

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Higher Broughton

Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105970

Headteacher: Mrs J McDermott

Reporting inspector: Mr A Clark  
21596

Dates of inspection: 9 - 12 October 2000

Inspection number: 224504

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hadfield Street Higher Broughton Salford
Postcode:	M7 4XG
Telephone number:	0161 792 3973
Fax number:	0161 792 2896
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Father D Macfarlane
Date of previous inspection:	15 June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr A Clark 21596	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Provision for pupils with English as an additional language and travellers' children	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? Leadership and management
Mrs J Cross 8988	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values, and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr R Walker 19708	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children under five English Art Music	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr J Porteous 28011	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education Equal Opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services

5 Huntsman Close  
Beaumont Park  
Huddersfield  
HD4 7BR

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

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

# REPORT CONTENTS

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

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school in inner city Salford. There are 192 pupils on roll between the ages of three and eleven, including 30 children who attend full-time in the nursery. Ninety per cent of the pupils are of white United Kingdom origin. A small percentage of pupils are of African origin and from central Europe including three pupils from travellers' families who receive additional support for their learning. Over 70 per cent of pupils are entitled to a free school meal which is well above the national average. Almost 50 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs including four pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Again these figures are higher than in most schools. The number of pupils on roll has fallen over the last ten years and many pupils leave or start the school at different points in their education. Only half of the pupils who were in the school as seven-year-olds are still in the present Year 6. Attainment on entry to the school is well below expected levels.

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

St Thomas of Canterbury is an effective school. It is well led and the teaching is of good quality. As a result standards, although well below national average in English, mathematics and science, are steadily improving. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and relationships are good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and they make good progress.
- Provision for children under five is good.
- The school is well led and pupils receive a caring, challenging and Christian education.
- Parents have a high opinion of the school.

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

- Pupils ability to speak clearly and use a wide vocabulary.
- The quality of pupils' written work, its presentation and the speed at which it is written.
- The speed with which pupils' recall number facts.
- Competence in using computers.
- Attendance and punctuality.

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

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

The school was last inspected in June 1998 and has made good improvement in the short time since then. Standards have steadily risen from well below average although speaking skills in particular are still low. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved significantly for five to seven-year-old pupils. The governing body is now effectively involved in monitoring standards and developments. There is now very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils' progress is good. The school has appropriate procedures for managing the professional development of its staff. The action points from the last inspection have been tackled well. The school has overcome its serious weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection and is well placed for further improvement.



## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E*	E	D	A
Mathematics	E	E	D	A
Science	E*	E	E	C

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

Standards have risen from 1998 when they were in the bottom five per cent for the country in English and science. In the year 2000, test results were over 20 per cent higher than in 1999 for English mathematics and science and exceeded the school's targets. The standards are well above those for schools with similar free school meals statistics in English. However, they are still low. This comparison does not reflect the very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Standards in science are still too low although over 20 per cent more pupils achieved the nationally expected result than in the previous year. Achievement for all pupils is at least satisfactory and it is good for those with special educational needs. The pupils' skills in speaking and listening are too low and they do not write independently at any length. Older pupils do not recall number facts quickly or accurately enough. Pupils make use of computers in several subjects but basic skills are too low. This is largely because of a lack of resources since the last inspection, which has recently been improved. In Key Stage 1 standards are well below the national average in English and close to the national average in mathematics and science.

Achievement through the nursery and reception class is good, although most pupils do not reach typical levels for their age in language and communication, mathematics, and personal and social development.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are sound and have improved significantly for five to seven-year-olds.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory. Up to age seven it is good. A few older pupils show too little self-control in lessons such as physical education, but staff quickly and effectively handle the situation.
Personal development and relationships	This is good. Pupils establish good relationships with staff and other pupils and show respect for the school.
Attendance	This is unsatisfactory and affects pupils' learning. A significant number of pupils arrive late for school and this impedes their learning because they miss the start of their lessons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In 70 per cent of lessons observed the quality of teaching was good or better, including 20 per cent very good teaching. In five per cent of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory and in the remaining 25 per cent it was satisfactory. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are generally well taught but not enough attention is paid to the pupils' care and accuracy in presenting their work. The work set is effectively matched to the level of attainment for pupils of all levels of ability. Pupils enjoy their work and respect each other's views. Many pupils have difficulty concentrating for long, but teaching uses a good range of strategies to keep the pupils purposefully involved.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils enjoy an interesting and broad curriculum. It is particularly good for children under five, helping them to settle quickly into positive learning habits. The school meets its statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils' needs are identified early and all staff provide good support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This is sound. Pupils' language and social needs are carefully planned for, and the pupils are fully integrated into the class.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The strong Christian ethos runs through all the school's work and gives pupils the assurance to grow in confidence and to respect themselves and others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Strategies to improve behaviour are very good. Attendance is carefully monitored. Parents have a very high opinion of the school and appreciate the information they receive. A few parents are involved in the work of the school, but do not have a significant effect on pupils' learning.

Relationships with parents and carers are satisfactory. Parents feel welcome in the school and support their children through homework and through helping on educational visits. The support parents give in the classroom is not so strong.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led by the headteacher with good support from the senior staff team. All staff contribute to planning for improvements and monitor the progress made. At present the school does not have a deputy headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The chair of governors works closely with the headteacher and is well informed. Governors evaluate the quality of teaching and learning effectively and fulfil their statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are sound procedures in place for the headteacher and subject leaders to assess progress. Useful analysis is made of statistical data, particularly in English and mathematics.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the available budget to provide a high level of good quality support and teaching staff to meet the needs of its pupils. Accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress children make.</li> <li>• The caring atmosphere and the values the school teaches.</li> <li>• The leadership of the school.</li> <li>• Teachers are very approachable and helpful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant concerns.</li> </ul>

The parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. No significant concerns were expressed at the parents' meeting before the inspection or through a questionnaire. The evidence of the inspection endorses the positive views of the parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards vary significantly from year to year. The results of national tests do not provide secure evidence of trends over time because a relatively small number of pupils are involved. The high percentage of pupils with special educational needs has a significant impact on standards attained, although pupils make good progress towards the targets set. A further challenge for the school is that many pupils do not complete all their education at St Thomas of Canterbury; between a third and a half of the pupils change school between the ages of seven to eleven.
2. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well below national average. There has been a steady improvement in test results since the last inspection, particularly in English. In all subjects the percentage of pupils achieving at least the level expected for their age improved by 20 per cent or more in all three subjects and this is a significant improvement for the school. The most able pupils are achieving the higher results in national tests although this is below the national percentage. The attainment of pupils has risen from a very low baseline in 1998 when they were in the bottom five per cent of the country.
3. The standards are well above those of similar schools\* for English and mathematics and in line with them for science. The results for seven-year-olds also vary year on year and are well below those nationally, but again they generally show a sign of improvement. The achievement for the majority of pupils is at least satisfactory from the low levels that many pupils enter school with. Achievement is often good for pupils with special educational needs and this is an important feature because of the very high percentage of such pupils.

\*Similar schools refers to schools with 50 per cent or more pupils eligible for a free school meal. 72 per cent of the pupils at St Thomas are eligible.

4. The steady improvements made in English and mathematics reflects the progress pupils make in the majority of lessons. Standards are built upon secure teaching of basic reading, writing and numeracy skills that are built upon through the school. Nonetheless many pupils do not have the clarity of speech and breadth of vocabulary to discuss their learning and reach the average standards in all subjects. Improved planning guidance and a good quality of teaching is helping to raise standards in science. Since the last inspection two years ago the new headteacher and subject leaders have monitored progress carefully and rigorously addressed the weaknesses in teaching and learning. Although test results remain below average it is evident that pupils are making effective progress in building securely on their earlier learning.
5. Only a small percentage of pupils attain high levels in national tests. By the age of seven, however, results in reading and mathematics are usually sound compared with similar schools. Unfortunately, there is a clear trend of the brightest pupils leaving the school after the age of seven to be better placed in their choice of secondary schools. This obviously affects test results by the end of the juniors.
6. The standards of work observed for the current Year 6 pupils are well below expected levels in the national curriculum. This is a reflection of the high proportion of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. Nevertheless, attendance is also poor for several pupils in the class and this does not help their learning. The work seen for pupils in Year 2 are close to expected levels for mathematics and science but well below those levels for English.

