in June this year and this is a substantial increase on previous figures. During the inspection week, eight parents attended the class assembly on Thursday morning. A suitable home-school agreement has been distributed and most parents have signed and returned it. The school is at present hosting the 'family matters' course in conjunction with a Liverpool college. Seven parents are attending the course that covers areas such as education, equal opportunities, families and parenting. Parents completing the course can proceed to higher education.
44. Parental involvement has a satisfactory effect on the life of the school. Parents and grandparents support fund-raising and social events. Some parents also assist in classrooms and on educational visits. However, the school has not benefited as much this year as it has in other years from the work of the parent-staff association.
45. The quality of information for parents is good and has improved since the last inspection. Parents say that they feel that they are now well informed. The school has hosted sessions for parents to help them understand the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Individual year groups distribute curriculum and topic information. The nursery and reception class provide information to assist parents in helping their child to settle into school. The governors' report and school brochure are informative. Parents have the opportunity to consult the staff formally on two occasions each year about their child's progress. The pupils' progress reports are satisfactory. All the required information is included and there is a section reporting on the pupil's personal and social development. However, there is not enough information regarding progress in the non-core subjects, such as art and design and geography and not all reports indicate how pupils can improve their work.
46. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. At home, some parents help their children with homework tasks and many listen to their children read. All parents have been informed about the school's expectations regarding homework in the school brochure. The home-school reading books are a valuable communication between home and school. The school plans to issue a survey to assess what further contact and involvement the parents would like in the life of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The headteacher was appointed shortly before the inspection in November 1997. It is because she has provided very strong and effective leadership that the school has made dramatic progress in many areas of its work since that time. She has a good knowledge of effective practice in primary education and is a very effective manager of the school. This is seen for example in the high quality of the school improvement planning process. Appropriate priorities for development are identified and their implementation is carefully and rigorously monitored and evaluated. The headteacher effectively monitors the quality of teaching throughout the school. Very detailed analysis of assessment information in English, mathematics and science is carried out and the headteacher systematically compares the school's results with those available both nationally and locally for all and similar schools. She also provides a strong role model to staff, pupils and parents in conveying the Catholic mission of the school.
48. The governors and the local education authority have provided and maintained very significant support to the headteacher and school improvement. The governors have a very good understanding of their statutory duties and responsibilities. They are very perceptive in their understanding of what has been achieved since the last inspection and what remains to

be done. Appropriate action has been taken to increase the number of support staff and to try to establish stability in the teaching staff. However, this inspection finds that the number of support staff is still insufficient, particularly to help teachers maximise the learning of less able pupils and pupils with special educational needs. The governors have appointed two new deputy headteachers since the last inspection but, on both occasions, these were short-lived and the school is currently without a deputy headteacher again. An extensive and expensive advertising campaign locally and nationally has to date been unsuccessful. This clearly increases the burden on the headteacher.

49. The school has experienced considerable difficulties with recruitment and retention of teaching staff for some years but this situation, in spite of further changes in September 2001 and two teachers being temporary, is more stable than it has been for some time. A significant additional factor with regard to staffing matters is the extreme difficulties the school has experienced in terms of supply teachers. The school seeks, through several agencies, to employ good quality, reliable and, whenever possible, familiar supply teachers. Records clearly show that at times the headteacher and school secretary have spent a lot of time with little success on this issue. This has resulted, for example, in major disruption to the planned programme of release of subject co-ordinators from class teaching to develop their role, particularly through opportunities to work alongside or observe colleagues teaching. The school has been successful in providing release time from class teaching and other support for newly qualified teachers in accordance with national requirements and recommendations. Three teachers who have started their careers at this school during the past two years speak very highly of the support they have received from the school and the local education authority.
50. The headteacher, permanent teaching staff and governors have a clear and determined commitment to further improvement. However, the instability in the teaching staff means that the capacity to succeed is only satisfactory.
51. Financial planning and control are good. The headteacher and governors have taken effective steps to avoid a significant financial shortfall in the future, due in the main to falling rolls. They are managing a sensitive financial situation well, although the carry forward figure this year is higher than is generally considered appropriate. The school development plan is a very effective tool for the management of change and all of the action points in it are fully costed. Specific grants, including standards funds, Education Action Zone funds and funding for pupils with special educational needs, are used well in accordance with their stated purposes. At the time of the inspection the school was benefiting from the input of a numeracy specialist through Education Action Zone funding. The school uses available teachers and support staff well, including subject specialists. The use of modern technology in the school is satisfactory and improving. Accommodation and resources are adequate overall and much improved since the previous inspection. However, not all of the windows and security screens have been upgraded and the reception class is housed in a temporary building which is in a barely satisfactory condition. There are an adequate number of computers and some very good quality teaching resources in the information and communication technology suite. However, the library is under-stocked.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Key issues for action

The headteacher and governors should now:

(a) Raise standards, particularly in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) by:

- placing a greater emphasis on the development of pupils' reading skills;
- increasing the support for pupils with special educational needs;
- reviewing the ways in which pupils are grouped in lessons;
- ensuring that lesson content is closely matched to the National Curriculum programmes of study for ICT across all areas; and
- providing homework more consistently throughout the school and encouraging parents to become more involved in their child's learning.

(Paragraphs 2-4, 20, 22-23, 27, 46, 71-76, 82-83, 89, 116-119, 126 and 132)

(b) Improve assessment procedures by:

- formalising systems for recording in the Foundation Stage;
- developing and implementing clear systems for assessing and recording what pupils know, understand and can do in the non-core subjects;
- using the resulting information in the teachers' planning and pupil target setting better; and
- stating what pupils know, understand and can do in all subjects in reports to parents.

(Paragraphs 41,45, 55-56, 102-103, 110, 116, 126 and 132)

(c) Develop the role of subject co-ordinator by:

- creating opportunities for them to evaluate the work of colleagues in the classroom in their subject; and
- increasing their role in the monitoring of teachers' planning and examination of pupils' completed work.

(Paragraphs 24, 49, 102, 116, 126 and 132)

(d) Improve the staffing by:

- appointing a permanent deputy headteacher;
- increasing the number of specialist support staff for basic skills and special educational needs; and
- establishing stability in the teaching staff.

