

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **ST THOMAS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tean, Staffordshire

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124365

Headteacher: Antony Wretham

Reporting inspector: Jonathan Palk  
23630

Dates of inspection: 4 - 6 December 2000

Inspection number: 224399

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Parklands Rd Upper Tean Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST10 4DS
Telephone number:	01538 722378
Fax number:	01538 722378
Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Father P J Meagher
Date of previous inspection:	09/12/1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
J Palk 23630	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
P Edwards 10965	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does it care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
J Forward 21852	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
S Lake 22191	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Music	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Thomas Catholic School is a small primary with 151 pupils on roll. Most of the pupils are Catholic and come from a broad range of social and economic backgrounds. Nearly half come from the surrounding villages. Three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average, and there are no pupils who do not speak English. One pupil has a statement, with a further 16 on the register of special educational needs. This is also below average. Seventeen children were under five during the inspection and their literacy and numeracy skills are below average on entry. The pupils are taught in five mixed-age classes and organised by ability when year groups overlap.

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

This is a good school. Pupils achieve very well and, by the time they are 11, the standard of their work is above average in English, mathematics and science. Much of the teaching is very good and pupils enjoy learning. The leadership and management are effective in taking the right action to improve the quality of education in the school, which gives good value for money.

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

- Pupils are making very good progress in Key Stage 2 as a result of some very good teaching.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and work hard.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop good social and moral values.
- The systems for tracking pupils' progress and supporting them when needed are good.
- Links with the parents and the community are very strong and their involvement is helping pupils reach higher standards.
- Good leadership ensures that subjects are developed well and staff are properly trained.

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

- By the age of seven pupils' standards in mathematics and science are below average.
- The work set for pupils in some subjects in Years 1 and 2 does not always meet their needs and they do not achieve as well as they could.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about other cultures around the world.
- The hall is not large enough for physical education lessons and the outdoor play space for the youngest children limits their creative and physical development.

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

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

The last inspection in December 1996 identified a number of concerns over the progress pupils made in the school, the quality of teaching, learning, leadership and management. The headteacher and governors have made good progress in dealing with all these issues and as a result the school is providing a much better education. Standards are higher in English, mathematics and science. There are still concerns over the achievements of pupils in Key Stage 1, but inspectors judged that the school is dealing with this adequately. The school has a clear vision of what it wants to achieve and the governors are now closely involved in helping it monitor and evaluate its successes. The curriculum has been strengthened and co-

ordinators are taking effective action to improve the subject teaching. There have been significant improvements to the quality of the accommodation and resources, which have enhanced the opportunities for pupils to learn, although the school is still short of space for physical education. It is well placed to improve further.

## 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	C	B	A	B
Mathematics	A	C	A	B
Science	A	C	A	B

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

average                    C

below average          D

well below average      E

These results are very good given the previous attainment of these pupils in the tests for seven year olds. The performance of pupils in tests over the last four years is broadly in line with national trends, the best gains having been made in English.

Last year's targets were exceeded in English and mathematics tests and have been raised again for the year 2001.

Pupils enter the school with below average skills in reading, mathematics and personal and social skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority reach the expectations of the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup>. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English through Key Stage 1 and by the age of seven are broadly average in speaking, listening, reading and writing, although handwriting is below expectations. Many pupils of average and above ability do not make sufficient progress in mathematics and science, and standards are below average by the age of seven. These findings reflect the situation found in National Curriculum assessments, and the school is taking appropriate action to address the weaknesses in the teacher's planning in this class.

By the age of 11, pupils achieve above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in music are also high. Progress is good, sometimes very good, and consistent in the three classes in these subjects. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress. Standards in some aspects of information technology are below expectations but are improving. Pupils do not achieve as well as they might in information technology as a result of shortages in equipment. Standards in most aspects of geography are also below expectation by the age of 11. The standards reached by pupils in other subjects are in line with expectations, with good standards seen in music, history and dance lessons in Year 6.

<sup>1</sup> Early Learning Goals: These are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the following six areas of learning: communication, language and literature; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. Pupils are very interested in what they do and proud of their achievements. They work hard and enthusiastically.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	It is very good in lessons, and playtimes are pleasant social occasions.
Personal development and relationships	These are good overall. Pupils work well together in lessons. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Above national averages.

The school bus is often late and this affects the prompt and efficient start to the school day.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	satisfactory	very good

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

Teaching is good overall. In 72 per cent of lessons the teaching is good or very good. All the teaching is at least satisfactory. The best teaching holds the attention of pupils from the very beginning, uses stimulating and exciting resources and builds well on what pupils have already learnt. Teachers' relationships with the pupils are very good and pupils know what they have to do to improve. Homework is well planned and helps pupils learn independently.

The teacher in the Foundation Stage is knowledgeable about the needs of young children, and activities are well organised. Children learn new skills well and adults working in the setting provide them with good support. There are limitations to the teaching and experiences of pupils in physical development because not enough opportunity is offered for outside play.

The teaching of seven year olds varies in quality. Whilst the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory, the evidence from looking at pupils' books and talking with them shows that not enough is expected of them and the work in many subjects is not always meeting their needs.

Older pupils are taught very well and as a result they are keen to learn. Teachers are clear about what pupils need to learn next. The work is well planned to match pupils' needs, and lessons are well organised.

Literacy is taught well through the school. Numeracy is taught very well in Key Stage 2 but is not as effective in Years 1 and 2.

Pupils with special educational needs and those with specific needs in literacy and numeracy are taught well and acquiring greater confidence in basic skills.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. A high priority is given to basic skills. There is a good range of visits and visitors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans are clear and assessment is regular. Parents are kept well informed.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for social and moral development and plenty of opportunity for pupils to work together. There are not enough planned opportunities for multi-cultural education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Teachers know them very well. Their progress is well monitored and achievements are celebrated.

Religious education is to be inspected and reported separately by Section 23 inspectors. There are not yet enough computers to give all pupils regular opportunities to develop skills in information and communication technology.

There is a very good partnership with parents, and their support with homework benefits the pupils. There is substantial involvement by the community in fund-raising to improve the school building.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are good. There is a determination to be even better and teamwork is well established. The necessary changes have been dealt with quickly and the goodwill of established staff has been retained.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	There is good delegation within the governing body which gives them a good view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The finances are managed particularly well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is good use of test and assessment data. Regular checks on the quality of teaching are helping raise standards. Co-ordinators have clear action plans and are taking appropriate steps to address the low attainment in Key Stage 1, with additional teaching support.
The strategic use of resources	Funds and additional money raised to improve the school and raise pupils' achievements are used well. Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' education.

More staff have been employed to give time for the headteacher and subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching and standards, and this is proving effective.

The school development plan includes the necessary staff training and strategies for evaluating its success.

