

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. RAPHAEL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Stalybridge

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106242

Headteacher: Mrs A Lake

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Fitzpatrick  
24326

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2000

Inspection number: 224668

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Huddersfield Road  
Millbrook  
Stalybridge  
Cheshire

Postcode: SK15 3JL

Telephone number: 0161 338 4095

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Casey

Date of previous inspection: 23 / 02 / 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs M Fitzpatrick, 24326	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further?
		History	The school's results and achievements.
		Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Mr D Heath, 9777	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 K Bardon, 11807	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information and communication technology	
		Design and technology	
		Geography	
Mrs B Rhodes, 31242	Team inspector	The foundation stage	
		Science	
		Physical education	
Mrs K Rollison, 7418	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
		Art	
		Music	

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Inspection Quality Division  
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Alexandra House  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Raphael's is a Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary School that provides education for children between the ages of three and eleven. It is smaller than average for a primary school with 158 pupils who attend full-time and 21 children who attend the nursery part-time. Because of fluctuating numbers the school has mixed age classes in Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 28 per cent, which is broadly average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is about in line with the national average and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. Of the pupils with special educational needs the majority have moderate learning difficulties, mostly associated with literacy. There are no children in the school from ethnic minority groups. The school's intake covers all abilities and is similar to that found in most schools. The attainment of pupils on entry is average.

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

St. Raphael's School has made all-round progress at a rapid rate since the last inspection and is now a good school with some very good features. Standards in the school are rising in line with the national trend. The headteacher provides excellent leadership in raising standards in all aspects of the school's work. Her vision for the school is fully supported by the teachers and together they have transformed how the school works for the benefit of the children. The quality of teaching makes a strong contribution to the good standards pupils attain in subjects, their behaviour, personal development and their attitudes to work. These factors, together with the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, mean that the school now gives good value for money.

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

- Sets and reaches very good standards in mathematics and good standards in reading.
- Excellent leadership by the headteacher has developed a strong team spirit among teachers, governors and parents.
- Management in the school is good.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- The curriculum is good and well planned.
- The provision for children under five is good.
- There is an excellent ethos in which pupils' learning takes place; pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Financial planning in the school is good. Spending is targeted at raising standards.
- The school's partnership with parents is very good in supporting pupils' learning.

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

- Standards in writing particularly for higher attaining pupils at both key stages.
- Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The attendance of some pupils.

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

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

The school has made very good improvement since it was last inspected in February 1998. All of the issues identified at that time have been successfully tackled. The quality of teaching has improved considerably; there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Overall, standards in mathematics and English have risen, and standards in science have improved in Key Stage 1; there are still some weaknesses in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. Both the standards and provision in information technology have improved significantly. The role of subject co-ordinators has been strengthened and they now provide good management for all subjects of the curriculum. The role of governors has been developed, they now make a good contribution to the school's strategic planning. All health and safety issues raised in the last report have been resolved satisfactorily. The school is now very well placed to make further improvements.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	A	C	B
Mathematics	C	C	A	A
Science	D	C	D	C

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

Pupils performance in the national tests in 1999 was well above that of schools with a similar intake of pupils in mathematics and above in English. In science, results matched those of pupils in similar schools. Taken together pupils' performance in these core subjects is rising in line with the national trend. Results in national tests at Key Stage 1 in 1999 were well above those in similar schools in writing and mathematics and very high in reading. Standards are particularly high in mathematics at both key stages where pupils develop very good mental agility with numbers. Reading standards are also good at both key stages with the majority of pupils reaching the expected standard. They are fluent, confident readers who read effectively for pleasure and information. In other subjects of the curriculum pupils achieve what is expected for their age, except in science at the end of Key Stage 2 where gaps in pupils' prior learning has led to learning at a slower rate and in English at both key stages where higher attaining pupils' achievement in writing is not as high as it might be. The governors set appropriate targets for the Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 and the school's results exceeded expectations.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are well motivated, enjoy learning and are keen to rise to the challenges offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils behave in a civilised and orderly way with the minimum of supervision both in and out of lessons. There are no exclusions from the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are confident, respect each other's feeling and beliefs and are able to take the initiative when required. The relationships they enjoy with each other and their teachers are very good and make a positive contribution to the harmonious learning environment that exists in the school.
Attendance	Attendance for the vast majority of pupils is satisfactory. A few pupils reduce the overall attendance in the school to an unsatisfactory level because their parents take them on holiday in term time. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. In over 70 per cent of the 44 lessons seen, teaching was good or better. In almost two out of ten lessons teaching is very good.

There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching in mathematics is consistently good, because teachers plan well and have subject knowledge. Lessons move at a brisk pace with pupils eager to explain their thinking and show their knowledge. Mathematical skills are used in science and design and technology to support pupils work when measuring and calculating. In English lessons pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their ideas through discussion and as a consequence they are confident, clear speakers. In history and geography pupils good reading skills are put to use as they find out information independently and then report back to the class. The teaching of pupils with special education needs is good. This is because teachers' good knowledge and understanding of their individual education plans and the quality of planning they do with classroom assistants who support these pupils. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of writing, due to the absence of a scheme of work to guide teachers' planning. Teaching in science at the end of Key Stage 2 needs to focus more on filling gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Activities are well planned and provide a good curriculum for pupils. The school needs to develop a scheme of work for writing at both key stages. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Classroom assistants make a very good contribution to their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision. Pupils reflect on their experiences; they are taught right from wrong and have very good opportunities to work together.  Their personal development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers know their pupils well. They use thorough procedures to monitor all aspects of their development.

Parents express strong support for the school. The vast majority value the way the school works in partnership with them to promote their children's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership provided by the headteacher has transformed the school since the last inspection. Very good support from the assistant headteacher, senior staff and governors.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They ensure a cost effective use of the school's resources and fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good monitoring of the school's performance compared with other schools. The school takes positive action to improve performance when this is needed.
The strategic use of resources	Spending decisions are based on raising pupils' attainment. The effectiveness of spending is monitored.

The school has enough teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum and adequate resources to teach it. Accommodation is efficiently used, though some of the larger classes are cramped for space. Resources for learning are satisfactory except in design and technology where the shortage of some materials and certain tools restricts what older pupils do and in the school library where much stock is out of date. The school makes good use of the principles of best value.