7. Pupils' ability to speak clearly is often well below average throughout the school. Teachers use good questioning strategies to improve this. Pupils read with reasonable accuracy as they grow older and use books for information effectively. Older pupils also use a CD ROM or the Internet to research for information but many pupils are hesitant and lack expression when reading. Writing skills are steadily built upon but spelling and punctuation skills vary. Teachers do not place enough emphasis on the value of careful presentation.
8. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their mathematical skills and enjoy exploring number and pattern, though many pupils have difficulty in understanding mathematical processes and their recall of number facts is laborious. A challenging pace of teaching through the school is beginning to show improvements and pupils with special educational needs are developing effective strategies to perform a sound range of mathematical calculations. Again, however, the care taken in presenting work is not good enough in some classes and undermines otherwise good teaching and learning.
9. Achievement in science is sound overall although standards are still well below average. Pupils' investigation skills are sound and they use written methods and graphs to record their work. However, they have a limited scientific vocabulary and do not show much initiative in their work. They are responding to the good probing questions teachers ask but even relatively simple words such as 'circuit' are quickly forgotten and this limits the progress they can make.
10. Standards in information and communication technology are below expected levels and seven and eleven-year-olds do not use computers confidently. They do, however, have a sound understanding of the possible uses of information and communication technology to their learning and have made very exciting use of video equipment and editing facilities to produce their own programmes. By the age of seven pupils' basic skills are below those appropriate for their age. The main weakness has arisen from a lack of computer equipment. This has improved with the good use of new grants and the planning and provision is now in place to support higher standards.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. Guidance for teaching the pupils is generally good. Some individual education plans, especially those relating to pupils with behavioural problems, do not give enough detail about ways in which teachers should cope with inappropriate behaviour. They are given work at a level which enables them to succeed in tasks, especially in numeracy lessons, and then move on to new work. Progress is in slow, steady steps but teachers and pupils share the pleasure of a new skill learned. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported in classrooms by the adults who work with them and help them to understand new ideas and maintain concentration. French speaking pupils receive good support from a specialist teacher and they often make sensible and appropriate contributions to lessons. Pupils with behavioural difficulties receive good support from teachers and other adults. The work undertaken by the learning mentor is especially helpful when pupils become restless or distracted.
12. In all other subjects pupils make satisfactory progress. In history, geography, design and technology, and physical education standards by the age of eleven are not significantly different from expected levels. Even so their understanding is not as thorough as it could be because pupils lack the vocabulary to reinforce their learning. There was not enough evidence to judge overall standards in art and music, although good standards of singing were observed. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
13. The headteacher and subject leaders make use a full range of assessment tests to help them set targets to be achieved by all pupils. They take positive action to address possible weaknesses. For example, they introduced more non-fiction material to interest and motivate the boys after test results in one year indicated higher attainment by girls. This is reversed in 2000 and there are no consistent differences in standards achieved by either gender. The targets set for the oldest pupils are suitably challenging and are focused on raising standards for pupils of all levels of attainment. The school is not complacent. Expectations are high for all abilities. This is particularly evident with the less able pupils and those with

special educational needs. The local education authority gives good support to the school for raising standards through its monitoring processes.

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

14. Some aspects, particularly in relation to the five to seven-year-olds, have dramatically improved since the previous inspection but whole-school attendance remains a serious concern.
15. Children of five years old and younger make good progress in their personal development. Many children have considerable difficulties in making relationships with others and teachers use every opportunity such as snack times and periods of reflection and prayer to involve and encourage children to mix with others and share. They learn to sit and listen and to enjoy their work. However, many children have difficulty in sustaining concentration for longer periods and they tend to play and work alongside each other rather than with each other.
16. Pupils between the ages of five and seven have good attitudes towards their learning. In the recent past a significant number of this age range were disruptive in class. Through clear leadership and an effective behaviour policy, this is no longer the case. The pupils are keen and interested in their work and apply themselves well to the allotted tasks. For example, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson, pupils chanted number sequences sensibly, listened to instructions carefully, settled well to group activities and maintained a high level of concentration.
17. The attitudes of the older pupils are not quite as good but are satisfactory. These pupils have a greater tendency to switch off and lose concentration. They lack independence and confidence as learners but respond well to additional help, reassurance and to being taught in small steps at a time. Pupils' attitudes were particularly good in a Year 4 science lesson when they worked very hard and with enthusiasm to produce clear and concise, well-presented records of their experiments. This was a direct result of very good teaching.
18. In general the pupils behave themselves and the school is orderly. This agrees with the views of parents who praised pupils' sense of morality. The behaviour of pupils up to the age of seven is good. This is a great improvement for the five to seven-year-olds whose behaviour at the time of the previous inspection was reported to be unsatisfactory. As pupils get older, learning is occasionally affected by the unacceptable behaviour of individuals or larger groups. For example, a Year 5 physical education lesson practising rugby league skills was spoilt by pupils' general lack of self-control and failure to respond quickly enough to commands. On the other hand, a group of more than 40 pupils aged mainly seven to nine years were well behaved and a credit to the school on an educational visit to the local swimming baths.
19. In the playground pupils mostly play happily with a range of equipment that channels their energies into positive activities. They enjoy the participation by supervising adults in their playground games. According to parents there are occasional instances of bullying but these are swiftly dealt with. Four pupils were temporarily excluded from the school last year.
20. There is mutual respect between adults and children and relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all aspects of its life. Some with particular emotional and behavioural difficulties are gaining much insight and pleasure from the link established with a nearby special school. Together pupils from the two schools have developed friendships through planting window boxes. These pupils acted very responsibly and the whole school showed their special friends care and consideration when they attended an assembly. During collective worship pupils are reverent and respectful and they sing with great enthusiasm and joy.
21. Attendance is poor. At 90.7 per cent it ranks in the bottom tenth of primary schools' attendance nationally. Authorised absence for reasons such as illness or holiday is fairly typical but the amount of absence taken without authorisation is very high. Staff are working very hard to reduce this and have been successful in halving the number of unexplained absences. Two years ago the rate of unauthorised

absence was almost ten times the national average. Whilst absences are better accounted for now than in the past, the school's considerable efforts have maintained, but not raised, the overall attendance level. Absence that parents condone plays a large part in the slow progress made by some pupils and to an extent affects standards generally. This is because teachers have to spend time explaining work that has been missed instead of getting on with the planned teaching.

22. A significant number of pupils arrive late each morning and this disrupts the otherwise smooth start to the day. Pupils who arrive during prayers mar the special reverence of class worship. Those who are later still miss vital information at the start of literacy or numeracy lessons and this impedes their learning.

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

23. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and pupils' learning reflects this. In 70 per cent of lessons observed teaching was good or better, including 20 per cent of very good teaching. In five per cent of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory and it was satisfactory in the remaining 25 per cent. For children under five and for the seven to eleven-year-old pupils the strengths in teaching have been maintained since the last inspection. The teaching for the five to seven-year-old pupils has markedly improved from being unsatisfactory and is now consistently good or better. The influence of this improvement is evident in the pupils' behaviour and willingness to concentrate on their work and try hard. A significant proportion of the oldest pupils do not show the same capacity to learn, despite skilful teaching, as their maturity and general knowledge is not good enough and a large group are identified with behavioural and learning difficulties. This is made worse when the teaching over-estimates the pupils' understanding and uses words and phrases that are meaningless to the pupils. This particular group of pupils have been poor attenders throughout their time in school and the school has directly worked to impress upon the parents and pupils the effect this has upon learning. However, throughout the school the quality of teaching is establishing an ever-improving capacity to learn.
24. Teaching of children in the nursery and reception class is good. The weaknesses in teaching and provision noted in the last inspection report have been fully addressed. The teachers and their assistants plan effectively together to make sure progress for the youngest children is in suitable measured steps and builds on their knowledge and understanding consistently. Personal and social development is carefully nurtured through shared social activities, well-established routines and careful observation of children's learning. When a new nursery child of ethnic origin sat with a small group of other children for the first time all staff felt a sense of achievement. Literacy and numeracy are well taught, and speaking and listening skills are promoted strongly. The provision is good for all areas of learning. Attractive resources such as jigsaws and posters featuring children of different nationalities encourage all pupils to settle in and make progress.
25. English is taught well throughout the school. Teachers concentrate on improving the clarity and range of pupils' speaking skills by questioning them carefully and giving opportunities for them to speak out loud. However, not enough use is made of drama or role-play to fully address the weaknesses many pupils have in this area. Reading is systematically taught and teachers make sure that pupils use different methods to learn new words or tackle unfamiliar text. This thorough and often imaginative teaching is helping to equip pupils with the skills to learn more effectively in all subjects.
26. The quality of mathematics teaching is also good and often very good. The lively pace of teaching is motivating and pupils' enjoyment is evident as they take pride in showing their numeracy skills and learning number facts. Seven and eight-year-olds with special educational needs rise to the challenge of rapidly finding change from a pound and explaining their thinking because of the quick-fire motivating manner of the teacher. Staff respect pupils' opinions and methods of calculation and this gives pupils increasing confidence in learning through talking about their mathematics. However, the teachers' acceptance of poorly presented work with crossings out and digits placed incorrectly undermines some