Data and assessment information are used to check that the action taken is giving best value.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children made a good start in the reception class.</li><li>• Children enjoy coming to the school.</li><li>• The school cares for the children and they make good progress.</li><li>• Parents receive good information about how well their children are doing.</li><li>• The teachers provide lots of interesting lessons and visits.</li><li>• Parents like the regular homework.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is some concern over the arrangements for teaching the younger classes next term.</li></ul>

The inspection team supports parents' views. Two teachers are leaving in January to take up new posts. Arrangements are now in place for teaching the reception class and Years 1 and 2.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The pupils' performance in the national test for 11 year olds has been improving in English, mathematics and science over the past four years and the results are now well above the national average and above those of similar schools. Overall the improving trend is broadly similar to that of all schools. However, there has been a notable improvement in English results. There is a very high proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in English, whilst well above average proportions reach this level in mathematics and science. The pupils taking the tests in 2000 made very good progress from the scores they achieved in their Key Stage 1 tests. The very good achievements of boys and girls from a below average entry point is largely due to the sound basis for future learning established in the Foundation Stage and the very effective teaching strategies of teachers in Key Stage 2. The use of the National Framework for Literacy and Numeracy also contributes to very effective learning at this key stage.
2. The pupils' performance in the national tests for seven year olds in reading and writing is below average and they are well below average in mathematics. Performances of higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 reading, writing and mathematics tests are now rising. However, overall test scores are well below those of similar schools. Inspection shows that the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and speaking and listening as a result of effective teaching of literacy skills and by seven reach average standards. Pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics and science. There is not enough rigour in the planning of mathematics and science lessons to ensure that the work builds consistently on what pupils have previously learnt and this is the main reason for below average attainment in these subjects.
3. Children enter the Foundation Stage below average in the areas of learning for young children. By the end of the Foundation Stage standards are broadly average in all areas of learning for young children as a result of good teaching.
4. Inspection evidence confirms the above average attainment of 11 year olds in reading, writing, mathematics and science and the school is on course to reach its challenging targets. Teachers in Key Stage 2 are very clear about what pupils need to learn and there are good strategies in place for tracking their progress in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs achieve reasonable standards and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the regular support they receive in many lessons. Pupils also benefit from regular and well-chosen homework and are given plenty of opportunity to reinforce basic skills.
5. The standards in most other subjects meet expectations. Improved termly planning which is shared by teachers with the same year groups within the key stage is the main factor in these achievements. The inspection found that pupils' standards in geography are below expectations at the end of both key stages. Eleven year olds have only a limited geographical awareness and their mapping and enquiry skills are underdeveloped. This is a result of weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum. Standards in information and communication technology are also below expectations in some aspects, and skills are underdeveloped as a consequence of insufficient resources. Whilst there was insufficient opportunity to observe pupils in physical

education lessons to form a judgement, there are limitations imposed by the small hall that affect the development of older pupils' gymnastic skills.

6. The last inspection found that progress was variable and pupils with more ability were not achieving as well as they should. With significant improvement in the quality of teaching of English, mathematics and science and strengths in curriculum leadership, progress is consistent through Key Stage 2 and pupils' achievements are above those of pupils in similar schools. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory gains in reading and writing. However the progress most pupils make is still variable and they do not achieve as well as they could in mathematics and science because work is not matched well enough to their needs.

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

7. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, have very positive attitudes. This is in line with the findings of the last report.
8. Pupils talk about school with enthusiasm, finding it difficult to choose what they like best about it. A common response in discussion was that they like everything. They work hard in lessons and try to do their best, as seen in a Year 5 /6 music lesson where the teacher's enthusiasm encouraged all to participate fully in the activities taking place, bringing the lesson alive. Pupils value the work that the teachers do and describe with interest and enjoyment what they have done in lessons. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that their children like school.
9. During the inspection the pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school was very good. This contributes well to their learning as it allows lessons to move forward at a brisk pace. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions when the pupils play well together. They speak warmly of the lunchtime supervisors, who encourage them to play together without arguments. The pupils are courteous and polite. They are friendly towards visitors and always seek to put them at their ease. Pupils treat their own and other people's property with respect and there is a good response when they are asked to bring things in from home to add to the history museum in Class 5.
10. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. The pupils know that all the adults want what is best for them. The teacher made good use of the positive relationships at the start of the history lesson, successfully involving all the class in acting out an air-raid. The lovely, warm huddle listening to the approaching bombers brought learning to life for these pupils. During the inspection no incidents of unkind behaviour were observed. Pupils who were interviewed said that bullying was not a problem. There were no exclusions in the last reporting year.
11. Pupils accept responsibility willingly and enjoy helping with the routines of class and school. Pupils in Year 4 set up the popular lunchtime mathematics games club, competently helping the teacher. Older pupils care for the youngest children at lunchtimes and playtimes, playing games with them. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 have reading partners in Key Stage 1 to help improve their reading skills. It was a frequent occurrence to see older and younger pupils playing with the mathematics game in the corridor. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning through target setting and keeping their own record to show how they are progressing.
12. Attendance is well above the national average and most pupils arrive at school punctually. However, the school bus is often late and this is still an area of concern as it affects the prompt and efficient start to the day.



## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The teaching is good overall. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and 72 per cent of the teaching is good or very good. A third of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is very good.
14. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. Children have good access to all areas of learning except outdoor play, which is not well resourced. The children are encouraged to make decisions about where to work, and the support they receive from the assistant is consistently good.
15. The teaching in both Key Stage 1 classes is satisfactory and good in more than half the lessons. The teachers manage the pupils well and the pupils settle to their work enthusiastically. The teaching undertaken by the relief teacher in the class for Years 1 and 2 was at least satisfactory or better. The scrutiny of work from this class found weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. Reading and writing are taught satisfactorily, and the teacher effectively uses the national framework to match work to the different abilities in the class. The work given to pupils in science, mathematics and geography in particular is not directed at their needs and this affects how consistently they make progress. Pupils are not being consistently challenged and too much of the work did not take enough account of the different ages and abilities in the class. Expectations of pupils vary. Sometimes, as in geography, they are set too high. At other times, as in science investigations, it is too low. Consequently pupils do not learn as well as they should.
16. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is often very good. The majority of lessons are well prepared and teachers use a good range of interesting activities to maintain pupils' attention. A very exciting and dramatic introduction to a geography lesson inspired pupils to work together on planning the timetable for a journey to Rome and to go on to set up other journeys they could make. Relationships are very good and this allows teachers to take risks. For example, one teacher dressed up as an Italian, whilst in a mathematics lesson the teacher wheeled in her 'thousand year old granny'. A humorous rendition of a poem had transfixed pupils, who were then eager to make their contribution in the following discussion. The enthusiasm is infectious and motivates pupils to give their very best.
17. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged whilst lower-attaining pupils are extended. In an outstanding lesson in Years 3 and 4 the teacher challenged the pupils to justify their suggestions of how the poem (on a haunted house) could be improved. Their responses received appropriate praise and led them to understand more about the use of vocabulary. As a consequence pupils in Year 4 produced, *'threadbare mat, flickering light and the only sound is the creaking floorboards'*. The easy rapport between pupils and staff in all lessons inspired confidence in the pupils. As a consequence pupils are happy to come up and explain methods, which further strengthens their understanding, or evaluate each other's work, as in the Year 6 dance session.
18. Across the school, teachers are knowledgeable in most subjects and seek help from colleagues. They are clear at the start of lessons about what is to be learnt and pay attention to the language that is being used, particularly in mathematics. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are understood, and delivered very effectively in Key Stage 2. Pupils respond well to the familiar patterns of these lessons and their learning benefits from the tight time scale that the teachers maintain.

19. Teachers prepare an exciting and appropriate range of resources to encourage a practical approach to learning and to stimulate pupils' interest. For example a variety of materials were available to help pupils understand the separation of materials whilst in Year 3 pupils had great fun creating a family to explain the number system. This encourages a climate in which pupils explore and take risks.
20. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Their individual education plans clearly identify specific needs in English and mathematics and the support assistants make good use of these during lessons. Pupils are grouped for most lessons following a scrutiny of records and tests, and additional classroom support is used well to help teach the pupils. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 3 receive effective additional literacy support (ALS). The ALS support is effective and makes a good contribution in developing phonic strategies for reading. There was good use of this information in grouping pupils in a geography lesson when they were required to use their knowledge of the 24-hour clock to plan a journey to Rome. Thoughtful grouping in a science lesson for Years 3 and 4 meant that pupils could support each other with reading.
21. Homework is set regularly in a wide range of subjects. It is demanding and challenging, particularly in mathematics, and supports the work in class as well as developing basic skills such as spelling and tables. Pupils with computers at home are encouraged to use them and, if they do not have them, time and help are given at lunchtime for the pupils to use the school machines. Lower-attaining pupils are well supported by their parents, reflecting the very good communication between home and school with the individual education programmes.