## 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>• That their children are well taught and make good progress.</li> <li>• That the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• That their children like school.</li> <li>• That children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• That behaviour in the school is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of home work given to pupils.</li> <li>• More information on how their child is progressing.</li> </ul>

Inspectors confirm parents' positive views of the school. Inspectors do not agree with the few parents who feel that the amount of homework is not right or that more information should be given on children's progress. Homework is adequate and sufficient information is provided on pupils' progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is average for their age and the curriculum provides appropriate coverage of all areas of learning. The children show a lively interest in all they do, take turns and respond positively to instructions. During their time in the nursery and reception, the children make good progression in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical, creative and physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are likely to reach the early learning goals by the time they begin Year 1.
2. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school is broadly in line with the national expectation when they enter Year 1.
3. Standards in English are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. In reading in the 1999 tests for seven year olds, the average number of points scored by pupils was well above the national average. Both boys and girls achieved higher points scores than the national average, though girls' performance was better than boys. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in reading was close to the national average. In the same tests, the average point score of pupils in writing at level 2 was above the national average. Again both boys and girls achieved higher than the national average point score. No pupils achieved the higher level 3 in writing. When compared with the performance of pupils in similar schools, pupils achievement in reading was very high and in writing was well above the average. Taken over the past four years, the performance of pupils aged seven was well above the national average in reading. In writing, the performance of pupils was above the national average in the same period. Pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 1 show similar high levels of attainment. They have a very good understanding of letter sounds and a good range of reading strategies that they use with confidence in a variety of situations. They understand simple story structure and how a simple sentence is punctuated. Higher attainers use more refined punctuation to show expression and convey meaning more precisely. Pupils learn at a good rate during Key Stage 1, particularly in the acquisition and application of their reading skills.
4. Standards in English are in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. In the 1999 tests for eleven year olds, the pupils' average point score was in line with the national average. Girls' results were better than boys. Compared with the results of pupils in similar schools results were above the average. Over the past four years, pupils' performance in English has been above the national average until the national tests in 1999. This fall in performance can be explained by the impact of teacher absence when this group of children were at the start of Key Stage 2, when a succession of temporary teachers taught the class; and by the weaker performance of these pupils in writing in the national tests in 1999. Pupils currently in Year 6 show average standards overall, though a higher proportion of pupils has reached the expected level in reading than is usual, standards in writing still depress the overall attainment of pupils. Pupils read fluently, have secure referencing skills and higher attainers express preferences in their reading, showing a growing critical sense. While all pupils write clearly and simply, they have not yet learned to write confidently for different purposes with a clear sense of audience. Overall learning proceeds at a

steady rate, with the best gains made in reading for information and in speaking and listening.

5. Standards in mathematics are high. In the 1999 national tests for seven year olds all pupils achieved the expected standard and pupils' average point score was above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3, was well above the national average. These results are well above the average compared with the results of pupils in similar schools. Early results from this year's tests suggest that the school has again made further improvements. This is owing to the effectiveness of the training for the national numeracy strategy which has given teachers good knowledge and expertise in the teaching of mathematics. By the end of the key stage pupils have a very good knowledge of number facts and well above average skills in making accurate calculations.
6. In the 1999 national mathematics tests for eleven year olds, the pupils' average point score was well above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was above the national average. These results were well above average when compared with those of pupils in similar schools. Girls' performance was above that of boys. The performance of pupils in mathematics over the past four years has shown a significant rise from broadly in line with the national average in 1996 to above the national average in 1999. Standards in mathematics have improved at a faster rate than has occurred nationally. Pupils in Year 6 have very good mental skills, they complete problems involving fractions, decimals and percentages accurately and with confidence. Higher attaining pupils solve simple algebraic problems. All pupils learn at a very good rate, are enthusiastic and enjoy the challenges of mathematics lessons.
7. In 1999, the teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 2 in science was very high compared with the national average. Pupils currently in Year 2 make precise comments about their observations. They are able to sort materials according to the characteristics of hard and soft, rough or smooth. Higher attaining pupils are able to distinguish between natural and man-made materials. Learning proceeds at a good pace throughout the key stage and especially in Year 1 where the teacher's high expectations mean pupils are constantly challenged to move towards the next stage of learning.
8. Standards in science are below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. In the 1999 national tests for eleven year old, the pupils' average point score in science was below the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving level 5 was below the national average. These results are in line with those of pupils in similar schools. Girls' results were higher than boys. The performance of pupils in science in the past four years has been below the national average. The lower standards found in science at the end of Key Stage 2 are due to the insecure knowledge and understanding of pupils in some areas of the subject, resulting from inadequate teaching in science when they were at the start of Key Stage 2. Pupils currently in Year 6 are learning at a slower than expected rate because of their weak understanding of some topics. They have a basic understanding of what constitutes a balanced diet and why this is necessary for good health. They have lower than expected understanding of scientific processes.

9. Attainment in information technology is average. By the time pupils are eleven, they have the expected skills and knowledge in the subject. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils select the correct keys when word processing and are able to construct simple graphs. They understand control devices and instruct a robot to cross the floor. Pupils in Year 6 have a secure understanding of what the computer can do, such as save, retrieve and print their work, locate information and for higher attaining pupils respond to their instructions to control on-screen models. Learning is secure and satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs who benefit from additional teacher support when needed.
10. In all other subjects of the curriculum, pupils learn at a steady rate and attain standards similar to pupils of the same age. In history they make better than expected progress in developing the skills of enquiry and research, and by the end of Key Stage 1 are already confident, independent learners. In art they learn a range of techniques and are able to work with a variety of materials. They have a sound understanding of the elements of design for their work in technology, and as part of a whole school project all pupils made clay pots and tiles to a good standard. In geography pupils develop a good understanding of how the decisions that people make effect the environment. In music they learn to sing in time, follow notation and by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils compose and perform their own pieces. In physical education at Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in gymnastics; they devise, link and repeat body shapes and balances. In Key Stage 2, they learn country dance steps quickly and are soon able to enjoy the flow of the music and the challenge of keeping time.
11. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well against their personal targets set out in individual education plans and against national expectations measured by National Curriculum tests at the end of both key stages. Although by the age of eleven, some pupils' attainment remains below average, last year's results show that most pupils with special educational needs made progress at the rate expected nationally, moving through two national curriculum levels. This rate of improvement in English and mathematics is a result of the good management of special needs provision in the school. All teachers integrate their individual education plans with their whole class planning, making accurate assessments of pupils' attainment so that pupils are given tasks which they can complete and which allow them to make progress. Pupils are further aided in their learning by the very good quality of in-class support that is provided.
12. Literacy is well promoted by the teachers. There is a good emphasis on developing strong reading skills with pupils given opportunities to use these to do their own research in other subjects. Teachers are skilled at encouraging and promoting good listening in pupils and when these are joined with lively discussion, as seen in mathematics lessons where pupils give full and clear explanations of their reasoning, then pupils make very good progress in their learning. Not all teachers plan to use the writing skills learned in the literacy lessons in other subjects of the curriculum. The absence of regular practice and consolidation restricts pupils' experience of writing for different purposes which would increase their confidence and improve their writing skills.
13. Standards of numeracy are well above the national average. Pupils have considerable mental agility and enjoy the challenge of applying their good knowledge of number in design and technology, science and geography for measuring and recording.