of the good work. This does not give pupils the confidence in written work that they are gaining in spoken mathematics.

27. A strength of the teaching throughout the school, but particularly for the five to nine-year-old pupils, is the effective management of behaviour and the good relationships. Simple techniques such as counting backwards or asking the pupils to hold up their fingers one at a time very effectively bring pupils to attention. Varying strategies between whole-class activities, for example planning questions to ask a visiting nurse in a Year 2 history lesson, to individual reporting of their findings, keep the pupils occupied and involved. As a result very little time is wasted so there is little opportunity for misbehaviour; teachers generally keep explanations brief, interesting and purposeful. There is a marked contrast with lessons where the introduction is too slow and uses terms and vocabulary that is beyond the pupils' understanding. A sense of fun runs through lessons in most classes and pupils are drawn into a mature relationship with all adults.
28. The traveller pupils and those with English as an additional language are taught well. This is a new situation for the school but work is consistently carefully matched to the needs of the pupils and teachers receive good support from the local education authority services. Clear targets are set for including the pupils in all activities and helping them to settle quickly into school. The school has always experienced a large proportion of pupils leaving or starting at all times of the year and uses this experience to welcome and support all newcomers. A small group of traveller pupils receive extra learning sessions from experienced support staff. They effectively focus on pupils' speaking and reading needs to equip them for fuller participation in the classroom. In this work, as in all others, the strong sense of care and respect boosts pupils' self-confidence and allows them to learn more effectively.
29. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The decision to create an additional class for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils is a great benefit to the pupils in that class and to those in other classes. The co-ordinator gives very clear targets for the lesson and encourages them to work at good pace and with high expectations of their own ability. For about three tenths of the week pupils in this class join their friends in other classes. This helps them to feel a part of the year group as they work along with their friends in subjects such as physical education, history and geography. Teachers are careful to include activities in these lessons with which pupils can cope without becoming frustrated. Relationships between pupils with special educational needs and the adults who work with them are very good. The work is appropriate for the pupils and equips them to develop learning in all subjects.
30. All pupils are set homework and this contributes to the quality of learning. Parents appreciate the clear guidance for this so they know when and what pupils are expected to do.

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

31. The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. All subjects of the National Curriculum plus religious education are taught. Although English, mathematics and religious education take up almost 70 per cent of curriculum time, the school works hard to make sure that no time is wasted and that there is a suitable balance between all areas of the curriculum. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when the curriculum was not balanced and when time was not used profitably. The school promotes the intellectual, physical and personal development of all pupils well.
32. The curriculum for the school's youngest pupils is good and has been maintained since the last inspection. The classrooms provide a good range of stimulating experiences for all areas of learning. Teachers focus on developing children's personal and social development so that they are happy and confident to learn. This is essential because many come to school unable to relate to other children and adults. All activities are planned to reinforce the children's basic skills in language and communication.

33. Many subjects such as physical education, history and geography are being re-organised to take account of the requirements of the revised National Curriculum. Teachers use local guidelines for music and national guidelines are appropriately being introduced in most other subjects. Outline policies have been written and careful consideration is given both to the content and to the reflection of the school's aims. Lessons for literacy and numeracy are firmly set in the school's routines. These lessons are beginning to have a good impact on raising standards, particularly in mathematics for younger pupils. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been carried through smoothly and is operating soundly. The school has made considerable efforts to implement the National Strategy for Mathematics and this is beginning to have a good effect on standards. A particularly effective and knowledgeable co-ordinator, who is well aware of what needs to be done to maintain the improvement seen in the recent past, leads the subject.
34. Pupils have opportunities to use their writing skills in lessons such as history and geography. Year 5 pupils write about life in a Victorian school and compare it with their own school. They also compare the Lake District with their own environment and make sensible comments about the advantages and disadvantages of both areas. Pupils make some use of information and communication technology in all subjects; for example work on the Internet is involved in historical studies and pupils' learn spelling and punctuation skills on the computer. The use of video equipment to produce a programme about the school contributed to speaking skills. The lack of facilities has limited use overall.
35. There are a number of pupils who have arrived in school very recently from overseas as well as a few traveller pupils. The school is very careful to include them in all school activities. Teachers support these pupils well and use the expertise of specialist teachers to help them.
36. A requirement of the previous inspection was to review the role of the special needs coordinator. This has been done very successfully. The co-ordinator now monitors the provision for special educational needs throughout the school when released from classroom duties. The co-ordinator visits classrooms regularly to see the progress and behaviour of pupils at first hand. The requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met and the special educational needs co-ordinator is able to maintain good liaison with the large number of other professionals who support pupils. Individual education plans are generally sound. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. At the time of the previous inspection the support for some pupils in infant classes was thought to be inadequate. There is now good support for these pupils. The support for pupils with special educational needs in lessons is good and the large number of adults working in classrooms makes a significant contribution to the good progress pupils make. Many pupils have emotional or behavioural problems. The support offered to these pupils by the learning mentor is particularly effective. He knows the pupils and their difficulties well and has won the confidence of pupils and parents.
37. The school's policy on personal, social and health education has been reviewed in the light of very recent national guidelines. Many references to personal hygiene and the need for having a healthy body are made in physical education lessons. Sex education is taught as part of the personal, social and health programme for older pupils. The benefits and dangers of drugs are highlighted when the school is involved with a national health and safety awareness programme.
38. The school is very successful in fostering children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is strength of the school.
39. The school's mission statement is reflected in its daily work. Children are helped to appreciate the Catholic faith and Christian values through worship assemblies, liturgies and everyday relationships. Spiritual issues and experiences are dealt with in ways appropriate to children of this age and in ways that the children understand. They are helped to appreciate the importance of these values in our daily lives. Children engage in prayers respectfully and express personal feelings and ideas in prayers they compose themselves. They sing hymns with enthusiasm, recognising this as an aspect of worship.

There are close links with the parish church and the parish priest is fully involved in the life of the school.