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

22. The quality of the curriculum and learning opportunities are satisfactory throughout the school. There has been substantial improvement in this aspect of the school since the last inspection. The curriculum is balanced and there is sufficient teaching time for all the National Curriculum subjects through a satisfactory three-year rolling programme of topics. The school day has been reorganised since the last inspection and allows for a better balance between the subjects. The shortage of computers is being addressed by the school and in the meantime teachers make the best use of those available to teach the full range of information and communication technology skills. The limited space in the hall for gymnastics lessons affects the development of skills in this aspect of physical education.
23. All statutory requirements are met. There are good strategies for teaching literacy skills which contribute to the above average standards in English, particularly at Key Stage 2. The strategies for the teaching of numeracy skills are also good at Key Stage 2, but the planning of lessons for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is not refined enough to allow for the wide ability ranges in the class, and expectations are not appropriate. Policies and schemes of work are in place or currently being revised in line with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) documentation to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum 2000. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when policies and schemes of work were inconsistent and lacked an overview. Homework is now well organised and fully integrated into curriculum planning, and supports pupils' learning very well.
24. The curriculum for children under five is appropriately planned to take account of the recommended areas of learning and the progression in the Early Learning Goals. The

provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and complies with the Code of Practice<sup>2</sup>. Information about the targets and the progress pupils are making is regularly shared with parents, and the individual educational plans are carefully thought out.

25. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities which broaden pupils' experiences, particularly in sport, research skills, mathematics, art and music. There are many trips to support the topic work as well as residential visits for outdoor activities for Years 5 and 6. Visitors are welcomed to the school and teachers develop what they offer in class lessons to introduce new skills and widen pupils' understanding. Good work is seen in the display of mosaic pictures made with an artist in residence and in discussion held after the visit of a dental nurse in Years 3 and 4. People from the community often visit the school to talk about their experiences, and evidence of this was seen in work on how people lived during the World War II, completed by pupils in Years 5 and 6.
26. The ethos of the school ensures that all pupils experience equality of opportunity and have full access to all aspects of the curriculum. The school is in the early stages of recognising the gifted and talented pupils. However, overall planning is satisfactory and individual targets are set for progress in pupils' learning. All resources have been checked to ensure that there are no stereotyped images in stories, reference books and play equipment.
27. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs education. These are delivered within aspects of the curriculum such as science topics about healthy eating and growth. Support is provided by members of the medical profession and a community police officer, and ensures that all pupils are aware of dangerous substances and the effects of tobacco.
28. There is an 'open-door policy' for parents and members of the community who wish to be involved with school activities. There is good involvement with the local community. Pupils participate in the distribution of gifts after Harvest Festival, join in Christmas festivities within the community and played a large part in the local Millennium Pageant. Parents are seen to join in and support pupils' learning in all classes. There are also good relationships with other schools and partner institutions in the area.
29. The provision for the spiritual development of the pupils is very good. The school makes very good provision as part of the religious education programme but also extends this well through the rest of the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their experiences in a wide range of contexts. For example, in history pupils in Year 6 read extracts from The Diary of Anne Frank as part of their project on World War II and reflected on how they would feel in such a situation. In an outstanding English lesson pupils discussed, when writing poems on 'The Spooky House', what makes them feel afraid and the teacher encouraged this reflection with comments such as, *"What do you think it would feel like sleeping in a mouldy quilt?"*.
30. Moral development is very well provided for. Pupils are helped to distinguish right from wrong in various ways. The strong Catholic ethos of the school is seen in the way in which pupils are expected to follow the Gospel values and apply them to their behaviour. Teachers and other adults set very good examples for the pupils through their own behaviour and reinforce this through school and classroom rules.

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Practice: This gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.



31. The school provides very well for the social development of pupils. This is closely linked to the emphasis placed on respect and tolerance. For example, older pupils play with and look after children from the reception class at break and lunchtimes. Pupils play well together regardless of gender or age. A very strong contributory factor is the way in which the headteacher or occasionally the deputy headteacher are always present on the playground mixing with the pupils and encouraging them to mix with each other. Teachers plan opportunities for boys and girls and pupils of different abilities to work together. This works well and adds to the happy atmosphere in the school. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility as monitors and this contributes to their understanding of community.
32. The planned provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory. Pupils have some experience of British and European culture through art and music, supported by visits to some museums, but this is basically white Christian culture. Although, in Year 6, pupils have an opportunity to study either South America or Africa at the end of the year, opportunities to develop an understanding of the wide richness and diversity of British society through their education are rare. A few opportunities, exist such as singing a calypso rhythm in a music lesson, but there is insufficient awareness amongst the staff of the need to develop this area of pupils' education, and the opportunity to discuss the origins of this music was missed.

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

33. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and progress is good, which is a substantial improvement on the findings of the last inspection. This information is used well by most teachers when planning work for pupils of different abilities. In the Year 1 and 2 class the scrutiny of work indicated that this information is not always used effectively. The school provides good additional support to pupils in all classes based on the information about pupils' progress and this is a contributory factor in raising their achievement. The headteacher and core subject co-ordinators analyse the data from statutory assessment and inform governors of pupils' end of key stage achievement and progress. This information in turn modifies and informs future action plans to raise standards and determine the allocation of resources, including staffing.
34. A school policy is in place and good procedures are followed throughout the school for assessing pupils' academic performance and progress in English, mathematics and science. Assessment is an integral part of planning for English, mathematics and science. It is not as effectively used in Key Stage 1 in mathematics and science as it is in Key Stage 2. Here half-term assessment identifies what the pupils know and can do and this information forms the basis for individual pupil targets and future lesson planning. Records for other subjects are also kept and used to monitor what pupils know and understand of the topics covered. This informs curriculum developments, lesson planning and the organisation of lessons.
35. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. There are well-organised folders of pupils' academic and personal achievements. Pupils take pride in adding to them and sharing them with other pupils and their parents. This makes them feel proud of their success and achievements and regularly informs parents about their children's targets and progress.
36. Satisfactory assessment procedures are completed to form a clear picture of what children can do when they start school. This information is used well in planning

lessons and tasks to meet the needs of each child and the requirements of the Early Learning Goals.

37. The school has maintained the caring Christian environment and good support for pupils which were found at the time of the previous inspection. The teachers know their pupils well, taking care of their individual needs. Parents are happy with the support and guidance offered to their children and value the caring ethos of the school.
38. All staff are aware of the procedures relating to child protection, and the policy fully complies with that laid down by the area child protection committee. However, no recent training has been undertaken. Teaching and support staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and the procedures in the school policy on discipline and bullying are very successful in creating an environment that is conducive to learning.
39. Attendance is monitored regularly and effectively by the headteacher, and parents are aware of their need to inform the school of the reason for any absence. This is maintaining the good attendance record of the school.