14. The school has succeeded in raising standards significantly in mathematics and information technology since the last inspection. There has been an emphasis on monitoring teaching and providing appropriate in-service training to improve teaching skills. This, together with better planning and assessment procedures, has been effective in raising the quality of teaching markedly since the last inspection. Standards in the core subjects overall are rising in line with the national trend. The school exceeded its targets in all of the core subjects in the national tests in 2000 and has set realistic and attainable targets for 2001.

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

15. The quality of pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour and personal development have been sustained since the last inspection and remain very strong features of the school.
16. Pupils have very good attitudes to work. They are well motivated, enjoy learning and are keen to respond to the challenges offered. Children in the nursery show that they have settled well, they respond well to the teacher in story time, they sustain concentration and the majority speak confidently and clearly. They are good at taking turns and sharing equipment. This pattern of good response continues throughout the school and has a positive impact on the standards achieved. Pupils settle quickly to new tasks and work with purpose and good levels of concentration. Pupils who have special educational needs have positive attitudes to school and they are involved in all aspects of school life, relating well to adults and to other pupils.
17. Behaviour throughout the school is very good. This confirms parents' views. Pupils clearly know what is expected of them and they behave accordingly. Around the school they behave sensibly and move around in a controlled and orderly way. Incidents of bullying are rare and none were reported during inspection. There have been no exclusions at the school during the previous year.
18. Pupils' personal development is also very good. They are confident and clearly respect each others' rights, feelings and values. The youngest children understand the importance of sharing and taking turns and have a good sense of fair play. During lessons the older pupils show that they are growing up to be responsible citizens. For example, pupils in a Year 6 class learned to respect different viewpoints by listening to the opinions of others. In assemblies all pupils take time to think about families who have recently lost a loved one. The quality of relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. There is a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere within the school that provides a very good background for learning. Pupils are polite, very open in their dealings with others and always ready to be helpful. At playtime and in the dining hall they are friendly and sociable, the older children taking care to look after younger ones.
19. Attendance is below the national average for primary schools. The majority of pupils have good attendance records, but a number of parents take their children on holiday in term time despite robust discouragement from the headteacher. In their responses to the pre- inspection questionnaire, parents confirm that children enjoy attending the school. Parents are quick to contact the school if their child is absent and the levels of unauthorised absence are less than the national average. Punctuality is good. Almost all pupils arrive on time and are settled in class promptly at the start of lessons.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. During the inspection, teaching was good or better in three quarters of all lessons seen. One in seven of the lessons observed were very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. In the foundation stage all teaching observed was good or better. In the rest of the school, the most consistently good teaching was seen in Key Stage 1 where in more than eighty per cent of lessons the teaching was judged to be good or better. The quality of teaching in both literacy and numeracy was good overall, with examples of very good teaching in both subjects. Significant improvements have been made in teaching since the previous inspection when almost two out of ten lessons were unsatisfactory. These improvements are owing to changes in staff, the effective training teachers have received in the national literacy and numeracy strategies and the emphasis the school has placed on the professional development of teachers in the last two years. The teaching of design and technology, which was found to have a number of weaknesses at the last inspection, is now satisfactory because of the provision of a scheme of work which includes all aspects of the subject, including the development of planning and design skills.
21. The quality of teaching is good in all areas of learning at the foundation stage. There is some very good teaching of mathematics. All staff show a good understanding of how young children learn and make the most of opportunities to reinforce the children's learning, for example counting whenever the children line up or are making sandwiches. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are given high priority, particularly in the reception year, and is of a good quality. Lessons are well organised and there is a good balance of teacher directed and child chosen activities. The teacher and nursery nurses have high expectations of children in all areas of work and they work very effectively as a team.
22. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is good or better in over eight out of ten lessons and the remainder are satisfactory. The best teaching in Key Stage 1 is consistently found in mathematics, where teachers place a strong emphasis on pupils learning and remembering number facts. In addition teachers encourage pupils to think about and explain their ways of working which helps pupils to learn a variety of methods and gives them confidence in their learning. This results in very high standards in the subject for all pupils. The teaching of English is good overall at this stage, with teachers developing pupils' knowledge of letter sounds at a good rate through regular reinforcement and well constructed games which help pupils to recognise and distinguish between sounds. As a result, reading standards are very good and many pupils become independent readers by the end of the key stage.
23. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good overall, with over six out of ten lessons good or better and the remainder satisfactory. The teaching of mathematics was always at least good and in one lesson seen it was very good. Teachers give pupils clear instructions on how to make calculations and allow them time to practise different methods. In most lessons teachers organise activities so they give intensive support to a specific group while others work independently. This enables the teachers to move pupils' knowledge and skills forward at a good rate, consequently standards in mathematics are very high.

24. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding in the subjects they teach. Their planning is thorough and is based upon sound schemes of work that ensure progression in each subject. Teachers share their planned learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons and in the best lessons teachers remind pupils of these to reinforce what they are learning and to encourage a brisk pace to the learning. The effectiveness of recap sessions at the end of literacy and numeracy lessons owes much to these learning objectives, as teachers make clear how well the children have learned. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection and is now good throughout the school, particularly in literacy and numeracy where their planning for different groups of pupils provides appropriate tasks so that all groups of pupils make at least satisfactory and more often, good progress. Lessons are linked to previous learning and the ideas and experiences of pupils are well used to promote further learning.
25. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods to interest and challenge their pupils. In history the use of domestic artefacts leads to active interest by Year 1 pupils as they try to discover how and why they were used in the past. The lively discussion that accompanies this enquiry gives pupils a good opportunity both to develop their thinking skills and to become more confident in making suggestions to the class. In mathematics lessons, teachers use a variety of strategies very effectively in mental arithmetic sessions and their enthusiasm for the subject is infectious as they challenge pupils with rapid fire questions in number games. In an English lesson about reference skills, pupils learn to apply alphabetic ordering at a very good rate, because of the high quality materials the teacher has produced to help them learn through the challenge of outwitting her.
26. The high expectations teachers have of behaviour and effort succeed in making pupils successful learners from an early age. Because of the teacher's good expectations in a dance lesson with Year 4 pupils, they learn the basic steps and how to keep time very quickly and move rapidly on to improving the quality of their movement. As a consequence they all enjoy their mastery of a complicated set and are keen to make constructive comments when evaluating their own and others' work. Relationships are very good, pupils are very well managed and prompt action is taken to check inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are praised for their good effort and achievement and this acts as a spur to even more effort from them. Time is well used and there is a good pace to most lessons. Occasionally, when the class is not organised so that all pupils can actively participate or see what is happening then their interest flags and the pace slows. Such instances, as when Year 6 pupils did not have copies of what was being read, are rare.
27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is consistently good, and in some classrooms, very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the purpose and use of individual education plans. These plans are followed in teachers' class planning and because targets are specific, support assistants know how intervention is to be managed and how learning will be monitored. Support staff question and challenge, as well as praise and encourage pupils, showing a good understanding of the value of developing independent learning. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.



28. Teachers make good use of questioning to assess how well pupils are learning during lessons. Work is marked regularly, but the practice of making specific comments and target setting is not yet consistent throughout the school so that some marking though well intentioned does not have the impact it might. Teachers need to review their practices with a view to developing more focussed marking. Homework is related to work in progress and reading activities and is usually appropriate to the age of the pupils.
29. Pupils enjoy their learning and are prepared to work hard in all subjects. They listen attentively to the teacher and each other and in all classes pupils are eager to answer questions. Because of the very good relationships they enjoy with teachers, all pupils are confident about asking for help or further explanation and as a consequence their good progress is maintained. Pupils particularly enjoy challenging lessons conducted at a brisk pace and always rise to demanding teaching.

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

30. The curriculum for the children in the foundation stage is good and fully reflects the spirit of the new national guidance. The children are provided with stimulating activities and experiences covering all the different areas of learning. The education children receive in the foundation classes enables them to move smoothly on to the National Curriculum when the time comes.
31. The curriculum for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good; both in the quality and in the range of learning opportunities it provides for pupils. As a result of this well balanced provision, pupils transfer smoothly into secondary education at the age of 11. The curriculum complies with national requirements, clearly reflects the aims of the school and provides equality of opportunity for all pupils. There are some weaknesses in writing and in design and technology in Key Stage 2. In Year 6, the science curriculum needs to be expanded to cover topics pupils may not have covered in sufficient depth at the start of Key Stage 2. Overall, the curriculum has improved since the school was last inspected and this is helping to raise standards.
32. This improvement is very evident in mathematics. The school has implemented the national numeracy strategy very effectively and this has not only improved the quality of the teaching and increased pupils' attainment but also given an impetus to the subject which bodes well for the future. The national literacy strategy is also fully in place, although this is not yet having as marked effect on standards in English as the national numeracy strategy is having on mathematics. Teachers extend the mathematics curriculum well by encouraging pupils to regularly use their developing numeracy skills when they are working in other subjects, such as science, design and technology and history. The English curriculum is not extended as effectively and opportunities for pupils to develop such skills as drafting and redrafting their writing when they are working on the computer are too often missed.
33. A considerable amount of national guidance on curriculum planning has been published since the last inspection. The school is making good use of this guidance to help ensure that pupils' learning builds progressively and systematically as they move from one class to another. Teachers' planning of the curriculum is much better than at the time of the last inspection and the school has successfully addressed this key issue. A very positive feature of the curriculum planning is the allowance made for pupils' differing levels of attainment. This is clearly evident in the provision made for pupils with special educational needs, which is good. Teachers pay due attention to the specific

needs of individual pupils and plan an appropriate curriculum based on the learning targets set for them.

34. The provision made for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory and, although there are no specific lessons, includes sex education and the issues surrounding drug mis-use. The school has recently introduced an improved programme for this important aspect of the curriculum that is broader and provides a more comprehensive coverage. It is too early to judge the effect that this will have on pupils' learning but the programme is well thought out and relevant to young people today.
35. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities; some organised by members of staff and others by regular visitors to the school. These include a variety of sports, arts activities including music and drama, French and chess. The school is also about to offer an information and communication technology club as study support. These activities are valued and well attended by pupils. For example, fifty pupils regularly attended the drama club last year and this looks like being every bit as popular this year.
36. The school's links with the community are satisfactory. Grandparents of the pupils are invited to a lunch club the last Friday of the month and a before and after school club uses a prefabricated classroom in the school grounds. Links with the parish are very strong and the priest is a frequent visitor to the school. Local clubs have been offered the use of an all weather sports facility recently completed at the school and these links, which could prove very productive, are just starting to form. The pupils have worked with a local printing company to design and make Christmas cards but the school has only limited links with local businesses.
37. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. The strength of this provision lies in the very effective ways in which teachers and support staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness through the values they promote and the ethos that this creates. Good improvements have been made in the provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. The provision for pupils' social development was unsatisfactory in the last inspection report and the school has made excellent improvements in this area.
38. Provision for spiritual development is very good. It is strongly supported by the principles of the Roman Catholic faith and is very apparent in the regular prayers, in collective worship and in religious education lessons. Pupils are encouraged to think about Jesus and how his teachings reflect on their daily lives. They explore questions about meaning and values in a supportive atmosphere and are regularly asked to make decisions about what they believe. The good relationships that teachers establish with their pupils encourage them to be open and frank about their feelings. Pupils are given regular opportunities to investigate for themselves and to discover with awe and wonder the many things that are happening in the world around them.
39. The provision made for pupils' moral development is very good. The school provides a clear moral code and the pupils' respond by behaving very well. Pupils are allowed to write their own class rules and teachers display these prominently. Teachers place a high value on honesty and truth and encourage good standards by example. Moral issues are raised regularly through the curriculum. An example of this was seen in a Year 6 geography lesson in which pupils were sensitively examining the impact of human activity on the environment. The headteacher has an excellent rapport with the

pupils and this contributes significantly to the orderly atmosphere that prevails throughout the school.

40. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The manner in which teachers often organise lessons encourages pupils to work cooperatively, discuss what they are doing in a constructive way and make decisions by agreement. Pupils are expected to take on responsibilities when invited to do so. This ranges from younger pupils returning marked registers to the office to older pupils acting as prefects for the school. There is also a school council upon which elected pupils sit and through which they can raise issues with the headteacher and other staff. The good range of extra-curricular activities provides pupils with further opportunities to mix socially with others and to develop their team spirit. The school's support for a number of charities helps pupils to become socially responsible and to be aware of the disadvantages that others may suffer.
41. The provision the school makes for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall but somewhat uneven. Pupils are taught about their own heritage through art, music, poetry and dance and in subjects such as history and geography. They learn to appreciate their locality and the community in which they live, particularly that of the Catholic Church. Pupils' cultural awareness is extended through theatre performances and visits to places of interest, and by visitors to the school, such as 'artists in residence'. However, the school does too little to raise pupils awareness of the diversity and richness of other cultures in modern Britain. Consequently pupils have insufficient knowledge of faiths other than their own and are generally unaware of the lifestyles and traditions of other ethnic groups.

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

42. The welfare of pupils is now well promoted in the school. There is a suitable health and safety policy in place and this is well implemented. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and the day-to-day working practices of the staff are good. Standards of cleaning are good, the building is tidy and is kept in a sound state of repair. Pupils are well supervised throughout the day and lunchtime routines are well managed. As a result the school functions smoothly. Procedures for dealing with accidents, illness and for the administration of medicine are appropriate and followed by teachers and support staff. The school nurse makes regular visits to the school, giving pupils medical examinations and assisting with the personal education of the older pupils. Child protection arrangements are effective. Local authority guidelines are followed. The headteacher has designated responsibility for liaising with outside agencies. At the time of the last inspection there were several safety matters needing attention. These matters have all been dealt with satisfactorily.
43. The school has very good procedures for promoting high standards of behaviour based on clearly defined rules, which form part of the home-school agreement. Sanctions are fair and the sensible rules ensure that pupils are thoughtful and orderly in their conduct. Appropriate guidelines are in place to deal with any incidents of bullying. Any reported incidents are taken seriously and are usually resolved quickly and satisfactorily. The presence of a worry box for pupils in the school foyer signals to them that the school has their well-being at heart.

44. Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very effective. Teachers know their pupils well because of the detailed pupil profile which accompanies each pupil from class to class as they progress through the school. Opportunities for pupils to plan aspects of their own learning and to work independently are good. The revised programme for personal, social and health education is well thought out and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the celebration of pupils' achievements. Praise and rewards are well used to encourage effort and significant achievements are celebrated each week in assembly.
45. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. Baseline assessments are used as the first step in assessing pupils' attainments and predicting future achievements. The school is careful to diagnose national test results to discover strengths and weaknesses in teaching or curriculum provision. The school also uses standardised tests in reading and mathematics periodically to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress. Within lessons progress is carefully tracked, especially in mathematics and English where teachers make use of these assessments to plan appropriately challenging work for pupils. All subject co-ordinators keep a portfolio of pupils' work which has been moderated and annotated to inform colleagues of levels of attainment.
46. The school has good procedures for identifying pupils who have special educational needs. The range of regular tests as well as classroom assessments ensures that teachers are quick to spot pupils who are experiencing difficulties with their learning. Teachers plan the work of support staff to help pupils who have special educational needs so that they make good progress. If there is need for intervention from an outside agency, the special needs co-ordinator follows the local authority guidelines. Since the last inspection, the school has been more effective in identifying pupils who need help from outside agencies and there are now more pupils in the school who receive such help. The vice-chair of governors has responsibility for special educational needs, he maintains close contact with the school and monitors the work of the special educational needs co-ordinator ensuring that high standards are maintained.
47. Attendance is now monitored thoroughly. This marks an improvement since the last inspection when procedures for monitoring attendance weren't satisfactory. Registers are completed promptly and efficiently at the start of lessons and returned to the school office. In accordance with current guidelines, any absences not explained promptly by parents are followed up effectively. The school rewards good attendance and teachers make pupils aware of the need to attend school regularly. Teachers and staff are successful in making the school day enjoyable and in the pre-inspection questionnaire parents agree that their children like school. The school makes every effort to discourage parents taking children on holiday during the term time, placing special emphasis on the importance of regular attendance in the periods leading up to the national curriculum tests. However this advice is not always heeded, leading to lower than usual attendance levels in the school.

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

48. The school has established very good links with parents. This was confirmed by strong support at the pre-inspection meeting when parents praised the headteacher and the staff for their efforts in improving the school. The parental survey also confirmed that parents are very supportive of the school. Parents feel welcome in the school and almost all of those who responded to the questionnaire consider that it works closely with them. They are encouraged to support their children's learning through the work they do at home and most are happy with the homework set. Nearly all parents have signed up to the home-school agreement. Several parents give up time to help in class or join school visits to assist with the supervision of children. The Parents' Association is active; its fund-raising and social events are well supported, with all the proceeds being spent for the benefit of pupils.
49. New parents are made welcome at the school and there are effective induction procedures in place. The teachers and parents work well together and the pupils make an excellent start to their school life. It is the school's policy that the nursery children have a staged entry during the first three weeks of term. This enables the children and the parents to be given maximum settling in time from the nursery nurses. Parents are encouraged to stay in the nursery if they wish to, until their children are secure. Many parents help and are given appropriate guidance of how to help with individuals and small groups. During the inspection, there were parents working with nursery children on the computers.
50. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly informed from the time the teacher has an initial concern. Individual education plans are shared with parents so that they can help with work at home. Parents are invited to attend the formal review of their child's progress, but they are also encouraged to discuss their son or daughter whenever they have a concern. At the meeting for parents before the inspection, some praised the school for the quality of provision made to support their children with learning difficulties.
51. Parents are well informed by the school prospectus, the annual governors' report and regular newsletters. The annual written reports on pupils give details of progress in every subject and targets are shown for the following term. There is an open evening during the autumn term, the written reports are sent out in July and parents can visit to discuss the reports if they wish. Parents know that if there is a problem or concern they can call in after school. Parents confirm that the teachers respond appropriately if there is a matter requiring attention. At all stages in their children's learning parents are encouraged and supported to play an active role. Because of this parents have a positive impact on the learning of their children, particularly at home where they listen to them read and oversee homework.