40. Great effort is made by all teachers to help children understand right from wrong. They act as role models in the care and concern they show, they are consistent in the way they implement the behaviour policy, and they discuss carefully with classes and individuals particular instances of misbehaviour and anti-social behaviour.
41. All staff recognise the crucial priority of raising children's self-esteem, and work effortlessly to develop it. Each child is individually valued and success, no matter how small, is given recognition and celebrated both in the classroom and in the weekly achievement assembly. The 'learning mentor' makes a significant contribution to fostering children's moral and social development. In a project developed with the local special school he has helped all pupils appreciate children with greater problems than their own and promoted a desire to help them. He has helped pupils enjoy their break and dinner times in the playground and library with a variety of supervised traditional games. No child is left aimlessly wandering around.
42. The school also enriches children's experience through visits and visitors to the school, and through a range of sporting and other activities. A homework club has recently been introduced for the older pupils and already this is having an impact on encouraging pupils to return the homework set for them.
43. The impact that the school makes on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was very well summed up in the Thursday morning assembly. The tone and organisation were very well judged so that all children were interested and involved, including a number of visitors from the nearby special school. Humour and fun were well balanced against proper reverence and serious reflection. Through consideration of a range of actual footwear they were led on to reflect on what it would be like to be in someone else's shoes, particularly if they were less fortunate than ourselves. The unexpected entrance of the local football club mascot, 'Moonchester', to present a birthday cake to one of the non-teaching staff only added to the sense of occasion. At this time children were given a very rich experience and the sense of the school as a caring community was well in evidence.
44. The curriculum is enriched with visits to museums, theatres, cinema and concerts at the nearby Bridgewater Hall. Good use is made of the local area in subjects such as geography. The local sports development association plays a significant role in improving the skills of girls and boys in games such as rugby league and soccer. There are clubs for sports including cross-country running and athletics as well as clubs for homework, chess and lunchtime clubs. Visits from different community organisations and visitors of many nationalities play an important role in improving pupils' knowledge and enhancing their awareness of social, moral and religious issues.
45. The school has strong links with the church. The community room and a large hall in the main building are used for social and educational functions by the church as well as for school concerts and productions. The learning mentor is becoming well known in the community and he is creating important links between the community and school. He has organised trips for parents including a successful sailing evening.
46. Links with other schools are effective. The school shares grounds with another primary school and the schools work together well, especially at headteacher level. Links with secondary schools are good; for example a teacher from the secondary school always attends the annual review of a statement of educational needs for any Year 6 pupil.

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

47. Over the last two years the school has developed and established consistent whole-school procedures for assessment and recording children's progress for all subjects. Use of assessment data is at a developmental stage, but is beginning to be used effectively in English and mathematics. The recent introduction of target setting in English and mathematics will enable teachers taking over a new class to plan their work closely to individual pupils' needs and seek to raise the performance levels of all children. Personal development is monitored informally though regularly. The teachers know their children very well. Assessment procedures for the Foundation Stage are thorough and information is very well used in planning work to match children's needs. Initial assessments on entry to the nursery and reception classes provide a range of information which the school uses well.
48. Suitable arrangements are made to support and guide the pupils. Improvements have been made since the previous inspection in fully implementing the behaviour management plan throughout the school and in monitoring attendance and following up absence.
49. The school has appointed a learning mentor to work in classrooms with pupils who are having problems with learning or who have emotional or behaviour problems. The learning mentor is very effective and is an important factor in the improved behaviour in the school. He is also an important contributor to raising the self-esteem and self-worth of many pupils with special educational needs. The value of his role in school was seen in a very moving assembly. The school is well supported by educational and health professionals and there are good procedures in place to identify pupils who may have special educational needs.
50. Very good procedures are used to encourage good behaviour and deal with any incidents that arise. The staff are good at boosting pupils' self-esteem by praising and rewarding good practice and they are fair and sensitive when applying sanctions. There is greater consistency in behaviour management now than in the past which helps pupils to be clearer about the boundaries. The learning mentor plays a key role in actively promoting good behaviour at all times of the school day. He, for example, plays games with pupils during their free time and occasionally takes individuals out of lessons for a short breather where appropriate. This allows the teacher to continue teaching the rest of the class without further distraction and the headteacher to get on with other important aspects of her leadership. The mentor has established a high degree of trust within the whole school community. Without his help it is unlikely that a small number of pupils with extreme emotional and behavioural difficulties could remain socially included in the school. A strong feature of the way that all staff deal initially with instances of poor behaviour is to draw those involved aside for a quiet word. This by and large successfully moderates their behaviour, and prevents tempers rising and others joining in. Parents are pleased with the way pupils are taught right and wrong and the way that the school tackles bullying.
51. A lot of time and effort has been put into reducing the very high rate of unauthorised absence and encouraging regular and punctual attendance. Much of the unauthorised absence is believed by the school to be approved by parents. Some success has been achieved, particularly in relation to unexplained absences, which have halved in the last two years. Working closely with the Education Welfare Service and setting targets for raising attendance the school has established a programme for further improvement. The headteacher explains the importance of good attendance to older pupils and shares the targets with them. The school tries to contact parents and carers on the first day their child is absent without notification, though this frequently proves impossible. The learning mentor again plays an important role by visiting the families of those whose attendance or punctuality causes concern. The registers are monitored appropriately, the education welfare officer is quickly notified and pupils are suitably rewarded for good or improved attendance and punctuality. The school is fully aware that vigilance is essential and rightly plans to increase the administrative time spent tracking pupils and producing statistics. Beyond this all that can be done is to build upon the trust being established with parents and seek further ways of impressing upon them the importance of regular and punctual attendance and the value of education.

52. Health and safety, child protection and pupils' well-being are taken seriously by the school. The caring staff are alert to pupils' sensitivities and difficulties and do all they can to help them. Structured health and safety checks and suitable assessments of risk are undertaken periodically. The welfare staff have recently received useful training in strategies to build pupils' self-esteem and encourage good behaviour. First aid training is in need of updating.

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

53. Two years ago inspectors reported that relationships between parents and the school had improved to a satisfactory level. Further improvements have been made since then and the school's partnership with parents is going from strength to strength. Parents' views of the school are very positive. The school's reputation in the community is growing and there are early signs of rising numbers of pupils being admitted.
54. Parents rightly praise the leadership of the headteacher and welcome the new channel provided by the learning mentor for them to communicate with school. The mentor is building trusting relationships within the whole school community by getting to know the families better, for example, by organising, just for parents, enjoyable ventures such as sailing that build team spirit. The trust established with the families enables the discussion of serious matters such as pupils' behavioural difficulties and attendance issues in a non-confrontational way. Parents feel that they can talk openly about their concerns and problems. Headway has also been made in raising parental support for the school's policies on discipline, school meetings generally and courses for parents in basic skills.
55. Parents feel welcome in school and they appreciate the good quality and amount of information provided for them on all aspects of school life including the progress made by their children. Half-termly newsletters and outlines of what the pupils are to be taught in each year group keep them suitably updated. Copies of these are usefully displayed in the entrance in case pupils fail to deliver them home. Weaknesses in information at the time of the previous inspection have been tackled. The prospectus now includes an appropriate overview of the curriculum and the written annual reports for parents on their child's progress now include comments on what each child needs to do to improve.
56. Relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good and they feel informed and involved in their child's learning. There are good systems to record and manage reviews and assessments of pupils' progress.
57. In the past homework did not extend pupils' learning consistently and did not prepare them adequately for secondary school. Now the homework set is broadly typical of that throughout primary schools nationally. Reading records are taken home regularly by pupils along with their books. These give parents good opportunities to make comments. Some do so regularly but the level of involvement of parents in this and other aspects of their children's learning is less than typically found. Parents willingly rally round to help with educational visits and events organised by the parents and friends association. Regular voluntary assistance in school is much more difficult to secure.

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

58. The headteacher, who was newly appointed at the time of the last inspection two years ago, vigorously promotes a strong drive to improve standards and provision. She has done this against falling rolls and significant financial difficulties arising from this. Circumstances have prevented the appointment of a deputy headteacher, but a small team of key staff provide good support. The headteacher has taken a leading role in monitoring teaching and learning with support from the local education authority. This has contributed to improvements in teaching and the focus on raising standards. Subject leaders establish sound plans of action for improving standards in their subjects. This is based on suitable monitoring procedures for English and mathematics but is not as effective for other subjects. Pupils' work is monitored against clear criteria. The headteacher identified weaknesses in standards of presentation and addressed this through individual teachers, but has not yet tackled this issue through the school.
59. The schools' aims build upon the Christian nature of the school and are well developed through planning and practice in the classroom. School improvements are carefully planned for and managed effectively. The plans are clearly displayed in the staffroom so that staff can identify and share in progress made

and recognise achievement. This helps to generate the positive teamwork and highly motivated approach. The key staff are involved in decision making at all levels through regular, planned meetings. They are business-like and professional in their approach to management. The chair of governors gives good support to the headteacher and is well informed about the issues facing the school. The governing body provides satisfactory management and now directly monitors and evaluates performance in key areas, which is an improvement from the last inspection. Statutory requirements are met.