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

40. The school has built a very good partnership with parents which is helping pupils get the best from their education. This is a great improvement on the situation reported on during the last inspection and confirms parents' very positive views.
41. The quality of information provided by the school is very good. Regular newsletters keep the parents informed about curriculum developments in the school. Parents receive annual reports which are clear about the progress their children are making, although there is some inconsistency in what is offered to parents as points for improvement. The school is aware of this and is moving towards a system of two progress reports each year, with an agreed policy on target setting. Parents are very well informed by letter about the topics to be studied each term and the amount of homework their children will receive.
42. Levels of involvement of parents in the life of the school are very good. All parents are encouraged to be directly involved in school through homework, and a significant number respond by helping in class or accompanying school trips. Their contribution is valued highly by the teachers. Workshops for new parents on play and for all parents on the literacy and numeracy initiatives were well attended. Parents were consulted on the home-school agreement and the review of the behaviour policy. Parents are supportive of the school's homework policy and readily comment in their children's reading record book and homework diary.
43. The Friends Association is very active in raising considerable funds to support the school. In particular they raised sufficient funds to build a new classroom and equip the school with additional computers. This was an impressive project that has helped bring school and parents together.

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

44. The quality of leadership and management has improved significantly since the last inspection and has contributed to the improved quality of teaching, planning and relationships within the school.

45. Leadership and management are good with some notable strengths. The headteacher has a clear vision of how to continue to take the school forward. He delegates responsibilities effectively, supporting staff through a good programme of training and providing them with time to manage their subjects. Both the English and mathematics co-ordinators have successfully implemented, monitored and reviewed the national frameworks for teaching literacy and numeracy and play an important role in evaluating standards and responding to the performance data. The provision for special educational needs and the development of the science curriculum are also managed well. Appropriate action is now being taken to address the underachievement in mathematics and science in Key Stage 1 through support with planning and additional classroom support. It is too early for inspectors to judge whether such action will ensure that the ambitious targets for seven year olds will be met.
46. The role of the governors has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection, when it was a key issue. The delegation of responsibilities and duties through the chair is effectively bringing governors together. This is strengthened by the regular and good quality information they receive from the headteacher and co-ordinators. An effective committee structure has been developed and the governors are closely involved in planning improvements. They hold the school to account and are conscious of best value in their financial decisions, with raising standards as the prime objective. For example, they have appointed an additional part-time teacher to release the headteacher from a permanent class commitment. The benefits of this are already apparent in detailed evaluation that the headteacher and co-ordinators have made of standards of attainment and the quality of teaching. The information is used to effectively allocate support staff, set targets for year groups and refine the school's development plan.
47. The school has an appropriate number of qualified teachers and an effective team of learning assistants to support them. The induction procedures for new staff are appropriate. For example, the teacher joining the school in January has had an opportunity to visit the school and prepare for her new class. Support staff are effective in their role and make a good contribution to pupils' achievements, particularly in literacy and numeracy. They are not always fully involved at the start of lessons and this is an area to monitor in order that the school provides the very best value. Mid-day supervisors make a good contribution to the ethos of the school; for example, in encouraging pupils to play well together at lunchtimes and maintaining routines in the dining hall. The day-to-day administration is smooth and efficient. The capable secretary carries out her duties effectively and with minimum disruption to the work of the teachers.
48. The governors and headteacher have firmly addressed the issues of weaknesses in the quality of accommodation. They have a clear programme of developments that confirm the high expectations they have of their pupils' education. The old mobile classrooms have been replaced and two new classrooms recently built. The governors have obtained grants and set aside funds from the school budget to build a new classroom so an existing classroom can be relocated and the hall enlarged. This will provide more facilities for younger pupils, a larger library and space for the new computers. However, whilst the school awaits the start of this phase of development much needed space for indoor physical education and the development of suitable outdoor play areas for children in the Foundation Stage are lacking. In this aspect there has not been sufficient improvement since the last inspection. There is a lack of suitable marking on the outdoor play area for games such as netball.

49. Good use is made of the money available to improve the pupils' education. Additional teaching staff and support assistants have been provided to assist in raising standards in Year 2 and to support classes where there is a wide range of abilities. Funds are used appropriately to train staff, in particular support and welfare assistants and this is helping to improve their effectiveness in the classroom. Resources have improved significantly since the last inspection, when they were judged to be barely adequate and often poor. Most of the outdated books and equipment have been replaced with appropriate and better resources, although there are still shortages in science and music. The school does not have enough computers to allow all pupils to have sufficient time on them to complete the full Programmes of Study. This issue is being addressed and new computers funded through the National Grid for Learning are due to be installed during the course of this academic year.

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

50. To continue to improve the quality of education and raise standards further the school and governing body should:
- (1) raise standards in mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 by ensuring that the teachers' planning in Years 1 and 2 is sufficiently challenging and reflects fully the different needs of these pupils; (paragraphs 2,15, 77, 83, 91, 107 and 115)
  - (2) provide systematic and more rigorous provision for raising pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of the global society, so that the school further develops its aims; (paragraphs 32 and 108)
  - (3) deal with the remaining issues relating to the accommodation by pressing ahead with plans to complete the construction of a purpose-built early years unit and adjoining play space. (paragraphs 48 and 121)

#### **These additional minor issues should also be considered as part of the action plan:**

- 1) raise standards in geography through planning for the systematic development of pupils' mapping skills and ensuring regular comparative studies; (paragraphs 107 and 109)
- 2) ensure regular opportunities for developing investigative science skills; (paragraphs 91 and 92)
- 3) develop the pupils' skills in data-handling and mathematical reasoning; (paragraph 88)
- 4) further develop planning in the Foundation Stage to include clear guidance for all adults helping children in the areas of learning. (paragraphs 52, 66, and 69)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	19	50	28	0	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

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	151
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	5

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
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#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	12	7	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	--	--	--
	Girls	--	--	--
	Total	14	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (71)	79 ( 85)	95 (81)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	--	--	--
	Girls	--	--	--
	Total	12	13	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (76)	68 (81)	84 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

NB Test and examination data is excluded where either the number of girls or boys is ten or fewer to avoid identifying individuals. DfEE circular 7/99 & 8/99

### 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	11	14	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	11	11	12
	Total	21	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (73)	84 (68)	92 (86)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	10	10
	Girls	7	12	10
	Total	20	22	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (73)	88 (68)	80 (73)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	133
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)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	27

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	247,201
Total expenditure	253,916
Expenditure per pupil	1,693
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,220
Balance carried forward to next year	15,505

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

151

Number of questionnaires returned

84

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	39	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	43	7	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	38	1	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	50	12	0	0
The teaching is good.	55	39	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	51	5	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	32	4	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	48	43	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	37	12	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	56	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	39	10	1	17



## **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**

51. At the time of the inspection there were 17 children full-time in the reception class. These will be joined by more reception aged children at the beginning of the spring and summer terms. On entry to school most children's attainment is below the expected average for their age. They make good progress in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy and the number aspect of mathematics. They make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, and by the time they enter Year 1 most children are in line to achieve the requirements of the Early Learning Goals in the areas of learning. No secure judgement can be made on the children's physical development due to the limitations of the accommodation and the lack of a designated play space with outside equipment for young children.
52. Teaching is good overall and staff, often with the support of parents, work well together. The teacher, nursery nurse and learning support assistant have good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and there is good teaching of the basic skills. Staff make good use of information gained from regular checks on what children have learnt and simple tests that are given to children when they first come to school. With this information they plan a good balance of group, class and individual activities. Staff use good questions to encourage the children's interest in books and in one lesson they quickly learned to recognise how speech is set out differently in a story. Lessons are interesting and taught at a good pace that sustains the interest and enthusiasm for learning of all the children.
53. Links with parents are also good. Parents are regularly informed of their children's progress and are given information about how they can help their children. Many come in to the class to help with activities. They hear their children read at home and comment in the reading diary. This is a successful development since the time of the last inspection.
54. The reception classroom is large and organised in areas that encourage children to make choices about what to do next. Displays of the children's work create a colourful and stimulating classroom. The secure outside play area is used at playtimes for the older pupils to play with the reception children. It is uninviting and the lack of games markings and equipment means that children in the reception class do not use it regularly for creative or structured physical play and this limits the progress children make in this area of their learning.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