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

52. The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher has transformed the school since the last inspection. All the issues raised at that time, including those which were judged serious weaknesses, have been successfully tackled and the school is now very effective. The headteacher's supportive leadership style, which places great emphasis on strong teamwork, has won her the trust and confidence of teacher colleagues who have worked very hard to follow her lead. The powerful sense of community which pervades the school is owing to the headteacher's determination to give every teacher and child a sense of their own value through the recognition and celebration of their achievements. She knows her pupils and teachers well and is

generous in her praise of their attributes and efforts. Her clear educational vision, which is very well reflected in the work of the school, is shared wholeheartedly by teachers, governors, parents and all who work in the school. Since the previous inspection, the school has made very good progress in tackling the issues raised then and in continuing to raise standards, both in attainment and in the quality of education it provides. In all of this work the headteacher has been very well supported by the hard work and determination of the assistant headteacher and the two senior teachers. Together they have succeeded in convincing all teachers of their capacity to bring about change and improvement in a short time scale. The headteacher has established very effective systems for the day to day management of the school and has brought financial management and administration under good control. All staff make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school.

53. Since the last inspection the headteacher has very effectively delegated responsibilities to subject co-ordinators and has provided detailed job descriptions to guide their work. As a consequence, criticisms of the role of co-ordinator made in the previous report have been eradicated. The co-ordinators of English and mathematics have a responsibility for monitoring standards of teaching, planning and the standards of pupils' work. In other subjects, the co-ordinator is responsible for monitoring planning, monitoring the standards of pupils' work and for the compilation of a portfolio of pupils' work to assist teachers in assessing standards accurately. All co-ordinators take their roles very seriously, work hard and give good support to their colleagues. The planned programme of monitoring, together with the improved role of co-ordinators has resulted in better provision, both in resources and in the quality of teaching in subjects since the last inspection. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides good management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. She has recently undertaken training in the assessment and teaching of pupils who are gifted or talented and plans are in hand to run an after school club for these pupils using the National Grid for Learning. She has a good working relationship with the special needs governor who visits the school regularly. Links with parents are good, and those attending the parents' meeting praised the quality of support they were given in helping their children at home. The integration of individual educational plans with teachers' planning ensures that pupils are well provided for in lessons. The SENCO's monitoring of pupils' needs in the school ensures that she deploys support staff very effectively in the classrooms. As a result of this provision pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
54. The school aims to create a caring community where all can learn and share together for the glory of God and enjoy educational success in a stimulating environment. The school succeeds fully in meeting all of these aims. Throughout the school, there is a strong sense of dedication in the work of teachers and children. The headteacher and teaching staff are very effective in celebrating the achievements of the children and in providing opportunities for them to reflect on their aspirations and success. Together the headteacher and staff produce a secure, well-structured and happy environment in which the pupils learn. Their conscientious approach to their role means that they know their pupils well and care for them accordingly. The evidence from parents' questionnaires and the parents' meeting shows that they are very happy with the way in which the school promotes its aims and values.

55. The role of governors, their involvement in the monitoring of standards and in strategic planning have all improved since the last inspection. There is a good partnership between the headteacher and governors who now have a clearer understanding of their role in the governance of the school. They are well informed through planned monitoring of standards and provision in the school of what the school's priorities should be. They share the headteacher's commitment to high standards and are aware of what parents want for their children. They are very well aware now of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are active in their efforts to improve the school. A good example of this being the recent provision of an all-weather pitch donated by a local company.
56. The scope and impact of monitoring standards, achievements and provision in the school have improved significantly since the last inspection. The headteacher and governors monitor test results, comparing the school's performance with other schools and use this information when setting targets for the following year. The inclusion of a target to improve pupils' writing, in the school's current development plan is a sign of their awareness of where the school needs to improve to maintain its good position in relation to other schools. The current targets in the school's development plan are appropriately focussed on raising standards. The plan is well detailed, costed and focuses on a manageable number of targets for the school. Current planning represents a good improvement since the last inspection when governors and teaching staff were judged to have an unsatisfactory input to the process. Governors are careful to seek a number of estimates for services and resources to ensure a cost effective use of the school's resources. Overall, the school makes good use of the principles of best value.
57. The school has enjoyed a more stable staffing since the time of the last inspection. Since that time the need to employ supply staff has dropped dramatically and both the quality of teaching provision and the school's budget have improved as a consequence. The appointment of a new deputy headteacher has brought fresh ideas and expertise into the school and has created a team which has a good range and balance of teaching expertise and experience. The headteacher has also reorganised provision for the foundation stage since the last inspection and both reception and nursery classes now benefit from having a qualified teacher who plans and monitors provision. All staff have a clear understanding of their roles and those of others and respond positively to new initiatives, as shown by the school-centred response to the numeracy and literacy strategies and the associated training. All teachers have been appraised and the school has a very good record of professional development for staff since the last inspection which has prepared them for new initiatives and allowed them to update their skills and knowledge.
58. The school's accommodation is adequate and is efficiently used to give pupils equal access to resources. However, although there are enough classrooms for all of the classes in the school, some of these are small and learning conditions are cramped, especially for the large classes at the end of Key Stage 2. This can lead to difficulties for pupils in seeing teacher demonstrations and restrict the range of teaching methods used at the end of the key stage. Teachers make good use of the space available in classrooms to mount displays and make learning materials accessible to pupils. The location of the school library, in the entrance foyer is less than ideal and is too small to be used to teach library skills to whole classes. The school has good playgrounds and a new all-weather pitch for games marks another improvement in the school's provision since the last inspection.