(Paragraphs 20, 23, 27 and 48-9)

Minor issues

The headteacher and governors should now:

- as time and finances permit, improve the learning resources and accommodation, giving a high priority to the number, range and quality of books in the school library;

(Paragraphs 51 and 78)

- carry out a review of class timetables, paying particular attention to the length of lessons in physical education and the timing of activities such as hymn practice.

(Paragraphs 21 and 128-130)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	22	54	19	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	21	222
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	92

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	54

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	10	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	12	18
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	19	18	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (67)	58 (64)	77 (82)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	17	15
	Girls	6	7	6
	Total	19	24	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (62)	77 (72)	68 (74)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	86 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	26	17	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	18
	Girls	13	4	9
	Total	27	18	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (51)	42 (41)	63 (46)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	14
	Girls	9	7	7
	Total	22	19	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51 (38)	44 (59)	49 (69)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	195
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.7
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
--------------------------------	----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	562,206
Total expenditure	542,782
Expenditure per pupil	2,207
Balance brought forward from previous year	62,349
Balance carried forward to next year	81,773

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate = 69%

Number of questionnaires sent out	226
Number of questionnaires returned	157

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	1	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	61	31	4	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	34	5	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	38	24	6	3
The teaching is good.	66	25	4	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	40	7	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	24	5	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	21	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	50	32	13	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	57	33	4	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	32	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	33	19	8	6

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

52. Through the nursery and reception the school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average with many children having very low level skills in communication, language and literacy. The children achieve well across the areas of learning. This is because they make a good start in the nursery and build on this in the reception class. However, standards are below average by the end of the Foundation Stage because a significant number of children do not achieve the expected standards in relation to the Early Learning Goals.
53. Teaching and learning are good in the nursery and the reception class. The teachers in both classes plan well to the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals and have a good understanding of the stepping stones contained in the guidelines. In the reception class, children are effectively prepared for the subjects of the National Curriculum and the literacy and numeracy strategies, particularly in the summer term. In both classes the teacher and nursery nurse work well as a team. Both classrooms are very well organised and activities are structured to develop specific skills. Adults use questions very well in their interactions with the children in whole class, small group and individual situations. The quality of marking by the reception teacher is very good. There are very good relationships between children and adults. Weaknesses in the teaching are few and, in the main, minor. In the nursery the adults do not always position themselves so that they can keep an eye on what all the children are doing in the different activity areas. Day to day assessment is little more than a record of what children have experienced and does not record significant gains or systematically identify individual difficulties. In the reception class, the children are at times kept together in a large group for rather long periods of time and, although they behave very well and listen to the teacher carefully, this does not help all the children learn effectively.
54. Baseline assessment and day-to-day assessment are carried out but this is an area which both teachers have recognised as a high priority for development. The early years co-ordinator is introducing a new system of assessment, based on the stepping stones, in September 2001. The headteacher and early years co-ordinator are investigating alternative baseline assessment systems because they do not find the current system very helpful in measuring individual children's progress and identifying strengths and weaknesses.
55. There are good arrangements for the induction of children starting in the nursery, transfer from the nursery to reception and transfer from reception to Year 1. Throughout the Foundation Stage there is a good partnership between the school and parents.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. The children make good progress in the nursery. They quickly learn school routines and rules and how to occupy themselves purposefully when asked to do so. They behave well and show great interest in whole class activities. They demonstrate reverence and respect at an early stage during the class acts of worship and when listening to stories with moral messages, from the Bible and elsewhere. The children play well with each other and respond in a friendly and inquisitive way to visitors. Through role-play activities, the children learn to take turns and that different people do different things in specific situations. However, one little girl became the receptionist, optician and cashier when she decided an inspector needed new glasses!
57. The children in the reception class achieve well building on the skills acquired in the nursery and most achieve the Early Learning Goals. They work on more formal classroom activities with considerable interest and involvement. The children show considerable perseverance and concentration in many activities. At play, and through activities such as assemblies, they begin to interact with older pupils and develop an understanding of the whole school community.

Communication, language and literacy

58. The children in the nursery achieve well in speaking and listening and some make rapid progress in the acquisition of vocabulary and the complexity and clarity of their speech. This is clearly seen by visiting in the morning and the afternoon. The group who attend in the morning have only been doing so for one or two school terms and most will be attending the nursery for another year. Many of these children have very limited vocabulary and are not clear in their speech. More able children predict what the end of a sentence will be in a story they have heard before. The group who attend in the afternoon have been in the nursery for at least a year and most are moving to the reception class in September. Most of these children speak in sentences confidently and ask interesting questions. For example, one girl instructs an inspector to, "sit down on the chair, you've got to watch me". Other children make appropriate spontaneous comments, although these are not always grammatically correct, for example, "the building's felled over" and "she's making a pizza, I'm a dessert". By the end of the year, all of the children in the nursery find their own name for the class chart and some write their name and other letters or even attempt simple words.
59. Children in the reception class achieve well in reading and writing but many do not achieve the Early Learning Goals. The most able children read a familiar story fluently with some considerable expression. Many of the children know about authors and illustrators and are developing skills and strategies to read new words. The less able children are not yet reading more than the most familiar words with any confidence, but they follow the words on the page, are keen to learn and make appropriate comments about the pictures, including predictions and guesses about what will happen next. The children make good progress in their reading because the staff listen to them regularly as individuals, many of their parents also do so and good records are kept of these activities. In whole class and individual activities in lessons, children are writing simple words and sentences, they know the sounds and names of most of the letters of the alphabet and find and match days of the week. The more able children write short stories with a clear beginning, middle and end and well-structured simple poems.