55. Children make good progress and by the time they come to the end of the Foundation Stage their attainment in social development is in line with the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.
56. The teaching is good. The children are managed sensitively and encouraged to take part in all that goes on in the classroom. There is a caring ethos in the class and there are good relationships between children and adults and between all the children. There are good systems in place to teach and respect class and school rules. For example, children receive regular individual praise for good attitudes in school and 'a marble in the jar' towards a class reward. The children behave very well in the

classroom, in the playground and around the school. They share play equipment, work together on building models and develop stories in the role-play area. They care for and help each other when changing before physical education. They listen well to the teacher, respond to instructions, follow the class rules and help clear up the classroom after practical activities such as cooking.

### **Communication, language and literature**

- 57. Most children by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage achieve in line with the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in speaking, reading and writing. Most speak clearly and with confidence when working in a group and when talking about their activities.
- 58. The quality of teaching is good. This results in the children making good progress. At the end of each session the staff encourage the children to talk about their activities and review their tasks to the whole class. Many opportunities are given for the children to read and write, either independently using the writing and story areas, or as part of a teacher focus literacy group<sup>3</sup>.
- 59. The teacher encourages correct vocabulary by repeating phrases and words used by children when they are talking about their work or sharing their thoughts. There is good intervention by adults in the imaginative play areas in the classroom. The children enjoy shared reading times and have a good understanding of the way to read a book, the alphabet and many phonic sounds. The high-attaining children are beginning to read simple caption books from memory and are building a sight vocabulary of key words. They know how to use pictures to help them understand a simple story and most can talk about what they have read. All children take home reading books to share with their family and are gaining confidence in their reading skills.
- 60. Most children are beginning to form their letters and can write their name. Many children can correctly copy the teacher's script, and higher-attaining pupils are beginning to make marks that 'tell' a story.

### **Mathematical development**

- 61. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children have mathematical skills in line with the requirements of the Early Learning Goals. They make good progress in number. They count on and back and recognise numbers to 20. Higher-attaining children count confidently in twos to 20 and understand 'one more' and 'one less'. Most children order objects in size, recognise some simple shapes and are beginning to recognise coins and understand simple shopping with pennies up to ten pence.
- 62. The quality of teaching is good. There is good pace to the mental mathematics at the start of each lesson as children begin to learn the number bonds to ten, and a wide variety of practical group and individual activities reinforce the basic skills.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

- 63. By the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage most children's knowledge and understanding of the world are in line with the expectation of the Early Learning Goals. Children talk about people in the school community that help them and the various

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<sup>3</sup> Teacher focus literacy group: A small teaching group where all pupils share the same objectives which are drawn from the school's strategy for teaching literacy.

people in their own family. Most children showed great enthusiasm for the hedgehog that visited the playground and made sensible comments about where it might live and what it liked eating. The teacher managed this unannounced visitor very well, giving children the chance to talk and reflect about the animal world.

- 64. Whilst they worked on a large play mat of the world children talked about the different countries and matched artefacts from Russia, Canada and South America to the correct continents on the world map.
- 65. Children learned to cut, fold, join and glue whilst making Christmas cards and are beginning to draw designs to use when making models from construction kits. They use the computer confidently for alphabet, word recognition and number games. They work with a programmable toy and know to give it instructions to move forwards.
- 66. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory. The staff provide an interesting range of activities linked to class topics and work alongside the children questioning, supporting and extending their skills and understanding in these areas.

### **Physical development**

- 67. Only a small amount of time was available during the inspection to observe physical education, due to the organisation of the timetable and the limitations of the accommodation. No secure judgement has been formed on teaching physical education or on the outside play activities. Children control their bodies well in a restricted space and catch, balance and throw balloons. They have adequate hand control for their age and control pencils, scissors, brushes, carpentry tools and cooking utensils well as they make Christmas calendars and decorate the Christmas cakes they have made. By the time children come to the end of the reception year they are in line to reach expectations.

### **Creative development**

- 68. By the time come children to the end of the reception year they achieve standards in line with the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. They participate in a variety of creative activities and experience many aspects of painting, drawing, collage, model making and working with clay.
- 69. The teaching and planning for creative activities are satisfactory and children make sound progress in this area. The nursery nurse and learning assistant make a valuable contribution to the development of the children's skills and knowledge in this area. Their discussions with the children and good organisational skills encouraged the children to make decisions for themselves. However, the objectives for this area of learning for young children are not specific enough to get the most from the activities.
- 70. Children recognise colours and are beginning to use them for effect in their imaginative paintings. They enthusiastically respond to music, enjoy singing and join in many familiar action songs and nursery rhymes. The play area of 'Santa's Toy Workshop' is very popular at present and children create and perform many dramatic stories about the elf and fairy that are helping Father Christmas.

## **ENGLISH**

71. The inspection found satisfactory standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing for pupils aged seven. This is a better picture than provided by the most recent National Curriculum tests for seven year olds and is a consequence of the effective action taken by the school. There is now more focused planning of English lessons within the structure of the literacy hour, with targeted support for individual pupils from experienced, trained and knowledgeable learning assistants and booster classes run by a part-time teacher. The teaching of literacy is better organised with the use of a carousel of activities to reinforce basic skills through a series of set grammar and spelling tasks whilst the teacher focuses on a reading group.
72. The standards reached by 11 year olds are good. This is as a result of the teachers' good subject knowledge and teaching skills, the support provided by the trained learning assistants and the detailed relevant planning of the literacy hour and the 'English carousel'.
73. Since the last inspection all issues identified in English have been well addressed. Standards have been raised throughout the school. Teaching has improved, particularly at Key Stage 2, where teachers have good subject knowledge and very good relationships with all the pupils. Teachers use very good questions to develop knowledge and understanding, and organise pupils effectively with tasks matched to their abilities. Lesson plans are more detailed and clearly address progression for all pupils and throughout the key stage. Resources are now sufficient to support teaching and learning. There is a satisfactory range of books in the school reading scheme, many sets of group readers and Big Books for shared reading and a small but adequate school library that is supplemented by books loaned from the county library.
74. In English, standards in speaking and listening meet expectations in both key stages. Throughout the school the pupils listen and respond appropriately to adults and other pupils. At Key Stage 1 pupils are quietly confident. They sensibly respond to questions and enthusiastically contribute their own ideas and comments in group reading and during topic discussion. They listen attentively to stories and recall plot and characters. By the age of 11, pupils use a rich and specific vocabulary and respond to the very good questioning by the teachers with clarity and well thought out ideas. They demonstrate confidence when speaking to the class about their work and enjoy discussing the books they have read, their millennium festivities and facts from their topic on World War II. In Years 3 and 4, pupils talk enthusiastically and use specific vocabulary as they speak about their art work and discuss their hypothetical plans for a journey from school to Manchester Airport using public transport.
75. By the age of seven most pupils reach average standards in reading, making satisfactory progress overall. They read accurately a range of fiction and non-fiction books from the school reading scheme, but these do not always challenge the more able pupils. Most pupils understand what they read and the higher-attaining pupils talked about the plot and the characters in their story. They are aware of the author and illustrator of the books they read, and many know how to use the index and contents pages of reference books. They have a good knowledge of phonics and know how to use a simple dictionary.
76. By the age of 11 all pupils read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books from the school library and books brought from home. They make very good progress in understanding quite complex stories such as the book 'Goodnight, Mr Tom'. In Year 6, pupils share their ideas about the character of Mr Tom, referring to his actions and his manner of his speech to justify their opinions. They recognise why the author wrote in non-standard English in parts of this story. They understand and deduce ideas from

the texts well. Pupils discuss their favourite authors and give reasons for their choice. They skim and scan reference books and newspapers to find information about life during the World War II and use the computer to find out more about Churchill.