60. Procedures for performance management for the teachers' professional development are at an appropriate stage. The weaknesses in provision for the induction of new staff have been addressed and mentoring procedures for teachers new to the school are good.
61. Provision for special educational needs is well managed. There are now effective systems to identify concerns at an early stage and progress is monitored closely. Resources, for example support staff, are matched well to pupils' needs. Teaching pupils with English as an additional language and working with the children of gypsy travellers is a new experience for the school. At this stage provision is at least appropriately managed. Outside agencies help the school to assess the pupils' learning and social needs. Teachers ensure the pupils are fully included in the work of the class and support staff skilfully ensure they understand the key points. In a Year 6 science lesson traveller pupils benefited from the practical nature of the task and made a good contribution to the lesson.
62. The leadership and management of provision for children aged under five are good. Planning and assessment procedures are carefully thought out, and this impacts positively on pupil learning. There are regular meetings between nursery and reception staff and all adults in the two classes work well together. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is good, being a self-contained unit for this whole age range, and being organised as a stimulating place to learn in.
63. Spending is well planned and closely linked to school improvement planning. The school has a considerable amount of money to spend in the current financial year, which is in direct contrast to the position over the past few years. For the last three years the school has had a falling role and this has caused financial difficulties which have precluded the appointment of a deputy headteacher. Additional finance has been obtained from various government and local education authority initiatives and the school has been very wise in spending this extra funding. The governors and headteacher have considered the needs of the school very carefully, especially in view of the need to raise academic standards. There are several new non-teaching staff who already know the pupils and the school's systems and routines well enough to give good support to pupils with learning, emotional and behavioural problems. The work of the learning mentor is particularly effective and the improvement in pupils' behaviour since the time of the previous inspection is apparent in lessons and on the playground. The school's decision to teach younger junior pupils in three classes rather than two benefits pupils in Years 3 and 4, especially those with special educational needs. There has been no deputy headteacher for some time and even though there have been reasonable financial and personnel reasons for the decision, the additional burden on the headteacher has been considerable. A knowledgeable bursar advises the school on budget setting and major spending decisions. Governors and staff make sure that they take all possible avenues to obtain the best value they can for goods and services purchased. The school secretary carries out the day-to-day office administration efficiently and without fuss. The headteacher and governors regularly receive good financial information.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to raise standards of attainment the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

Improve speaking skills by (Paragraphs 2, 4, 25, 69, 78, 92):

- Providing opportunities to encourage pupils to speak clearly and to improve their vocabulary through role-play and drama.

Raise standards in writing by (Paragraphs 2, 69, 82):

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length;
- Expecting pupils to write more in the time given;
- Implementing clear guidance to ensure that written work in all subjects is presented to a high standard.

Raise standards in mathematics by (Paragraphs 2, 8, 26, 72, 87):

- Improving pupils' mental recall of number facts;
- Encouraging the use of the correct mathematical vocabulary.

Raise standards in information and communication technology by (Paragraphs 34, 73, 109):

- Allowing regular, useful access to computers to fully implement the scheme of work.

Rigorously monitor attendance and seek every opportunity to explain to parents and pupils the importance of good attendance (Paragraphs 10, 14, 21, 23, 51).

In addition to the key issues above, the following, less important issues, should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan (Paragraphs 9, 92):

Providing more opportunities for pupils to make careful scientific observations and measures;



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20	50	25	5	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	162
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	139

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	77

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

***Attendance***

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	8.2
National comparative data	5.4

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	2.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	17	10	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	*	12
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	18	18	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (67)	66 (62)	78(81)
	National	86(82)]	88 (83)	93 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	*	13
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	18	14	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (48)	52 (36)	70 (52)
	National	82(82)	86 (82)	88 (87)

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

**\* data not entered to avoid the risk of pupils being identified**

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	*	*	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (50)	68 (50)	74 (50)
	National	78 (70)	75 (69)	89 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	12	12	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (50)	63 (50)	73 (47)
	National	70 (67)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

**\* data not entered to avoid the risk of pupils being identified**

***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	10
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	122
Any other minority ethnic group	8

*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	4	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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6
Average class size	21.3

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

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	258

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
--------------------------------	----

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999-2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	432764
Total expenditure	411806
Expenditure per pupil	2527
Balance brought forward from previous year	24845
Balance carried forward to next year	45803

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	167
Number of questionnaires returned	16

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	13	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	88	6	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	25	0	0	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	50	13	0	0
The teaching is good.	69	25	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	25	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	13	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	25	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	81	19	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	81	19	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	25	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	75	25	0	0	0

### Other issues raised by parents

Thirty-eight parents attended a meeting with members of the inspection team before the inspection. They did not express any concern about the school. They gave many examples of the improvements the school has made in management of behaviour and the care of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.

## **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**

65. Good provision has been maintained for children in the nursery and reception class since the last inspection and teaching is good. This has a positive effect on children's learning and leads to good progress.
66. The majority of children begin nursery with very poor levels of skill in speaking and listening, mathematics, and personal and social abilities. This is confirmed by the initial assessments carried out. By the time they are ready to start year one most children are below what is expected of children of this age in all six areas of learning.
67. At the time of the inspection 21 children attended nursery full-time and nine attended part-time in the morning. Of the 22 children in the reception class only one child had reached five years of age.

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

68. Most of the children enter the nursery with very immature skills in personal and social development. They make good progress but by the time they leave the reception class they have not yet achieved the early learning goals for this area. Good progress is due to skilful teaching of both the younger and older children where their confidence, self-esteem and relationships are well fostered. Teaching is good. Teachers work hard to establish routines and develop firm but encouraging relationships with children. They and the nursery nurses are very sensitive to the children's needs, and praise and reinforce well achievements and helpful attitudes and behaviour. Children are helped to enjoy learning. Children develop a clear appreciation of what is expected of them and of what kinds of behaviour are acceptable and which are not. They are beginning to sit still and listen and follow instructions appropriately. They are establishing relationships with other children but tend to play alongside one another, and there is limited co-operation and sharing. Speaking and listening skills are very poor and this considerably hampers communication and affects confidence. The concentration span of many is short.

#### **Communication, language and literacy.**

69. Both younger and older children enjoy listening to story. Many younger children who pick up a book know when it is upside down, but some do not. Older children know a number of letter sounds and high attainers can spell a few three-letter words, like 'cat' or 'dad'. They hear and say the initial sounds in words and can relate some letters to sounds. They are beginning to recognise by sight the names of story characters. Most children are beginning to turn the pages of a book and with some support talk about the pictures. They are developing an understanding of writing as communication but many have limited skills in writing recognisable words. They can write their own names but have no real understanding of writing for different purposes. Letter formation is weak.
70. Many children in the foundation stage have limited communication skills. They lack confidence in conversing with others, respond often with one-word or brief answers and have difficulty in communicating their ideas in a clearly understandable way. Some nursery children observed when asked where the soft toy was, simply pointed and said "there", rather than referring to its being on or under a chair. Few of the older pupils speak clearly and audibly and are able to develop and extend their ideas. They have a very limited vocabulary and limited skills in using their talk to organise and clarify their thinking.
71. Teaching of literacy is good with many opportunities created to encourage children to listen carefully and talk about what they are doing and about their experiences. Both teachers and nursery nurses engage



children in discussion in groups and as individuals. They also help children to enjoy the pleasure of rhymes, songs and stories.

### **Mathematical development**

72. This area of the curriculum is well taught and children make good progress, but they are still not fully achieving all the early learning goals. Younger children are beginning to organise objects into sets and have an awareness of long and short in a practical context. They have a more limited understanding of positional words. Higher attainers can use both pictures and numerals to count. Older children can count up to ten, and some beyond, and can add one more. They can create simple patterns using practical apparatus. Most are able to recognise a number of shapes. Understanding and use of mathematical language is limited, though, and ability to use mathematical ideas to solve practical problems is unsatisfactory. Teaching observed with older children effectively developed children's understanding of number through well-matched tasks that caught their interest. A range of resources was available to enable children to reinforce the learning through structured play.