Mathematical development

60. In the nursery, children learn about numbers, shapes and colours and acquire basic skills such as sorting and matching. More able children count beyond 10 clearly and consistently complete quite complex puzzles for their age.
61. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children have begun to establish a basic knowledge of number but many do not achieve the Early Learning Goals. Most children count a sequence of objects to ten and some count beyond. Counting on from a given number is a challenge for a significant number of children and when asked to add two numbers quickly they find this difficult. Most children name simple shapes such as circle and square, some know triangle but few identify a rectangle or any shapes with more than four sides.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. Children achieve well in the nursery. The more able children have already developed the basic skills for investigating materials and natural phenomena and make recognisable structures using construction kits. They know about reflections in water and that the carriages of a toy train stick together because of the magnets. The children are learning about the different foods we eat and which foods are more or less healthy. They understand and use simple cause and effect computer programs unsupervised.
63. In the reception class, the children learn to carry out simple investigations, for example finding different insects and other small creatures in the school grounds and thinking about where they find them. They are beginning to use vocabulary such as habitat. They explain how they have changed from being a baby to now, through clear drawings and writing simple words and phrases. The most able children write good descriptions showing the difference between a hot and a cold holiday. Overall, standards are below average at the end of the Foundation Stage because a significant number of children do not achieve the Early Learning Goals.

Physical development

64. In the nursery children make good progress in all aspects of their physical development. The good, safe and well-equipped outside area is used on a daily basis to develop the children's skills such as moving in different ways, balancing, climbing and playing with bikes, scooters and cars. In the classroom, the activities promote the development of basic physical skills such as using tools and implements including pencils, paint brushes and cutlery and hand-eye co-ordination, for example through simple computer games and role-play activities.
65. In the reception class, the children play well in their own area of the playground and towards the end of the school year have increasing opportunities to play with older pupils. They have more formal lessons in physical education in the school hall. These lessons are planned well and promote good learning of individual skills and simple games skills in small groups. The teacher has high expectations and challenges the children "to find a way of making it harder if it's too easy". A simple activity such as passing a ball in pairs or threes and counting the number of catches clearly makes a good contribution to their understanding and use of number. The more able children count confidently well beyond 20 in this situation. Most children have adequate throwing and catching skills but a few are very limited in these basic physical skills.

Creative development

66. The children in the nursery achieve well in art and music activities. They develop control of a pencil or paintbrush and choose colours. More able children paint people with considerable details, such as several fingers and toes and earrings. The less able children have difficulty drawing a face with recognisable basic features within a clearly defined shape or draw a simple snowman with a head much bigger than the body. All children explore making shapes with play-dough and simple printing techniques. The children enjoy songs and nursery rhymes and join in with the singing and actions with great enthusiasm. They control the volume of their voices at appropriate points in familiar and obviously much-loved songs.
67. In the reception class, children make good progress in drawing and painting and use an increasing range of techniques in their work, such as mixing colours. No musical activities were observed.

ENGLISH

68. In the 2000 national tests taken by Year 2 pupils, the percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 2 or above was well below the national averages in both reading and writing. In the national tests taken by Year 6 pupils that year the percentage of pupils who gained the expected Level 4 or above was also well below average. Since the last inspection the school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy and the progress all pupils make, including those with special educational needs, in developing their basic skills in English is now at least satisfactory. In the last report progress was seen to be unsatisfactory and this was largely attributed to a lack of structure and poor planning. In both respects, the school has made substantial improvements. The assessment data produced by the school shows that a significant number of pupils make good progress while at school. The data indicates that many children enter school with very poor literacy skills but that improvement over time has exceeded both the national and local trends.
69. In Year 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well below expectation. Pupils listen well to the teacher during the whole class sessions that invariably start literacy lessons and follow the instructions they are given. However, they need constant reminders to follow through with tasks because many do not retain the detail of what the teacher has said. Their discussions with each other are also limited and they look largely to the teacher or support staff for assistance. The time allocated for classroom assistants in Years 1 and 2 is insufficient to give pupils the support and guidance they need for even simple tasks at this crucial stage in their development. In question and answer sessions they offer simple responses that are rarely extended. Their oral vocabulary is very limited and a number are reluctant to take part in class discussions.

70. Most Year 2 pupils are reading at levels that are well below expectation for their age. Teachers have not the time to listen to pupils read as frequently as is required to promote good or very good progress. Classroom assistants do listen to pupils read but their hours with the classes are too few for them to make a significant impact on progress. Nevertheless, more able readers in this age group are reading a range of texts with understanding and fluency. They talk about the main events and the characters they read about. Average and lower attaining readers make inconsistent use of a narrow range of strategies to find meaning in text. For example, they do not always pick up on the clues found in illustrations that often accompany the words they read.
71. Standards of writing are well below national expectations in Year 2. Higher attaining pupils produce writing that conveys meaning in simple and straightforward ways. There is little sense that pupils are writing with an audience in mind. Ideas are set down in sequences of sentences and pupils have made satisfactory progress over the year in applying simple punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. Pupils do attempt a range of writing styles but their limited vocabulary leads to pieces that are short. Lower attaining pupils produce work that lacks structure, ideas that are largely self-centred and punctuation that is rarely applied.
72. Current Year 6 pupils are attaining standards in speaking and listening that are below national expectations. They listen well to the clear and lively delivery that is a feature of teaching. Teachers use a range of strategies to encourage extended responses in question and answer sessions. This helps to increase the confidence of hesitant speakers and produces some thoughtful and extended comments from pupils. Teachers are also well aware of the need for structured approaches to help develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. For example, they provide suitable opportunities for pupils to write and deliver class talks. They stress the importance of eye contact, of clear delivery and of talking at a pace that allows understanding. Higher attaining pupils respond by producing talks that are thoughtfully developed and confidently delivered. Lower attaining pupils give short talks to class members that include relevant details of, for example, books written by their favourite authors. Teachers make the most of other opportunities to increase the confidence of their pupils such as encouraging them to read from a prepared text in assembly, expressing their feelings and thoughts about leaving school in the near future. They are confident in this context.
73. Reading standards are well below national expectations at the end of Year 6, although higher attaining pupils achieve national averages. Lower attaining pupils are following a good reading scheme that helps them to build their skills progressively. They use simple strategies to reach meaning in words and text. Higher attaining pupils are reading a range of texts independently. They understand the main themes but do not find it easy to summarise aspects such as themes and characterisation. They recall events in the books they read in good detail. They are beginning to read with expression that signifies understanding and which shows they are thinking about who is listening to them. Many pupils have great difficulty with higher order skills, such as making inferences and scanning text. All pupils in this age group can efficiently locate information in books using an index.
74. Standards of writing of current Year 6 pupils are well below national expectations. Higher attaining pupils are writing letters that include the basic setting out of facts, but which do not involve the reader with, for example, interesting vocabulary or expressive language. Teachers introduce pupils to a good range of writing styles. These include poetry and also some diary work. The latter allows pupils to build on their own experiences. Their limited vocabulary makes tasks such as writing using metaphor very difficult. One task, the reporting of an incident, produced short insubstantial pieces which lacked attention to detail and which did not feature the use of logical ordering of events.
75. Teaching and learning are good. There has been substantial improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have developed good strategies for the teaching of literacy and pupils' learning is good as a result. Lessons begin with clear objectives that are shared with pupils. This begins in Reception and is maintained right through to Year 6. This is good practice that gets pupils used to the idea of target setting in learning. Lessons have a good pace and a variety of activities that keep pupils engaged in their learning. The learning of spelling is made