77. Progress in writing is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and, by the age of seven, pupils' writing is in line with expectations for their age. Most pupils know and understand how to correctly use capital letters and full stops in a sentence, with the more able pupils recognising question marks, exclamation marks and speech bubbles. They spell familiar common words correctly and are beginning to recognise simple spelling patterns and make satisfactory attempts at phonetic spelling. Although pupils experience a satisfactory range of writing tasks, there is a considerable reliance on worksheets where pupils are required to cut and stick words rather than develop their writing skills. This is not challenging the more able pupils to extend their writing skills. The standard of handwriting of many pupils is unsatisfactory. Letters are poorly formed and not of regular size, words are not evenly spaced and the presentation of most pupils' work in English is untidy. No pupils use a cursive script.
78. By the age of 11 the pupils are writing at greater length and in a wide range of styles and purposes, and standards are above average. They are making good progress in using appropriate punctuation. They present their work well and write in a style appropriate to the subject and to the intended reader. They plan, draft and write well in a variety of formats using topics and other subjects as stimuli. Good work in Years 4 and 5 for the school newspaper demonstrated a competent use of word-processing skills on the computers. A range of good work is seen in Years 5 and 6, including a moving biography of a family member and his war experiences, and a critical report written by a famous historical character. Pupils' spelling is generally accurate and handwriting is usually well formed.
79. Teaching is always good and often very good in Key Stage 2. The presentations are lively and the lessons are well planned, based on the requirements of the literacy strategy as well as on the understanding of what help pupils need in order to learn. The support staff are used wisely both to support those with identified needs and to encourage valuable discussion and preparation. There is a slight weakness in Years 1 and 2 and many of the worksheets do not stretch the more able pupils. Teachers make good use of other subjects and topics to extend English skills and this is further developed through well-chosen homework.
80. The management of the subject is very good. The subject co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and is a very good role model for the rest of the staff in teaching English. She gives good support to all the staff and assists the headteacher in an analysis of the assessment results. She monitors planning and teaching, gives constructive and relevant advice and arranges staff training and development efficiently.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81. Standards are below average for pupils aged seven but rise to a level which is above average by the age of 11. For a significant proportion of pupils standards are very high in many aspects of their work. Standards in using number are particularly good and pupils have a good range of strategies, both mental and using pencil and paper. By the age of 11, pupils have developed a good range of effective strategies for solving mathematical problems. Standards are higher in this aspect of mathematics since the last inspection and pupils' progress through the key stage is consistent. This is a

consequence of good teaching and the effective sharing of information between teachers about what pupils can and cannot do.

82. When children enter the reception class the majority lack confidence with numbers and have limited mathematical language. Progress is inconsistent and by the time they are seven most pupils still count on their fingers when adding numbers below ten together and are unsure of strategies for adding and subtracting larger numbers. Most count in their heads forwards and backwards in twos to 50 and in tens to a 100, but do not use these facts when doing simple sums.
83. The teaching was satisfactory in Key Stage 1. The teachers use good strategies such as the 'talking beanbag' and the story of the hungry caterpillar to extend pupils' knowledge of 'more' and 'less'. Pupils in Year 1 were asked searching questions such as, "*Which day of the week did the caterpillar eat the most?*", which encouraged them to look closely at the graph they had made of the 'Hungry Caterpillar'. The mental activities were taught well and pupils responded enthusiastically. Pupils in Year 2 quickly gained in confidence at working out the teacher's missing numbers, and higher-attaining pupils increased their responses after a slow start. The resources to develop their knowledge of time and counting are well chosen and matched to the different abilities. Additional support was used well to support lower-attaining pupils and they made good progress in learning to tell the time. However, there are weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics at this key stage and this affects the achievements of pupils. A scrutiny of pupils' work found weaknesses in the planning in the Year 1 and 2 class. Too much of the work was not planned to address the different abilities in the class and often left the pupils in Year 2 unchallenged, particularly in number work. Some of the number work was too difficult for lower-attaining pupils, such as finding eighths and sixteenths of regular shapes when these concepts are not understood. Work was sometimes chosen that expected too much of pupils; for example, in recording the minutes past and to the hour, when most pupils were unsure of counting in fives and had to count one by one. There were many mistakes in pupils' work which revealed uncertainties, particularly in strategies, such as near doubles<sup>4</sup>.
84. The school strategy for teaching numeracy in Key Stage 2 is very effective and pupils make very good progress. They gain in personal confidence as they are rewarded for their effort and this ensures very good learning. As a result of the praise, pupils of all abilities will have a go at offering strategies to solve real-life problems. A lower-attaining pupil in Year 3 stepped up to the board to show how they could use the solution of one sum to work out another, whilst another who had understood that multiplication was repeated addition set out her sum for all to see. This had tremendous benefit for other pupils uncertain how to tackle multiplication.
85. Teachers' subject knowledge in Key Stage 2 is good. They are confident and enjoy the lessons as much as the pupils. The lessons are well balanced, and the mental warm-up activity is lively and fast and always finishes on a point that leaves pupils feeling confident yet challenged. Praise was used well both to extend thinking and for correct answers. This establishes a confident climate where pupils set problems for each other, as in setting a journey for each other to follow, and meant that a class of pupils in Years 3 and 4 picked up a game of fizz buzz with little difficulty.
86. A strong feature of the teaching in the Year 4/5 class was the high expectation that the class would beat the clock and improve on past performances in solving number problems. These were challenging and required pupils to listen carefully to the

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<sup>4</sup> Near doubles: One of a range of strategies taught to pupils to help them manipulate numbers quickly eg  $8+9$  can be taught as  $(8+8) + 1$ .

changes in direction or the target numbers during a multiplication race. A similar good pace to this part of the lesson was kept up as pupils in Years 3 and 4 raced up and down to 100, counting in threes and fours from different starting points. Pupils are taught well to approach problems in a clear and logical way, as in a Year 6 lesson on percentages and VAT.

87. Teachers manage the lessons very well across the school and leave enough time for pupils to share their strategies. This encourages very positive attitudes towards mathematics, which is a favourite subject amongst many pupils in the school. The displays in the three older classes are well chosen to develop ideas of number patterns as well as to explore the relationship between the different multiplication tables. These are of particular benefit when pupils and teachers refer to them during lessons.
88. The scrutiny of work in Key Stage 2 found that pupils were set work very well matched to their abilities. Older pupils confidently worked at plotting co-ordinates in four quadrants and higher-attaining pupils translated and transformed these by altering the negative and positive values. Homework is used very well to extend class work, with good examples given to guide parents and pupils. There are good opportunities in most other subjects for pupils to use mathematics, for example Years 3 and 4 had graphed their results of a survey on favourite sandwiches whilst pupils in Year 6 completed spreadsheets with the higher-attaining pupils going on to enter their own formula. However, teachers' planning is still weaker in this aspect and pupils are not yet entirely confident about explaining their findings. The teachers are using the limited number of computers to introduce pupils to simple programming and devices such as light and heat sensors, but the lack of hardware means that pupils do not get enough opportunity to consolidate these skills.
89. The subject is very well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. The monitoring by the headteacher and co-ordinator has led to consistency in the delivery of the mental warm-up at the start of lessons which has raised standards over the last two years. Assessment and record keeping combined with the careful analysis of test information have improved the teachers' understanding of pupils' strengths, and extra staff have been deployed to provide more support for all pupils including those with specific targets identified in their individual education plans. This information is very well used by teachers in Key Stage 2 in their lesson planning but is less effectively used to raise standards in Years 1 and 2. Resources are now adequate to support numeracy teaching.