59. Overall, resources to support learning are satisfactory. There have been good improvements in the provision of computers and these are now adequate to meet the needs of all classes. Resources have been improved in mathematics, English, science, art and history. There is still a shortage of some resources in design and technology that limits the skills pupils are able to develop. The school library stock is somewhat limited, out of date and in need of a considerable investment. This means that pupils' opportunities for independent research and the refinement of library referencing skills are reduced. However, in the absence of funds to replenish the library teachers make very good use of the school's library service to provide pupils with good quality reading for pleasure and research.
60. Financial planning in the school is now good. Spending follows the priorities in the school's development plan and spending decisions are linked to raising attainment. Specific funding for special educational needs is very well used, providing good progress for these pupils especially in the core subjects of mathematics and English. The headteacher and school secretary are skilled in the use of finance and administrative systems and provide the governors with regular updates of spending so that they can monitor the budget. The school makes appropriate use of technology – computer software and electronic communication in and out of the classroom. The last school audit was carried out in January 1999. At that time minor recommendations were made for the school's financial routines. These have all been carried out. Given the improvement in the quality of provision, the rise in standards which is in line with the national trend, the improved provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision and the greater cost-effectiveness, the school now gives good value for money.

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

61. In order to continue to raise standards the governors, headteacher and staff of St Raphael's School, should:-
- (1) Raise standards in writing at both key stages by providing a scheme of work for writing which ensures progression in knowledge and skill for all pupils from the start of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2 and by providing specific training for teachers to support them to implement the new scheme (paragraphs 4, 73, 74, 75, 76, 79).
  - (2) Raise standards in science by the time pupils are eleven and especially among higher attaining pupils by careful assessment of their current knowledge and understanding in the subject, by the provision of learning activities which will compensate for any gaps in their knowledge and understanding and by providing higher attaining pupils with challenging activities which will allow them to reach the higher levels of attainment (paragraphs 31, 88, 90, 94).
  - (3) Continue to seek ways to improve the attendance of those pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern (paragraphs 19, 47).



In addition to the areas for improvement that have been identified above, the following should also be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- (4) Improve opportunities for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 to develop a greater multi-cultural awareness and a deeper sense of the diversity of the society in which they live (paragraph 41).
- (5) Improve resources for design and technology, especially for older pupils in order to extend the breadth of their experience (paragraphs 59,103).
- (6) improve resources for the library, especially non-fiction books (58).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	61	23	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	10.5 FTE	158
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	22

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	13	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	29	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (85)	100 (90)	100 (63)
	National	82 (80)	83 (82)	87 (83)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	16
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	29	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (84)	97 (88)	100 (88)
	National	82 (80)	86 (85)	87 (81)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	13	11	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	11	7
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	18	21	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (67)	88(66)	71 (76)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	10
	Girls	10	9	10
	Total	19	19	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (66)	79 (71)	83 (67)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	-
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	-
Indian	-
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	158
Any other minority ethnic group	-

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

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

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

*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)	7.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	26.3

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

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	23

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	337262
Total expenditure	333247
Expenditure per pupil	1972
Balance brought forward from previous year	-3100
Balance carried forward to next year	915

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	158
Number of questionnaires returned	62

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	19	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	35	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	69	29	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	31	16	0	6
The teaching is good.	76	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	35	11	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	27	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	23	2	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	56	40	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	76	23	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	27	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	35	3	0	6

### Other issues raised by parents

No issues of concern were raised by parents. They were very supportive of the new ethos in the school and spoke very highly of the new headteacher, for the way she has developed good relations with them and has created a very effective and supportive team of teachers.

## **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**

62. The school makes good provision for children under the age of five in the nursery and reception classes, which are now named the foundation stage. Children attend the nursery part-time for one year, before transferring full-time to the reception class. All children start the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. The reception teacher is the Early Years Co-ordinator. She and the two nursery nurses work very well as a team. They plan together under the supervision of the co-ordinator. Maximum use is made of all staff and time is used most efficiently. As a result, all children benefit from learning in a very happy and purposeful environment with competent and conscientious staff.
63. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is average for their age and the curriculum provides appropriate coverage of all areas of learning. The children show a lively interest in all they do, take turns and respond positively to instructions. During their time in the nursery and reception class, the children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical, creative and physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the foundation stage.
64. The quality of teaching in the foundation stage is good in all areas of learning. All lessons observed were good and one particular numeracy lesson was very good as it was enhanced with a range of interesting objects to stimulate the children's learning and understanding. The teacher used hand puppets, and a large red tablecloth to show the children how, by continuously folding it, she could make different shapes and sizes. The teaching of literacy and numeracy and communication is given high priority, particularly in the reception year and is good. Lessons are well organised and there is a good balance of teacher directed and child chosen activities. The teachers and nursery nurses have high expectations in all areas of learning. They work together very effectively as a team. The quality of display and resources in the nursery and the mobile classroom are of a high standard and quality, which enhances the children's learning in a stimulating environment. All staff are aware of the specific needs of individual children. As a result of the good teaching, children's confidence grows rapidly; their speaking and listening skills improve and their understanding increases in all areas of learning.
65. The provision for children's personal and social development is very effective. The children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in personal and social development by the end of the foundation stage. By the end of the reception year the majority of children develop a degree of independence and self esteem and are gaining confidence to communicate with each other and with adults. They behave very well in their lessons and equally well when working without supervision. They understand what is right and wrong and why. They have good attitudes to learning and enjoy being in school and playing and working happily together. Children are very good at taking turns and sharing equipment and all children are well trained at tidying away independently. Teaching is consistently good. The emphasis that staff place on the development of social skills, results in good relationships between children and with all adults. The nursery and reception staff provide a very secure and caring environment, with good levels of supervision and pastoral care.