fun when teachers use interesting games, often with visual aids and pupils respond enthusiastically. At the end of lessons, teachers recap what has been achieved to give pupils an idea of how well they have been learning. This encourages pupils by giving them confidence in themselves as learners. Planning is good. Teachers' planning follows the National Literacy Strategy closely but teachers make good use of the extra time given to literacy to extend pupils' skills, particularly in writing. Teachers also make good use of opportunities to develop literacy in other subjects, such as in science when pupils are taught to write reports of investigations, or in history when they write the stories of historical figures. They use question and answer well to extend understanding in a variety of contexts, including the guided reading sessions that they lead. In these sessions they put expression into their reading which engages pupils well and stimulates learning. Teachers have developed good relationships with pupils which lead to little time being lost on discipline. They invariably apply classroom conventions such as insisting on pupils holding hands up to take turns to speak. This leads to well-ordered and purposeful learning in lessons. Attitudes are almost always good in lessons. Pupils enjoy English and work hard for their teachers. Teachers build up a good knowledge of the capabilities of their pupils in English through good assessment procedures. They use the information well in planning the pupils' work.

76. The subject is well co-ordinated. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively introduced. The co-ordinator has a clear idea of where the subject is heading and of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in the school. This good level of awareness has helped her to overcome the weaknesses evident during the last inspection. Since that time, a policy and schemes of work have been written. Good assessment procedures have been introduced. The co-ordinator has also helped to establish the library as a key resource for learning, though this task is not complete. More books are needed to establish it as an environment that encourages research and reading for pleasure.

MATHEMATICS

77. Standards are below national expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage and at the end of Key Stage 1, at seven years of age, and at the end of Key Stage 2, at 11 years of age. There has been a gradual improvement in standards since the last inspection but overall, standards are below those found nationally. Evidence from the observation of lessons and from pupils' work show that, when compared with the national average and the average for similar schools, the pupils do not attain the levels expected. To achieve the standards they do by the age of 11, the pupils achieve well in the nursery and reception class and they make satisfactory progress in the rest of the school. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, which found progress to be unsatisfactory.
78. The results of the teachers' own assessments and the national tests taken at the age of seven and 11 show that attainment is well below that found nationally and below that found in similar schools. In the Year 2 tests taken at the age of seven in 2000, 77 per cent of pupils attained the expected National Curriculum Level 2 or above, compared with 90 per cent nationally. No pupils in the school attained the higher Level 3, while nationally 25 per cent attained this level.
79. In the 2000 national tests taken at age 11, 82 per cent of pupils attained the expected Level 4, compared with 92 per cent nationally. Where 24 per cent of pupils nationally attained the higher Level 5, no pupils in this school attained this level. Taken over the five years 1996 to 2000, however, the school's results show encouraging improvement as the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level has risen steadily, keeping pace with the improvement in results found nationally. The school recognises that there is still much to do to close the gap between the results attained by their own pupils and the national average.
80. By seven years of age, the pupils' understanding of number is limited. Some add and subtract in their heads quite well but few recall addition facts such as 'seven plus eight' quickly. The more able pupils learn some multiplication tables but most have little knowledge of multiplication facts. The school has worked hard to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and this is beginning to have an impact on standards. Discussions with pupils about their knowledge of numbers show that they are developing the skills of mental calculation.

They are beginning to learn useful strategies to help them to speed up when adding and subtracting without writing numbers down.

81. By the age of 11, just over half of the pupils have a secure knowledge of number but a significant minority has a low level of skill in applying this knowledge. Although they know the four rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, many pupils find using these operations with large numbers a significant challenge. They recognise fractions and decimals but few use them accurately in calculations. The pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of shape and most reposition a pattern to show reflective symmetry along both the horizontal and vertical axes. Few, however, are certain of their accuracy in calculating perimeter and area, or in representing standard units of capacity as decimals, such as when converting millilitres into litres.
82. The evidence of rising standards is an encouragement to the school, which works hard to compensate for the pupils' lack of basic mathematical knowledge and skills on entry. The increasing percentage of pupils attaining the nationally expected level by the ages of seven and 11 shows that pupils make satisfactory progress overall. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good, representing an improvement since the last inspection. These pupils benefit from the effective support they are given and they achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. The school has identified one very young pupil who has a natural ability in using number and this pupil is given work with an extra level of challenge to help him to develop this gift. Consequently, good progress is seen in the development of his numeracy skills.
83. Teaching is good overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching and some very good teaching in Key Stage 2. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection, which found some unsatisfactory teaching in the infant classes and an unacceptable level of unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2.
84. The teachers have incorporated the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy into their planning and teaching well and lessons are well structured and the level of challenge is appropriate. In most lessons, teachers set clear objectives for learning and these are explained to pupils. The key features of good lessons include clear explanations to help pupils to understand what they are trying to learn. The teachers have a good knowledge of what the pupils already know and they set challenging, well organised activities which help the pupils to continue and extend their learning from the teacher's introduction.
85. In good and very good lessons, teachers use questions effectively to promote pupils' thinking skills and develop good strategies for mental calculation. The good mental arithmetic sessions, at the beginning of lessons, make an effective contribution to pupils' learning and enable them to develop greater confidence in their use of number. In one very good mental arithmetic activity, Year 3 and 4 pupils learned to calculate a fraction of a number accurately as a result of the teacher clearly demonstrating the process using a number line. In another very good lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils understood the relative positions of a pattern with both vertical and horizontal lines of symmetry from the teacher's clear explanation and from the good practical activity given to consolidate their learning. Good use of information and communication technology was seen where a number square was projected onto the computerised whiteboard screen and Year 5 and 6 pupils were asked to respond rapidly to questions testing their knowledge of multiplication facts.
86. In the great majority of lessons pupils show positive attitudes to the work they are asked to do and they behave well and, consequently, learn well. Most of the pupils listen attentively to the teacher when they are being asked questions to exercise their mental arithmetic skills. The great majority of pupils know what to do when they are set group or independent tasks because they have listened carefully to the teacher's explanation. The teachers work hard to keep this high level of interest up amongst the pupils as there are a few individual pupils who do not concentrate well in lessons. Sometimes, the teachers have to interrupt the flow of what they are teaching to help these pupils to refocus their attention on what is being taught. They do this effectively, using the agreed strategies outlined in the school's behaviour policy. A few