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

73. Children enter the nursery with a very limited general knowledge. Both nursery and reception teachers work hard to broaden children's knowledge and experience and range of vocabulary. The school grounds are used well and visits to such places as a farm and the seaside develop children's understanding of the world around them. The quality of teaching is good and children have good attitudes. Stimulating learning activities are organised in the classroom to help children examine objects and materials and find out about living things. Older children can name parts of a flower, and know that a baby cow is a calf and a baby sheep a lamb. They can draw simple maps of a walk they went on, and identify things they like and do not like in the school grounds. Observational skills, though, are limited and ability to explain is under-developed. Again, poor language skills hamper their thinking and communication. Older children are developing computer skills satisfactorily. They are beginning to use the mouse with control and with some support can operate mathematical and language programs.

### **Physical development**

74. Teachers provide good opportunities for physical and creative development both in an indoor shared area for both nursery and reception and in adjacent outside areas. A variety of large apparatus and toys enable children to test out physical skills of climbing, balance, and jumping, and areas set aside for role-play enable them to develop their imagination. In sessions observed children thoroughly enjoyed these physical activities, developed skills soundly and showed a good awareness of safety and of the needs of other children around them. In a physical education lesson older children showed developing bodily control in the movements they undertook. They could make themselves short and tall, and run and stop in response to music. They understand some of the body changes brought about through exercise. A good number of nursery children lack dexterity in exploring and manipulating materials like playdough. Older pupils generally cut and stick with reasonable control and handle building apparatus sensibly.

### **Creative development**

75. In both the nursery and reception classes children have good opportunities to use a variety of art media to express feelings and ideas, and to explore sounds of musical instruments and develop enjoyment in singing. Teaching is of good quality. Children learn quickly and make good progress. Older pupils enjoyed making bubble paintings, blowing through straws to create the bubbles and holding their paper over bowls containing different colours to create patterns and textures. Effective displays of children's artwork celebrated their achievements in observational drawing of pine cones and leaves, and paintings in the style of Kandinsky. Children enjoy listening to music but need considerable coaxing to join in.

## ENGLISH

76. By the ages of seven and eleven pupils' overall performance in English is well below average. However, it is important to recognise that children enter the school in the nursery with very poor language skills, that there is a high proportion of children with special needs in the school, and that many of the higher attaining pupils move to other schools before they reach eleven years of age. The results of national tests in 2000 indicate that, for reading, seven-year-old pupils at St Thomas' were achieving in line with the national average compared with similar schools, and were achieving a higher proportion of pupils above the average. In the results of the national test at eleven in pupils at St Thomas' performed well above when comparing with schools of a similar intake. Fluctuations in test results from year to year reflect the high proportion of special needs children in the school and marked differences between different cohorts. The current Year 6 class contains a large number of low attainers. Overall, however, the test results indicate clear improvement since the last inspection.
77. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils behave and respond well to set tasks. This has a positive effect on the quality of learning, and pupils develop understanding and skill in most lessons. However, since many pupils start from a low language base progress made tends to be in small steps.
78. Attainment in speaking and listening is well below average throughout the school. Younger pupils listen and respond appropriately to questions and instructions but levels of concentration are low for quite a number. Answers are often brief or one word and pupils have difficulty in expanding and clarifying meaning. A good number lack confidence and need much coaxing. The speech of a number is unclear and difficult to understand. Teachers ensure that a range of children are drawn into whole-class discussion and effectively intervene to encourage speaking and understanding when children are working on independent activities. They use praise well and provide good models of speaking and reading aloud themselves.
79. Older pupils have difficulty too in maintaining concentration and in being able to explain and extend their ideas. The vocabulary of many is limited and, despite intensive teaching of technical subject language, many pupils do not use it comfortably. Teachers work very hard and use a variety of strategies to combat these difficulties. Pace is used well to maintain interest and to involve responses from as many pupils as possible. Lapses of concentration or distractive behaviour are picked up immediately. Good behaviour, effort and attempts at an answer are consistently praised, both to raise confidence and self-esteem of the pupil involved but also to encourage others to offer ideas. In a few instances the teaching did not satisfactorily develop pupils' listening and speaking skills because the content of the discussion was pitched too high and the teacher spent too much time talking at the children.
80. Attainment in reading is well below average through out the school. At seven average pupils are reading simple books largely word by word, and are not always secure on the sight vocabulary needed. Higher attainers are more fluent but do not observe punctuation well. Most pupils have some understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction and how to use the content page to locate information. Ability is limited in relating details of a story. An average reader was keen to talk about the pictures. Most use suitable skills to work out words they do not recognise. Low attainers can work out individual letter sounds but not blend them. Teaching of reading skills to younger children is good. Large texts are used well in the literacy hour to raise children's interest in reading and to help them follow the reading process, listening and talking about the content and details of text. Stories were read aloud effectively and good attention was paid to developing basic skills of word-recognition through structure and meaning. Teachers keep detailed records of progress in reading for each individual child which accurately identifies the next step in learning.
81. Eleven-year-old pupils can read aloud a self-chosen book with reasonable accuracy and fluency. Expression is less well developed. They know how to use the contents and index of a non-fiction book to locate information, and use these skills in research work in class. They show understanding of what

they read and can explain some word-meanings like ‘thoroughly’. Lower attainers have limited fluency and expression. All can express simple preferences in their reading and talk about the content of a passage from a book, but skills in interpretation and reading beyond the literal are limited. There is a good deal of hesitancy and lack of confidence in the reading of many junior children, and much variability in their skills of word-identification. Teaching of reading in some lessons observed was good. In one instance the teacher skilfully developed children’s understanding of shape poems, giving pupils clear strategies to identify ways of reading and composing poems. In another, the teacher helped the children to give personal responses to a poem and observe structural aspects through quick ‘brainstorming’ in groups and focused whole-class discussion. Where teaching was ineffective, the teacher failed to provide a clear text reference to enable the children to make comparisons with a film version of the book, and in a guided reading task used a text which was far too difficult for the children. They were read aloud to without exploring understanding. In all other cases learning was effective because the teachers used a variety of strategies to arouse interest and maintain attention and involvement on task.

82. Attainment in writing is well below average throughout the school. Many children have difficulty in composing extended pieces of independent writing. They have difficulty with how to structure and organise the content of a story or a piece of information and with writing clear and grammatical sentences. There are weaknesses too in spelling and punctuation, and presentation of work is often untidy. Many seven-year-olds do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of what a sentence is. Pupils have a very limited sight vocabulary to draw upon in their writing. The teaching of writing to infant children that was observed was very carefully planned and structured. The children were given a very clear idea of the purpose of the activity and clear instructions about how to carry it out. Both teacher and support staff gave good support as children undertook the learning activity. Progress in these lessons was at least satisfactory.
83. Higher and average attaining eleven-year-old pupils can produce pieces of writing of reasonable length and are beginning to be aware of different kinds of writing for different purpose. There are lively ideas in some pieces, but overall there are weaknesses in sentence construction and standards of spelling and punctuation are below average. The oldest pupils still needed a good deal of adult support to write down their ideas about character and a setting in a story they had read. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in improving and developing writing skills through the good match of work to their ability and good support. Some teaching of writing was very good. For example, in one lesson observed the teacher led a very good discussion of the language and structure of a poem about a cat, and then set the children the task of writing their poem about a dog using the shared poem as a model. Worksheets with leading questions provided additional support and these were matched to different levels of attainment. Children were encouraged to make use of interesting adjectives with the suffix ‘-ing’. The teacher’s skill in clarifying the task and motivating the children enabled them to make good progress in their learning. In another lesson observed, which had good features, writing skills were not well advanced because the pupils were insufficiently encouraged during group work and one group spent much of the time copying out the text.
84. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching of the infant age-range. There has also been significant improvement in resources. Effective assessment and testing procedures have been set up, and the results are well used to guide priorities in planning and the grouping of children. However, the school recognises that there is more to do to raise standards closer to the national average, and that the development of speaking and listening skills in a consistent way throughout the school is the next priority.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds over recent years show that there is considerable variation in standards between groups of pupils from one year to the next. The results for

2000 indicate that pupils came closer to the national average. Standards for the present oldest junior pupils are below this level. However, they make at least satisfactory progress from their earlier learning. The variation in the mathematical abilities of pupils from one year group to the next is reflected in test scores, but because work is matched accurately to pupils' needs they make good gains in learning from a very low start. Results of national tests for seven-year-olds have been improving steadily for the past three years and they are now very close to national averages. This improvement is seen in the work of both infant classes and in the work of younger junior pupils.