## **SCIENCE**

90. Standards are below expectations for pupils aged seven but rise to a level which is above average at the age of 11.
91. At Key Stage 1 one lesson was observed which was taught by the relief teacher. It is therefore not possible to make a reliable judgement on teaching in Key Stage 1. Pupils' previous work was examined and discussions were held with pupils. By the age of seven, pupils know how to sort materials according to simple criteria such as whether they are magnetic or non-magnetic or sink and float, and they have a basic understanding of forces such as pushing and pulling. In this work the investigative process is not effectively developed and pupils do not record their results clearly. Pupils have a basic understanding of simple circuits and many can construct a circuit using a battery, wires and bulb that causes the bulb to light, but there is very little

difference between the work of Year 1 pupils and those in Year 2. Consequently the opportunity for pupils to build on previous attainment is not guaranteed.

92. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching overall is good. Particular strengths of the teaching in Key Stage 2 are the good questioning skills that draw out pupils understanding and the very good relationships with pupils that encourage and motivate them. By the age of 11, pupils understand and apply knowledge about food chains when studying the growth of other animals and accurately record the impact of different environments on plant growth. There is very clear progress through the key stage and, by the age of 11, pupils' knowledge and understanding are very good. They use a range of techniques for reporting on their findings. For example, pupils wrote in graphic detail their story of the journey of a piece of food through the body. By the age of 11, pupils have a good understanding of materials and suggest how a mixture of iron filing, salt, sand and grass can be separated. However, their scientific reasoning and practical skills, although satisfactory, do not match their knowledge and understanding. Pupils effectively use a computer to record the results of temperature changes noted by sensors connected to the computer. However, the use of data-handling skills to support recording the results of all investigations are underdeveloped, limiting the contribution that this subject makes to pupils' numeracy skills. Older pupils present their science topic work clearly and this makes a good contribution to their methodical approach to investigative work.
93. The school is developing science well through the adoption of a new scheme of work and the close monitoring and analysis of assessments carried out by the co-ordinator. In the previous report resources were criticised. The school has addressed this issue to the best of their ability, but resources, although better, are only just adequate. In particular the school requires more material for the study of electricity. Opportunities to further pupils' knowledge of areas of science are planned into other topic work such as history and art. The areas for development at Key Stage 1 are well known and action has started to address them.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

94. Only one art lesson was seen during the inspection, which is not enough to form a secure judgement on the teaching of art throughout the school. From the scrutiny of pupils' work and the displays around the school of their current work the standard of pupils' work at the end of both key stages is judged to be in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum for pupils at seven and 11. This is similar to at the findings of the last inspection.
95. Pupils experience a wide range of art and design activities that include an understanding of craft and design, investigating and making art, and knowledge of some famous artists and their work, such as Lowry, Monet and Kandinsky. However, there was no evidence that pupils find out about the lives and work of artists and craft workers from non-western cultures.
96. By the age of seven, pupils mix and explore ways of using paint and are beginning to understand shades of colour. They draw with a range of pencils, crayons, chalks and felt-tip pens, producing realistic and imaginary scenes. Around the classrooms these are displayed well and brighten the learning environment of the younger pupils. These pupils work with a range of media and show their sound skills in collage. Good work was seen in using paper, plastic and textiles to create 'a touch maze' and a class wall-painting depicted a listening walk as part of a project about the senses. The clay pots,



two-dimensional and three-dimensional models and puppets are decorated well with a variety of colourful patterns and designs.

97. By the age of 11, pupils competently use a range of drawing tools including chalk, pastels, charcoal and poster colour and have learnt printing, collage, mosaic, batik and paper folding. The sketch books are used well by pupils to prepare for more-detailed observational drawing and to practise technique. Art and design are linked together well. For example, pupils work with a variety of textiles and decorate costumes using embroidery, beads and sequins for historical pageants and plays. They used clay, card and wood to make a variety of models, following their designs closely. Teachers are starting to make use of computer design software, and pupils have shown an aptitude for this in their Christmas card designs.
98. Pupils know about the lives and work of some famous artists, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 enthusiastically participate in discussion about the similarities and contrasts between the work of Francis Bacon and Picasso. They enjoy drawing in the style of, or copying the work of, famous artists as well as creating their own imaginary paintings with an interesting use of colour. Some of the pupils' work is displayed at present in the local library and has been featured in the local newspaper.
99. The co-ordinator gives satisfactory support to the staff in planning. A policy and clear guidelines are currently being reviewed with reference to the QCA documents. The school has benefited from an artist visiting the school and working with pupils on mosaics. From this has developed a popular art club, and its mosaic work is proudly displayed around the school. A particular improvement since the last inspection is the greater access pupils now have to art experiences, brought about by better resources.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

100. Pupils aged seven and 11 meet the expectations of the National Curriculum, and standards are higher than previously reported. At that time there was little evidence that pupils were designing their own products, there was no policy and resources were limited.
101. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some particular strengths in the range of stimulating activities that are planned for the pupils to link in with other studies. For example, pupils have designed and toasted sandwiches and are designing posters for the youngest children in their science work on healthy foods. Older pupils have designed and made hobby-horses, toys, costumes, pageant banners and World War II cardboard gas masks and this has helped develop a good understanding of what life was like during World War II. Teachers pay good attention to the evaluation process. The oldest pupils write constructive evaluations about the suitability of their design and the materials they chose to make Christmas boxes. Good questions are asked of the youngest children; for example, "Is it nice? Why?", when talking to them about the Christmas cakes they have made. These encourage pupils to discuss and evaluate their own designs and the materials.
102. By the age of seven, pupils measure and use appropriate tools to cut materials and are skilful at using glue, sticky tape and split pins when building models. They are developing sound technology skills and an understanding of the design process when making topical and exciting products such as wooden calendar frames and a pretend rocket made from a balloon. They use a variety of construction kits to design and make their own toys, such as a stickle-brick Thomas the Tank Engine and a dog made

from magnetic bricks. They are beginning to explore and understand how to programme a simple robot toy.