pupils in the infant classes are unsure of how to tackle the work set for them and they are slow to get started until their teacher has explained the task to them again individually.

87. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented and is having a significant impact on the curriculum for mathematics and in its use in other subjects, such as geography and science. Objectives for lessons are clearly linked to the strategy in long, medium and short-term planning. There are effective systems for assessing pupils' learning. Together, improved assessment and planning have led to a greater awareness of what pupils need to do to achieve better. This is having an impact on the content of lessons, making them more effective and leading to gradual improvements in pupils' learning. There is, however, no clear programme of homework to extend pupils' learning at home. Homework is given inconsistently and the activities make little contribution to the overall progress made by the pupils.
88. The school has been involved in an Education Action Zone project to support the improvement of mathematics. A specialist teacher, seconded to the project, has worked effectively with the subject leader and the other teachers in the school to help them in a number of ways. For example, the performance of pupils in tests has been analysed to identify which aspects of their learning need further improvement. The training needs for each teacher have been identified and training has taken place. The subject leader and the specialist teacher have drawn up an action plan for improvement following an audit of the subject. The action plan has clear priorities which, if effectively implemented and monitored throughout the school, will continue to improve teaching and learning. Taken together, these initiatives to co-ordinate the subject more effectively and rigorously and the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, have resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

89. The standards of work seen at the end of Key Stage 1, when pupils are seven, are below the national average. At the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils are 11, standards are broadly average. Since the last inspection, standards at Key Stage 1 have remained below average. At Key Stage 2 they have improved, as they were also below average at that time.
90. The 2000 teacher assessments of seven year-olds showed that standards were well below the national average and in comparison with similar schools. The improvement seen during this inspection is due to the at least good standards of teaching seen. National Test results for 11 year-olds, compared with all schools, were well below the national average and they were below average compared with similar schools. The main reason for the improvement in the attainment of 11 year-olds seen during inspection, is the quality of teaching. One teacher takes two of the three Year 5 and 6 classes for science and achieves excellent levels of teaching and the standards of teaching in the other Year 5 and 6 class are at least good. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall, with tasks modified to meet their needs. However, there are too few support staff available in the school. When these pupils receive additional support in their groups, their understanding is greater and progress is more rapid.
91. By the age of seven, pupils are moving towards developing a sound knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of science. Supported by very good teaching, pupils in a Year 1 and 2 class understood the principles of fair testing well. They wrapped ice cubes in different materials, making predictions that this would affect the rate of melting and carefully giving a length of time for each cube to melt. After setting their stop watches for three minutes, they unwrapped the ice cubes, covered in foil, paper, cotton wool or plastic, to see which had melted the most. Real excitement was seen when they made their discoveries. High quality recording sheets, modified according to individual pupils' literacy skills, enabled them to discuss and record their results successfully. Samples of previous work included satisfactory examples of work on forces, with fair tests on pushing and pulling, sources of light and sound, changing materials and the life processes of humans, animals and plants.
92. By the age of 11, pupils understand the life processes, growth and nutrition and the reproduction of plants. A series of two lessons, featuring excellent teaching, was seen in Years 5 and 6. Pupils very successfully identified the parts of plants, such as petals, stamen and

stigma. More able pupils described the main functions of the most important organs and their role in the reproductive process of the plant. Significant learning took place in the following lesson when the teacher prepared tasks to further extend pupils' understanding of the differences between the associated processes of pollination and fertilisation. Samples of previous work produced examples of a good range of work on the life processes of humans and animals, how to group and classify materials and discussing changes when materials are heated or cooled. Work on building electric circuits has been successfully completed. Pupils have learnt about the sources and properties of light, how sound travels and how it is produced when objects vibrate. Throughout all this work there is a good evidence of pupils making predictions, carrying out fair tests and recording their results and drawing conclusions.

93. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is good overall. At Key Stage 2 it is very good. This contributes to the good achievement and good progress pupils are now making at both key stages. During the inspection the quality of teaching never fell below good across the school. Teachers are improving standards due to the preparation of tasks and grouping of pupils in class to meet their assessed needs. They take account of their well below average literacy skills and present pupils with work they can understand at their respective levels. Excellent examples of this are seen in the Years 5 and 6 science lessons, where the teacher prepares a range of written opportunities for pupils to record their findings. These vary from providing for pupils who can write a full description of their investigations and for those who still have problems with using writing to record their findings. For them the teacher prepares a cued worksheet, giving pupils the relevant scientific words with suitable explanations. Here they fill in the scientific information in the required spaces. This excellent preparation and teaching helps pupils to show how well they can achieve in their understanding of scientific concepts when they are not faced with having to try to read and understand printed material which is, for many, beyond their level of comprehension. Here attainment in science is high because the teacher has successfully overcome the problem pupils often have because of their limited reading and number skills. They have the necessary scientific understanding, but due to their lower attainment in reading and writing, cannot successfully respond to formal tests, unless they have these very successfully modified resources. Across the school teachers' clear and competent explanations reflect good science subject knowledge. These, combined with skilful use of questioning, effectively promote pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of science. Very good management of pupils and very effective lesson planning contribute to a good ethos and productive learning. Pupils respond with at least good and sometimes excellent levels of enthusiasm. They are motivated, interested learners, responding very well to their tasks.
94. At the time of inspection there was an acting co-ordinator for the subject, as the previous co-ordinator had left the school. There is good planning for the subject, supported by a national scheme. The effective monitoring of the quality of teaching, with teachers planning together across years, applying their generally good subject knowledge, leads to the effective coverage of the whole curriculum, with a relevant depth and balance. Worksheets are well designed and support learning. Resources are satisfactory. There is a good application of literacy and numeracy skills and information and communication technology is starting to be satisfactorily used.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Standards are broadly average for both seven year-olds and for 11 year-olds. This is much higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection, when they were well below average standards. Pupils have a good range of opportunities for two-dimensional work. They use a good range of media for drawing and painting. Opportunities for three-dimensional work are developing satisfactorily, but are under represented. Pupils have opportunities to experience work using a setting clay and papier-mâché. Their opportunities to experiment with sculpture and other three-dimensional materials at various differing scales are limited.
96. The quality of pupils' drawing, aided by the use of sketchbooks, is to an at least satisfactory standard throughout the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have experiences of sketching and shading to produce different tones and textures. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 accurately represent what they see through their good observational drawings of plants and flowers. Teachers

provide a good range of artefacts for pupils to choose from. This enables pupils to explore and develop their own ideas of representation and composition effectively.

97. Painting is given a high priority. Pupils, from the youngest, quickly develop good techniques of colour mixing and its application for effect. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, having to produce pictures showing the effect of light at sunset, mix and apply colours very well, using shades of red and yellow to produce an exciting range of paintings of sunsets, influenced by the works of Tony Hudson, Jonathan Sanders and Patrick Bradford. They bring their paintings to life with the application of silhouette figures and shapes cut out of black paper. When looking at the work of Monet, pupils showed a sensitive use of pastels by combining colours in the style of the artist to get the effects of light striking a watery surface. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, after completing a pencil drawing of flowers, applied paint and used colour well to represent the visual and tactile qualities of what they saw.
98. Pupils have recently benefited from working with a visiting artist. This has extended their range of work and enables them to produce collage pictures, using torn and cut coloured paper and coloured foil. Work on display celebrates their success in designing and comparing pictures which show a good awareness of the development of shape and pattern. Art from other cultures is studied. A Year 5 and 6 class showed a good awareness of the style and patterns of Aztec art, when they made head-dresses and mosaics. Other pupils in Years 5 and 6 have carried out a very good analysis of the use of symbols and patterns in Aboriginal art and design. Their ideas are very well reproduced through paintings and the application of Aboriginal designs and colour on the papier-mâché plates they had made. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, having early experiences of the use of self-setting clay, produced models using clay, pipe cleaners and twigs, influenced by the teacher showing them the work of Henry Moore. They were very excited by the holes in many of his sculptures and proudly displayed their finished work, saying where the holes were and how they reflected light.
99. The quality of teaching is good overall at both Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers, supported by a commercial scheme, are developing a good knowledge of art and design. Lessons are prepared well and a satisfactory range of resources is provided. Good teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 when the teacher introduced pupils to basic technique for working with clay well and explained how to produce work in the style of Henry Moore. Good teaching was seen again in Years 5 and 6. Here the teacher evaluated pupils' techniques when they were colouring their previously completed observational drawings of flowers. She suggested ideas for the development of technique, giving pupils a good range of opportunities to learn how to use their chosen materials of pastel or paint. Pupils enjoy the subject, working with high levels of motivation, enthusiasm and understanding.
100. The co-ordinator effectively monitors planning and gives feedback. She has little available time for management and has no time to evaluate teaching. There is as yet no defined means of assessing the subject. It is not given a priority for development in the school development plan dated 2002. Resources are satisfactory and the subject has a good, recently allocated budget. The use of information and communication technology is beginning to be implemented through the purchase of suitable CD-ROM. The good displays of art around the school celebrate pupils' successes and support other subjects well, such as religious education, where there is a good range of paintings, drawings and collages of St Paul, St Patrick and St Andrew. Good links are made with science, for example through the observational drawings of plants and flowers.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. It was not possible, due to the way the timetable operated during the inspection, to observe any design and technology lessons. There was also insufficient evidence either on display or in books to reach any firm, reliable judgements on the quality of teaching and standards achieved by pupils. The school has adopted national guidelines for the teaching of design and technology. The newly appointed co-ordinator has carried out an audit of the available learning resources and these are adequate. There are no formal procedures for assessment. She has a clear vision for the future development of the subject in the school.