86. Teachers and other adults support pupils with special educational needs very well and they make good progress. They learn basic number facts and with help they are able to use them to solve simple problems. Teachers are very careful to present mathematics in a way that is easily understood by pupils. Classroom support assistants demonstrate great patience as the pupils work hard to solve even the simplest problems. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is an important factor in the success they enjoy in these lessons.
87. The teaching of mathematics is at least good in all the lessons seen and very good in almost two thirds of lessons. Many pupils have great difficulty in understanding the most fundamental mathematical ideas and teachers work hard to find interesting ways of explaining these. For example, one teacher used a simple stick with marked spaces to demonstrate the relationship between whole numbers and simple fractions. In a class which had both seven and eight-year-olds, pupils responded eagerly to the teacher's instruction that they must be eagle-eyed because there was no time for slow coaches. In several classes mathematics lessons are a source of enjoyment for both teachers and pupils. The pupils take great delight in demonstrating their mathematical skills in front of their teachers and their friends and there are very positive responses from both adults and pupils to the successes of others, however small. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and pay proper attention to both the national guidelines and the attainment levels of the pupils. Clear lesson plans include activities that help pupils to use known facts in new situations and to learn new facts. Teachers know the pupils well and realise that many pupils may need a longer than expected time to complete tasks. Nevertheless there are occasions when pupils, especially older pupils, are hindered by their lack of knowledge of basic number facts. Time is wasted as these older pupils deliberately calculate simple facts which they should know such as eight times six or half of sixteen. Pupils do not generally have good skills in halving and doubling. This hinders their ability to calculate problems involving simple fractions and their attempts to multiply or divide by single digits. Teachers are skilful when questioning pupils to test what they know. They are also skilful when using pupils' answers to reinforce correct mathematical thinking. Teachers' good knowledge of mathematical processes helps them to use what pupils already know and then introduce new or more complex ideas. This good knowledge also helps teachers to plan activities that will challenge pupils. For example, pupils have good knowledge of two-dimensional shapes which they classify by different properties. Teachers work hard to support pupils during lessons, especially those pupils who may be experiencing the greatest difficulties. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and teachers show great respect for the efforts of the pupils. This helps lessons to be productive.
88. Pupils have good attitudes in most of the lessons seen. They listen carefully to their teachers and to their friends and they work with great concentration during group or individual activity sessions. There are occasions, however, when the behaviour of a minority of pupils undermines the learning of others. In such lessons, teachers work very hard to help pupils to work sensibly but with only minimal success. In one lesson the behaviour of a significant minority affected the learning and the attitudes of the rest of the class.
89. Pupils' efforts in class are too often spoiled by careless and slipshod presentation. Figures are written carelessly and scribbled over and diagrams that should involve a ruler are drawn freehand and are inaccurate. Work is set out haphazardly and without any real sense of order. All of these lead to silly and unnecessary mistakes which undermine the efforts of both pupils and teachers to improve standards in mathematics. Pupils have no real sense that careful layout and neat presentation is an important part

of mathematics, and that they are an essential aid to high quality and correct working. Work that is crossed out is not only difficult to read but it often makes accurate working impossible. The poor presentation seen in too many books is an odd contrast with the considerable successful efforts teachers make to raise the self-esteem of pupils in lessons. Teachers do not always present pupils with good models of presentation when they write examples of correct methods and working in pupils' books. The school is aware that pupils have difficulties with using and applying mathematics but have not identified presentation as a contributory factor to this. Teachers mark work regularly and most make suggestions that help pupils to improve. It is not clear, however, that the weekly assessment undertaken by all teachers has any real impact on teachers' planning for the immediate future. In most evaluations there is an indication of what pupils need to do next, but this is not always the case. Weekly planning sheets are useful and informative documents, and those used by the teachers of the younger pupils are particularly easy to follow and clearly show the progress made by pupils of differing attainments.

## SCIENCE

90. Standards of science are well below average by the age of eleven. They are in line with those for similar schools by the age of eleven and this does not include the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The work seen in other year groups indicates that standards are rising and are close to average by the age of seven. Significantly, the percentage of eleven-year-old pupils achieving the expected level increased by 24 per cent in 2000.
91. Pupils have positive attitudes to scientific investigation and much of the work seen is based on practical, hands-on experience. Pupils appropriately use graphs, charts diagrams and written recording and presentation in the work seen is satisfactory. The pupils in Year 6 took care to produce careful accurate circuit diagrams. In Year 2 the brightest pupils write accounts of the effect of exercise on the body with appropriate detail but drawings and diagrams by many pupils are immature and simple. The practical nature of much of the work means that able pupils are able to develop their skills appropriately overall. However, there is little evidence of very high levels of achievement. Pupils use measuring equipment such as thermometers and stopwatches appropriately, but not often. There is no difference in the achievement of the travellers' children and in Year 6 the pupils' pride in producing parallel and series circuits was a joy to observe.
92. A weakness in standards is the recall of a scientific language. They lack the vocabulary to discuss their learning and find it hard to articulate their knowledge. This makes it difficult to build consistently on earlier learning. For example, Year 6 pupils could not recall the term 'circuit' in even though they had recently used it. The pupils avoided new terms such as 'parallel' and 'series' when they discussed their work. This was despite the strong emphasis the teacher placed on extending pupils' understanding.
93. The weakness in knowledge of natural processes identified in the last inspection has been overcome. Year 5 pupils describe the functions of the heart very effectively and produce detailed and accurate diagrams. They show a more secure understanding of the correct vocabulary than older pupils and this helps the retention of the knowledge. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercise in both key stages. Pupils' understanding of classifying objects by different scientific criteria is satisfactory.
94. Too few lessons were observed to give an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. The lessons seen in both key stages were at least good. The teachers understand the essential scientific needs of the pupils and spent a good proportion of the lessons emphasising this and encouraging pupils to use correct vocabulary. There is a good practical approach to investigative work, balanced with direct teaching. In Year 2, the teacher asked pupils probing questions to help them to observe carefully and record what they see, but in the work seen overall there is not enough use of first hand detailed observations. The high quality of the management of pupils' behaviour in both lessons meant pupils worked hard on the practical tasks. In particular two older pupils with identified behaviour problems

were very well managed. The teacher ignored their sullen attitudes, but worked with other pupils near to them until natural curiosity led them into working effectively with others.

95. The science curriculum is now satisfactory. Schemes of work based on national guidelines have been carefully introduced and monitored. The current Year 6 pupils have not benefited from this for more than a short period of time, and the work seen shows that standards are improving lower down the school as knowledge and understanding is built on more systematically. Computers are being used for research, particularly on life and living processes, but they are not yet a significant tool for learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN, AND MUSIC**