103. By the age of 11, pupils know and apply the design process appropriately, as seen in the pop-up cards, stick puppets, board games, and the range of products they make as part of their topic activities. They work with construction kits to understand mechanisms and are beginning to use the computer to help them design, plan and evaluate their work.
104. Pupils enjoy their work in design and technology and work well together on projects such as the making of costumes, banners and artefacts for the recent Millennium Pageant. All pupils talk enthusiastically to their class about their designs and finished objects, such as the Christmas puppets. The older pupils are beginning to consider the opinion of others as part of their own evaluation process of their designs.
105. There are guidelines and a policy that are being revised in line with recommendations from the QCA document. The co-ordinator gives satisfactory support to staff in lesson planning. However, monitoring of the teaching and assessment of the subject are in an early stage of development. There are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning. These are stored safely, with equipment and tools in good condition.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106. The standard reached by seven and 11 year olds is below expectations in many areas of geography and not as high as reported at the last inspection. One lesson was seen in each key stage, work was scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils. A particular strength is the pupils' knowledge of their own locality as this has developed through the local-studies work undertaken in history. As a consequence pupils have a good understanding of how their locality fits into the British Isles.
107. Planning is not specific enough to meet the different needs of pupils in Key Stage 1. There is an over-reliance on colouring-in worksheets and not enough practical work. The work is often set for all pupils in the class irrespective of ability. In the lesson on giving directions the task was too easy for many pupils, who were ready to explore directions from different places on the map. Teaching is better in Key Stage 2 and literacy and numeracy skills are developed well. For example, the Year 4/5 lesson had been well planned, and a good range of atlases and maps were used competently by the pupils to provide accurate journey times to Rome. However, the scrutiny of work shows that mapping skills are not developed coherently through the school. Pupils do not adequately extend their labelling techniques or develop their use of co-ordinates to give the location of features on maps. Consequently older pupils are not aware of how most cartographers give the proper explanation for locations.
108. Pupils know of the major countries in Europe but have little knowledge of the world and particularly of matters relating to global issues and their understanding of other cultures. The lack study of people from other cultures is a matter of concern, particularly as the local community offers only a limited opportunity for young people to appreciate the nature of a multi-ethnic community and the global community.
109. Geography has not developed since the last inspection and the good standards have not been maintained. In the main the present scheme of work is not detailed enough in providing a clear breakdown of how the key skills are to develop. There have been a number of co-ordinators since the last inspection and none have really had enough

time to overhaul the scheme of work or monitor the standards achieved. The newly-adopted national guidelines for geography have been welcomed and some teachers' planning is beginning to reflect clearer learning objectives and pupils' attainment.

## **HISTORY**

110. Standards are in line with expectations for pupils aged 11 and very similar to those reported at the last inspection. A scrutiny of work from pupils in Years 1 and 2 did not provide enough information to make a secure judgement on standards by the age of seven. By the age of seven, pupils successfully list and identify those toys that come from a long time ago. They follow up experiences at a local museum with well-chosen activities such as matching people in different costumes to the objects they may have used. In the main much of the work seen is dully presented and makes little contribution to developing pupils' historical skills.
111. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 thoroughly enjoy their study of the World War II. As a result of very good teaching they have acquired a good understanding of what it was like to live through this period. They have based their understanding on works of fiction and autobiography as well as looking at newspapers, photographs and artefacts from the period. They have made good progress in their enquiry skills with a well-planned visit to a real Anderson shelter. This experience fired their imagination when they were writing about their feelings during an imaginary air raid. The visit was further developed in a dance performance which gave an opportunity to act out many of the emotions that complemented their writing. A notable strength of this lesson was the collaboration between pupils in deciding some of the elements of the dance to show people's fears and thoughts.
112. The lessons are well supported by real evidence and challenging questions that encouraged research. Visits to local factories are very well planned and thoroughly researched. Pupils prepared lists of questions to ask on their visit to the pottery and this had helped the lower-attaining pupils recall accurately how factory practices had changed over the years. The experienced and knowledgeable ancillary played an active part in the Year 5/6 lesson helping pupils describe their thoughts and feelings.
113. The school was criticised in the last inspection for a narrow approach to teaching history. This has been successfully addressed by the co-ordinator, who has expanded the range of visits into the local area to develop research and enquiry skills.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. Standards in information technology were a key issue in the last report. Since then the National Curriculum requirements have changed. Standards of attainment have improved considerably since then. The lack of some equipment means they still fall below the expectations for pupils aged seven and 11 in aspects relating to programming, use of the internet and retrieval skills. Pupils meet expectations in their word processing skills across the school. In Key Stage 2 most elements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are covered and the limitation on pupils' attainment by the age of seven and 11 is caused by the shortage of computers. The school is addressing this and new computers funded through the National Grid for Learning are due to be installed later in this academic year in order to provide all pupils with sufficient access to computers to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum.

115. There was insufficient evidence to form a secure judgement on the quality of teaching. During a scrutiny of work and discussions with the pupils' inspectors found that a broad range of opportunities are being provided for pupils, but this does not always ensure that they are becoming independent users of information and communication technology. Pupils use art and graphic programs to demonstrate their ability to 'drag and drop' when using a mouse and by Year 2 they use the programme to make their own Christmas cards. Some go on to add their own text, although skills in this area are not secure for many.
116. By the age of 11, pupils experience almost all of the required elements of the Programmes of Study, but the shortage of computers means that they do not all have sufficient time to achieve the expected levels of attainment. Nevertheless some of the work observed is of a good quality. Pupils make good use of word processing to support the development of their literacy skills. In Year 3, lower-attaining pupils use the computer when writing stories and poems. Their presented work meets expectations in using word-processing skills such as capitals and different fonts. Pupils use desktop-publishing programs to produce a school 'newspaper' that includes articles about their school. The oldest higher-attaining pupils develop simple multimedia presentations and support their science through the use of sensing equipment. Some pupils control simple toys through the computer. Much of this work is of good quality and derives from the enthusiasm of the teachers to raise standards in this subject. However, insufficient use is made of computers to interrogate CD-ROMs to support learning in other subjects and at present insufficient use is made of the Internet. Much of this is due to the shortage of computers and suitable software.
117. The subject is managed effectively and good plans are in place to address the future development of the subject. The governors have ensured that the building alterations have included workstation sites for the new computers and the new telephone lines. New computers have been ordered, with the necessary funding set aside to provide additional training. The training needs of the teachers have been identified and some training has already started. The effect of this can be seen in classrooms at Key Stage 2, where teachers are now more confident in using information technology with the pupils.

## **MUSIC**

118. It was not possible to make a judgement about pupils standards achieved at the age of seven. The timetable arrangements meant that it was only possible to observe one lesson at Key Stage 2 during the period of the inspection. Discussion with pupils and the evidence of this lesson indicate that the standards seen at the time of the last inspection are being maintained and 11 year olds reach standards that are above those expected.
119. An examination of planning shows that pupils have a satisfactory range of musical experience. They make music and have suitable opportunities to appreciate various styles. The oldest pupils in the school have a good understanding of time and sing well. In the lesson observed, pupils sang in three parts while another group played chords on xylophones. Pupils sing well and are able to combine an ostinato with a calypso rhythm. They develop confidence in this during the lesson and perform well. Pupils have good opportunities to learn the recorder and a range of musical instruments. The criticism in the previous report that pupils had insufficient experience

of performing and composing music has been addressed. Resources are of good quality.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. It was only possible to see one dance lesson at Key Stage 2 during the inspection. However, discussions with pupils and with the newly-appointed co-ordinator together with the evidence from inter-school activities indicate that standards are in line with those expected by the age of seven and 11. School records show that the school meets the requirements for swimming and pupils exceed the expected standard.
121. In the dance lesson pupils' attainment was above expectations and the links made with history supported learning in that subject. The lesson was taught well with a good focus on technical language and a chance for the pupils to discuss their work with each other. Discussions and an examination of planning show that pupils experience a suitable range of activities within the resources available. However, the school hall is too small for pupils to experience a quality programme in gymnastics. The school is aware of this and the governors are addressing the issue. Funds have been raised and grants obtained to provide a larger hall.
122. A suitable range of extra-curricular activities support the physical education curriculum. Equal opportunities are addressed well, with boys and girls having access to netball and football. The co-ordinator has drawn up a detailed development plan for the subject and obtained funding and training through the TOPS scheme.