GEOGRAPHY

102. By the ages of seven and 11, attainment is below that expected nationally. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection, although the overall achievement of pupils has improved and their progress is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment.
103. By the end of Key Stage 1, at the age of seven, the pupils have some understanding of their local area and they can make comparisons between their home town and a contrasting seaside town, such as Blackpool. They are not confident, however, in describing the amenities and facilities found in each of these localities nor can they accurately describe features common to both. The pupils show some knowledge of the development of a seaside location to attract tourism when they are discussing photographs of Blackpool with their teacher. When recording their findings, however, they are unsure what to write to show what they have learnt from these discussions. Some describe their findings and show a good recall of what has been taught but a significant number of pupils cannot explain, for example, different reasons why both Blackpool and Blackburn have railway stations.
104. At the end of Key Stage 2, at the age of 11, the depth of pupils' knowledge about other countries and geographical features is limited. Higher attaining pupils show a satisfactory understanding of amenities in their home town. They discuss environmental issues, such as traffic restrictions in the centre of town, with a growing awareness of the rights and needs of different groups of people. Overall, however, the scrutiny of their work shows that they have limited knowledge and understanding of other aspects of geography, such as the effect of world climate and the physical features of landscape such as rivers and mountains. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know that other countries, such as Kenya, export goods to the United Kingdom and most of them give appropriate reasons why our country needs to import these goods. They look carefully at the packaging of products to find clues about their country of origin. However, they show limited knowledge of other aspects of world trade, such as what Britain exports in return to Kenya, or to other countries.
105. The pupils' work shows that they have developed some basic mapping skills and some more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 have used a key in plans accurately. These skills are further developed in Key Stage 2, although, by the end of the key stage, knowledge of the application and use of, for example Ordnance Survey maps, is below that found in most other schools.
106. The quality of teaching is good overall, which is a significant improvement from the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers have a clear knowledge of the content of the programme of study. They plan effectively to match lessons and work to the pupils' prior attainment. Resources are used well to provide an interesting stimulus to the lessons and to help pupils focus on the activity.
107. This promotes learning well, such as when pupils respond positively to a stimulating activity with a clear purpose, supported with interesting resources. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 looked closely at old photographs of Blackpool for clues about its growth as a tourist attraction, drawing conclusions from what they could see about the reasons for change. Similarly, pupils in Years 3 and 4 investigated packaging to identify ingredients that may have been exported from Kenya and thought carefully about the reasons why. The pupils have good attitudes to their work. Most pupils listen attentively to the teachers' explanations and join in class discussions and debates with interest. Those who have confidence in their knowledge are happy to share it with others in response to the teacher's questions, but quite a number of the pupils need prompting by the teacher before they will volunteer an answer. Often, questions have to be expressed in a number of ways before some pupils can articulate a satisfactory answer. The teachers are skilled in varying the way in which questions are asked to give all pupils, including those with special educational needs, the opportunity to respond accurately.
108. The school has a draft policy document, which effectively promotes the importance of the subject. The teachers' planning, based on national guidelines, is good overall and shows that the teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and that they recognise the need to provide a good level of challenge to promote better learning. An audit of the curriculum is

planned by the subject leader to establish clear priorities for improving the subject, such as the already identified need to provide more visits to places of interest. There are no formal procedures for assessment. Although there is a satisfactory range of resources for use in the classroom, the quantity and range of books in the library is limited and little use is made of information and communication technology.

HISTORY

109. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in history is below that expected nationally. The previous inspection also found that attainment was below national expectations so there is no change from the findings of the previous inspection. However, pupils enter the school with a low level of knowledge of history and poor skills of historical enquiry and they achieve well in relation to this attainment. Overall, their progress is satisfactory throughout the key stage, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.
110. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made good progress and their attainment is similar to that found in many other schools. This too is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, which found both attainment and progress to be unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. Examination of pupils' work, however, shows that few have satisfactory skills in recording their knowledge in workbooks.
111. Evidence from looking at pupils' work in books and displayed around the school shows that the pupils in Key Stage 1 have been taught about the lives and work of historical figures such as Florence Nightingale. Some pupils remember important facts about her life such as her role in a war, the name of which they could not recall. Most pupils, however, only remember that she became a nurse. The more able pupils talk about other aspects of life in the Victorian age. These pupils make relevant connections with Florence Nightingale, but most other pupils do not readily recall the details of her life or understand her contribution to nursing.
112. At Key Stage 2, pupils learn well and show an increasing knowledge and understanding of the chronology of historical events and familiar characters from times past. The use of clear time lines in classrooms helps pupils to place events into a sequence of time measured between well-known dates, such as the birth of Jesus and the current year. This helps them to learn how long ago, for example, the Vikings invaded this country. Work on display, resulting from a visit to the school by a group who use role play to teach about the lives of the Vikings, shows a good level of interest in this topic.
113. There were no history lessons seen during this inspection, as the subject is time-tabled for a different part of the school term. From the displayed work and photographs of pupils involved in Viking role play activities, pupils enjoy activities which give them direct experience of the lives of different people. They produce artefacts such as leather bracelets and spun wool with skill, showing a good attitude towards producing work of high quality. Pupils talk with interest about their work, topics they have been taught and their favourite historical characters.
114. The subject leader has made some progress towards improving provision for history since taking over 18 months ago. Following a thorough audit an effective action plan for subject improvement has been drawn up. The subject policy has been redrafted and a good scheme of work has been implemented. There has been some monitoring of planning but little time has been available to evaluate the whole curriculum or to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school. There are no formal procedures for assessment. There are satisfactory resources overall and the school has made good use of visitors. Visits to museums or sites of historical interest are limited and consequently there is little enrichment of the curriculum from these opportunities. The number of history books in the school library is poor but the subject leader has included the purchase of more resources as one of the priorities in the action plan to develop the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

115. Standards achieved by seven and 11 year-olds are below national expectations. This is an improvement in standards since the last inspection, when they were judged to be well below national expectations. At that time the progress of pupils with special educational needs was

unsatisfactory and this is now satisfactory. There have been a number of important events which have had an adverse effect on teaching and learning in ICT in the school. The national training scheme for teachers has not been made available until very recently. The school has chosen to introduce the national guidelines for ICT, but staff have decided to develop their own schemes of work as they find out what works well for their pupils and what doesn't. This process is further complicated by the two year planning cycle. A third factor is the very recent arrival of equipment. Teachers have not had much time to familiarise themselves with new hardware and software. There is as yet no Internet connection to the school and so this important resource cannot be used to support and extend the curriculum.