96. At the time of the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons in art. As the amount and range of evidence of pupils' work was limited it has not been possible to make an overall judgement on standards. Scrutiny of long-term and medium-term planning, together with discussion with the co-ordinator, indicates that an appropriate range of experiences is provided to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. From scrutiny of pupils' work, children are making satisfactory progress in drawing and painting, and developing skills in colour mixing, tone and composition. There is some use of sketchbooks but there is not a consistent policy about their use. The present co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic but has taken on this role only since September, after a year when no one carried that responsibility. She has a clear view on the development of the subject and plans are already in hand to review provision and revise the policy by the end of the present term.
97. There was not enough evidence to form an overall judgement on standards in music. However, from the lessons and hymn practice that were seen and discussion with teachers, there is clearly satisfactory provision as far as the requirements of the national curriculum are concerned. The quality of singing in the school is good. The majority of children sing with enthusiasm and clearly enjoy the experience. They follow the tune well and sing rhythmically. In a lesson observed with junior children standards were not significantly different from what would normally be expected of children of that age. They were able to listen carefully and identify wind and string instruments. With guidance they were able to compose a simple rhythmic pattern to play on percussion. In doing this they were improving their awareness of musical structure. In an unsatisfactory lesson, however, little learning occurred as the teacher's methods were inappropriate and inadequate for teaching the children a new song and there was too little challenge in the content of the lesson as a whole.
98. The school provides opportunities to learn the recorder. Older children are taken to concerts and visiting musicians play at school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils of all abilities reach standards that are typical for their age and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is very good in lessons observed throughout the school. Pupils make very good use of information and communication technology to produce designs for musical instruments. However, pupils' ability to make written or spoken evaluations of their work are limited by their speaking and writing skills.
100. Pupils in Year 2 understand how wheels and rollers are used to move heavy objects. The teachers' probing questions help them to focus on the problem to be solved. They understand the need to plan before they make their wheels. The teacher emphasises an appropriate vocabulary and asks the pupils to repeat key words and phrases such as 'axle'. This is done in a fast paced and interesting way. Pupils produce a suitable range of products in flexible and rigid materials. They do not often use textiles.
101. In Year 3 pupils make careful observations of packaging before attempting to design their own. They have a good understanding of the need for the package to fulfil its purpose and focus on the most

important features such as the strength and size of the packaging. They are very interested and respond to the good knowledge and enthusiasm of the teacher. They are beginning to use technical language such as 'net' and 'disassemble'. By Year 5 pupils are making detailed plans in different media for their musical instruments and the quality of manufacture is sound. They show different views of their planned project accurately. This is developed in Year 6 where last years' pupils made very detailed plans for wooden birdhouses that were finished to a high standard.

102. The quality of teaching makes a good contribution to standards achieved. Lessons are practical and stimulating. Behaviour is very effectively managed and there is a good pace to all lessons. Pupils of all attainments are fully involved and attitudes to learning are very good. Teachers emphasise accuracy and care and the subject makes a good contribution to progress in literacy and measurement in mathematics. However, the lack of clear speech and problems with writing fluently limit the ability for pupils to communicate their ideas. Planning is based on national guidelines and progress is consistent through school.

## **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

103. By the ages of seven and eleven, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriate standards in both geography and history. This is an improvement since the last inspection when progress in both subjects was described as unsatisfactory and standards were too low.
104. Strengths in the teaching and learning in both subjects across the school is the very clear focus to the local environment and local sources of history. In geography continual reference to landmarks and geographic features of the local area help pupils to put their work into a context which they can understand. This was the case, for example, when Year 5 pupils worked on problems associated with the supply and dispersal of water considering how waste water in school is collected and taken away. In history, adults are seen as a primary resource, such as when the school invited visitors to talk about the recent past.
105. Five to seven-year-old pupils have good attitudes to both history and geography. They listen carefully to their teachers and give sensible answers to questions. They co-operate well in pairs and in groups and can work for sustained periods at tasks which engage their interest and challenge them. This is because the good teaching uses pupils' existing knowledge and builds very well upon it. Activities are chosen particularly well to engage pupils' interest. For example, this was the case when Year 1 pupils remembered the walk they took around school and tried to remember the order in which things were seen. The context of the teaching enables pupils to learn at a good rate.
106. Teachers successfully work hard to give pupils a sense of time past. Year 6 pupils looking at the time of the Queen's coronation are helped by the teacher's reference to the fact that the event happened when he was one year old. Teachers question pupils carefully to help them to have an idea of both place and time and they make good use of incorrect answers to help them overcome misunderstandings. Pupils are also helped to understand new ideas by teachers' references to work previously undertaken in lessons such as in mathematics, literacy and science. The behaviour of junior children is at least satisfactory and sometimes it is good. They behave well when teachers give them tasks which capture their imagination and which they can complete without too much difficulty. Their progress in lessons is sometimes hampered because of poor reading and research skills.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

107. Standards are below the levels typically expected by the ages of seven and eleven because, over time, pupils have had insufficient access to computers and other technology. Recent improvements in the quantity and quality of resources, including access to the Internet and the use of a video-editing suite, are an improvement on the time of the last inspection. Resources are still limited, however, and their use is not as effective as it should be. Even though pupils are now making better progress the newly acquired

technology has not yet been in use long enough to significantly raise standards. However, the planning and general approach to developing skills is good and teachers make practical use of information and communication technology.

108. By the age of eleven pupils understand many of the basic techniques and skills required to use computers but have not had the opportunity to practice them regularly. However, they are confident in loading specific programs from CD ROM, floppy disk or hard drive. They can set up a file for their work and save it. Investigating the history of the Titanic, two pupils found appropriate information on an encyclopaedia program, 'cut and pasted' the relevant information, and transferred it to a word processing document. This good level of skill reflects the clear focus on teaching specific computer skills and then identifying opportunities to use them in other subjects. For example, pupils learn that art programs have suitable tools to produce their designs of musical instruments and effectively evaluate the appropriateness of different packages. They make use of data handling programs in mathematics to total decimal scores. The five to seven-year-old pupils explore ways of making written work more interesting on the computer. They change colour and font size and underline their work. They appropriately control floor robots through entering simple instructions to direct their movements and enjoy using an art program to paint and draw. Pupils' attitudes to computers are good and many are enthusiastic, including those with special educational needs.
109. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. All teachers are confident in the use of computers and this is encouraging pupils to see them as a natural tool for learning. During the inspection computers were successfully used in classrooms in several lessons but the use of the new computer suite is less effective. The layout of the room meant that pupils were too crowded to work comfortably and it was difficult to communicate with individual groups. The school had just received lap-tops through the education action zone funding and pupils made satisfactory progress in their use for researching information. However, because only some of the computers are linked to the Internet, the incompatibility of programmes to particular computers caused some confusion and reduced the effectiveness of a lesson. An aspect of good teaching in Year 4 was that the teacher realised the pupils had some problems in following instructions because of the congestion in the room and brought pupils together to talk to them about the difficulties and ask them for possible solutions. This motivated the pupils to follow directions carefully and they also put forward good ideas.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

110. Pupils at the end of both key stages, including those with special educational needs, achieve the standards identified in the National Curriculum. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall.
111. Year 4 pupils attend weekly swimming lessons along with a few Year 5 pupils who cannot yet swim 25 metres. Pupils enjoy swimming lessons and behave well both while in the pool and during the journeys between school and the baths. All Year 6 pupils can swim at least 25 metres. Pupils cover the full range of physical activities during the year including dance, gymnastics, movement, athletics and games. They know the reasons for warming up and cooling down at the end of lessons and they are aware of the effects that exercise has on their bodies. At the time of the previous inspection infant pupils were unable to evaluate their own efforts and those of their friends. This is no longer the case. Younger pupils talk sensibly about what they have done and make good suggestions about ways in which they can improve. They listen to their teacher, interpret music and work at different levels while controlling their movements skilfully. Good planning for physical education lessons allows both infants and juniors to experience interesting and increasingly complex movement and skill-based tasks within lessons. Year 3 pupils, however, do not generally demonstrate skilful control of their movements. They are unable to move slowly or gently and they find it difficult to complete a simple sequence joining two different balances. When the class gently exercise to allow their muscles to relax at the end of a lesson as the teacher asks them to move lightly as to a slow piece of music on the piano, movements are controlled, graceful and interpret the music very well. Teachers know pupils well and are very good at encouraging



them to improve their performance especially when the pupils tend to become discouraged. Pupils in most lessons seen enjoy physical education lessons and their behaviour is generally satisfactory. In one lesson, taken jointly by the class teacher and a coach from the local sports development association, pupils were unclear about the command structure and consequently pupils' behaviour was unsatisfactory. In a similar lesson with older pupils the coach concentrated on encouraging pupils to improve their skills while the teacher concentrated on maintaining discipline with a quiet word here and there. This latter method was much more effective.

112. Pupils generally have good attitudes to physical education and make sound progress during lessons. Teachers demonstrate skills well and pupils respond positively to the encouragement and praise of their teachers. There are sufficient resources to teach the full curriculum, although some are quite dated.