116. Year 2 pupils have an uneven grasp of the various aspects prescribed by the National Curriculum for information technology. Most can enter commands using the control panel of a robotic vehicle. They can make it follow a course around various objects set out on the classroom floor. However, they rarely use computers for simple word processing activities. They develop their understanding, in both literacy and numeracy activities, using simple computer programs, but have little understanding of databases or spreadsheets. They model designs using graphics software in art lessons. A few use the Internet at home, but because the school does not have an appropriate connection for curriculum use they have not been introduced to e-mail or using the Internet for research.
117. Most Year 6 pupils have used a word processing package at some time to write stories and poems. For a 'Dark, dark tale' they have used atmospheric graphics as a stimulus for their own writing. Although they have combined text and graphics to create bookmarks and greetings cards, they have not developed these skills, for example to create leaflets. They have developed, with their teachers, class databases holding information on class members. They ask the right questions of the databases to gain the answers they want. Most have created spreadsheets that hold the financial details of an imaginary class party. They also use software that creates bar charts based on the information they enter. They use these to communicate the findings of a traffic survey carried out in Blackburn. They are given a budget to work to and have to use the spreadsheet to model the information. Like the younger pupils, they have not had the benefit of Internet access for research or to e-mail. Their understanding of control technology and the use of sensors to measure external events is not developed after Year 2. Their understanding is not broad enough and this reflects the uneven delivery of the different elements of the ICT curriculum and the variable and often insufficient, use of ICT in other subjects.
118. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. Teachers give clear explanations of what pupils are to learn during the lesson. In some lessons, teachers reinforce the message with prompt cards, as in a lesson in Year 2 which equips pupils with knowledge of how to programme a robotic vehicle to move along a predetermined course. These use instructional language that extends pupils' literacy skills. Tasks are matched to pupils' levels of ability, though sometimes the support sheets are too challenging for the lower attaining children. The best teaching features an energetic approach that stimulates pupils' interest. Teachers prepare well for lessons. This ensures that the use of time for learning is maximised. Subject knowledge, in the lessons observed, was adequate for the tasks set. Teachers are becoming more confident in ICT and most teachers are using the network room to introduce large groups of pupils to ICT skills effectively. The response of pupils to the use of ICT is generally good and they clearly enjoy using the computers.
119. Co-ordination is satisfactory. Since the last inspection a policy has been introduced and national guidelines have been adopted. These are being developed into a scheme of work. There have been good, but very recent developments, in relation to assessment. Since the last inspection the provision of hardware and software has much improved, though the school needs to do what it can to accelerate the introduction and use of the Internet.

MUSIC

120. There is rather limited evidence of standards achieved in music but, from the two lessons seen and the standards of singing by the school choir and in school assemblies, they are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages.
121. A very good lesson was seen in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class taken by the subject co-ordinator. The teacher has very good knowledge and conveys her own love of and interest in music to the pupils. The pupils listened very well, copied different rhythms well and sang familiar songs with great enthusiasm and good control. They performed using percussion instruments and voices to a poem they chose during a literacy lesson. The pupils are learning some basic musical notation through weekly repetition of very similar activities. The variety and pace of activities and the teacher's own skills captivated the pupils and learning was very good.
122. A good lesson was seen in a mixed Year 5 and 6 class. The teacher has good knowledge of music at a primary school level and the lesson started with a very effective flash card activity reinforcing and extending their knowledge of musical notation. The teacher set challenging tasks for pupils to compose using combined ostinato patterns in small groups. Pupils play four-four and three-four rhythm patterns quite well and identify what others are playing accurately.
123. The school choir performed an extensive number and wide variety of songs during a whole school assembly and after school one day during the inspection week. The quality of their singing was of a high standard. The choir came second in the Blackburn and Darwen Music Festival in 1999 and these high standards have clearly been maintained. A brief observation was made of 10 Key Stage 1 pupils participating in a recently established recorder club where they performed a recognisable tune. The teacher and school secretary were correctly modelling accurate fingering. The whole school sang very well during assemblies including a very moving rendition of a hymn sung in parts. Recorded music was used well to set an atmosphere and develop pupils' knowledge of the diversity of musical forms. Musical ensembles have visited the school and Education Action Zone funding has supported African, Asian and British musicians working in the school.
124. All of this very positive evidence of good teaching, at least satisfactory standards and significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, was not convincingly supported through an interview with the subject co-ordinator. The school's provision has been effective in many respects but there have been no clear guidelines to provide a whole school structure for class teachers to plan to. A commercial scheme of work has been purchased and is being introduced in September 2001 to address this significant weakness. However, management of the subject is underdeveloped in terms of monitoring the quality of teaching, assessment and the use of information and communication technology.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations in games and swimming at the end of both key stages. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about other aspects of the subject. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2.
126. Two satisfactory games lessons were seen in the mixed Year 1 and 2 classes. Both lessons included appropriate activities and a good structure. Pupils made satisfactory gains in ball control skills in both individual and partner activities. Both lessons lacked some pace and a real sense of energy and this was almost certainly because the lessons were only 30 minutes long.
127. Two games lessons were seen in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes; one was satisfactory and one was good. Both lessons included appropriate activities and a good structure. Pupils made satisfactory gains in ball control skills in both individual and partner activities in one lesson because a significant number did not have sufficient skills to succeed at a challenging task. In the other lesson pupils made good progress in both physical and social skills. Because these lessons were 45 minutes long, the pace and content were more effective and teachers used some time to evaluate the pupils' learning. Year 3 and 4 pupils were also

observed swimming. Teaching and learning was satisfactory and the school meets the National Curriculum requirements for swimming at the end of Key Stage 2.

128. Two very good games lessons were seen in Year 5 and 6 classes. Because the planning was very good and the tasks were challenging but matched well to the pupils' knowledge and skills, pupils learnt very well in both lessons. They were working very effectively in small groups making up their own games using the provided equipment and four skills learnt and practised during the term. These lessons were again only 30 minutes long and in one lesson this meant there was no time for a reasonable evaluation of what had been achieved at the end.
129. Immediately after this inspection, five boys and one girl were leaving to participate in a schools football tournament in Sweden. One boy told an inspector he was going to speak in front of about 4,000 people on behalf of all the British pupils attending. He spoke his speech confidently and with great pride. During the school year, the school provides a good range of sporting activities after school.
130. Because of staff shortages, the subject co-ordinator is a newly qualified teacher who took over this role after only one term in the school. The school is implementing the national guidelines for the subject and the co-ordinator is developing resources well. However, management of the subject is underdeveloped in terms of monitoring the quality of teaching, assessment and the use of information and communication technology.