66. The teaching of communication, language and literacy skills is good and children will achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the reception year. The majority of reception children are sufficiently confident to speak clearly to adults and their peer groups and they were happy to talk to the inspectors during the inspection. They are encouraged to talk for a variety of purposes. For example in the home corner the children learn through role-play situations, on the telephone and making Chinese noodles for their meal, using Chinese, crockery and cooking utensils. All the children in the reception class and nursery listen attentively to stories and they learn songs and rhymes from memory. They enjoy looking at books which they handle with care. The higher ability children in the reception class are already showing the ability to predict what the next stage of the story is likely to be and can sequence the events of a short story. During the shared reading session the higher attaining children are able to notice alliterations such as waddling and water and hens and hopping. They are learning about full stops and the higher attainers are aware of exclamation marks. Children in the nursery have opportunities to write and are writing their names over the teacher's writing. The reception children have the opportunity to practise writing their name every day and are making good progress with their emergent writing. The higher attaining children are able to dictate to the teacher what they want to write and can use a pencil to copy the writing with recognisable letters, which are correctly formed. All the reception children have achieved the levels expected by the end of the nursery stage and are making good progress in the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy.
67. The standards in mathematics are typical of those found nationally and children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals. All children including those with special educational needs are making good progress. Children who are only just turned three years of age and have only recently started nursery are working with numbers 1-5 and they are sorting, matching, counting and naming colours. At the end of their time in nursery and at the beginning of their reception year all children are working confidently with numbers to ten and beyond. The higher attaining children are competent at working with numbers beyond 20. They name shapes such as circle, square, triangle and rectangle and they are learning to describe their properties such as corners and sides. In practical activities they are beginning to use vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting. For example when using a dice in the egg box game, the more able children can calculate how many more dots they need. The teaching of mathematics is good and all staff use every opportunity to count, for example when they are lining up or making sandwiches. The standards in mathematical development have improved since the last inspection. The children now make good progress, whereas it was satisfactory in the last report.
68. Provision for children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is good. They will achieve the Early Learning Goals by the start of Year 1. The teacher and nursery nurses provide the children with many first hand experiences, which encourage exploration, observations and discussions. The children use construction equipment to design and build models. The children in the reception class are confident at using the computer and are developing the control of the mouse and consolidating their knowledge in phonics and basic numbers. The nursery children have already been introduced to the computer and during the inspection were practising writing their name with support from a parent. The early experience of using computers is giving children essential skills and confidence in using information technology and preparing them well for the next stage of learning. The children respond well to discussing the differences between people. They use mirrors to look at themselves, select card to draw a puppet of themselves and are confident at using scissors and sticking their band on their puppet. Children playing in the home corner find out about their own



culture. They also learn about other cultures by using crockery and cooking utensils from other cultures. They are familiar with the correct vocabulary such as wok, chapati pan and balti dish.

69. Provision for children's physical development is good. In the nursery and reception class, the teacher and nursery nurses provide many and varied opportunities in the daily activities to develop children's fine manipulative skills. They use a range of tools successfully when drawing, colouring, and cutting, enabling them to cut, draw and manipulate small objects well. They are aware of the need for careful and safe behaviour when using scissors. Opportunities are provided to use large apparatus for climbing, travelling around, under, over, through and balancing. The reception and nursery children play together in the outdoor area on the climbing frame, tunnels, slides and with the large construction blocks. These many and varied opportunities for outdoor play, support the development of all physical skills. The children are making good progress and are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in physical development.
70. Provision for creative development is good and children make good progress in this area. Staff provide children with a good range of interesting activities that foster their creativity. They express themselves appropriately through singing, drawing, making music, and creating models with play dough. They are taught the specific knowledge, skills and techniques that they need to develop greater understanding of the materials they work with. For example, when using jigsaws, scissors and the computer mouse, they increase their knowledge of the variety of uses and the range of outcomes of these tools. They are able to use their imagination in a variety of role-play situations. For example, when playing at "bathtime", the children bathe the "babies" carefully and wrap them in towels. Children in the reception class know the names of instruments such as cymbals, tambourines, maracas, bells and scrapers. They follow the teacher's conducting and enjoy making music to the tune of, "Old Macdonald had a Farm". They are able to control loud and soft sounds by following the teacher's hand movement. Children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals for creative development by the end of the foundation stage.
71. There are very good home-school relationships. The nursery and reception staff have daily contact with all parents. The parents have a home-school diary with suggestions and advice of how they can help their children at home. Well-established procedures for starting nursery and for transferring to reception and then, at the end of the foundation stage, to Key Stage 1, run very smoothly and this helps pupils settle well to school life.
72. The good quality of provision for pupils at the foundation stage has been maintained since the last inspection, when it was reported as a strength of the school. The foundation stage now has a qualified teacher who has oversight of planning and responsibility for standards. She manages the department very well and she and the team have prepared very thoroughly for the introduction of the new Foundation Curriculum. They have attended courses and they have visited other centres of excellence. They are all confident and secure in their knowledge of the Early Learning Goals and they are very aware of the needs of all the children in the foundation class which allows them to plan appropriately and ensure good progress for the children.

## ENGLISH

73. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 are average. In the 1999 national tests for eleven year olds the pupils' average point score was in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 4 was above that of similar schools. However, fewer pupils attained the higher level 5, than in most schools and girls achieved higher results than the boys. Results from this year's tests are similar to those of last year. Results in the national tests have fallen since the time of the last inspection when they were above average and this is mainly owing to weaker performance in writing. In reading, over seven out of ten pupils achieved the expected level 4, while in writing this figure is reduced to less than five out of ten reaching the expected standard. In the 1999 tests, the results of seven-year-olds were well above the average in reading and very high when compared with the results of similar schools. In writing, pupils' results were above average and well above the results of similar schools at the expected level 2. Girls' results were better than boys. At this key stage results show an improvement since the last inspection for the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level. However, in writing no pupils achieved the higher level, highlighting again weaker performance on this aspect of English.
74. Standards of listening are good among Key Stage 1 pupils. They pay close attention to their teacher's explanations, model their reading on hers during whole class reading and show that they have listened well, by giving prompt and appropriate responses to questions. They show good concentration and patience when listening to classmates, giving them time to express their ideas and asking for more information or adding to ideas. They speak clearly and confidently and are encouraged to develop their thinking through talk. For example, very good questioning by the teacher in a Year 1 lesson, gives higher attaining pupils the chance to expand their ideas and reflect on how they express their thoughts in a group writing activity. The vast majority of pupils at this key stage have reached expected standards in reading. They have a good sight vocabulary, recognising many common words when they read, "Going on a Bear Hunt", with the teacher. They show a good knowledge of letter sounds when asked to read unfamiliar words and higher attainers are skilled at working out the meaning of the new words they meet in the books they read. Pupils' handwriting skills, knowledge about punctuation and grammar progress at a good rate. They write simple narrative accounts and adapt stories they have read. In this writing pupils show a sense of simple story structure, with beginning, middle and end. The majority sequence events in their writing appropriately and their stories have plausible endings. However, pupils' ability to write independently for a wide range of purposes shows slower progress and the highest attainers do not reach the higher level of writing. This is mainly because there are insufficient planned opportunities for extended writing within the English curriculum and in other subjects such as history and geography.
75. The good standards that Key Stage 1 pupils achieve in reading and in their knowledge of punctuation and spelling are maintained in Key Stage 2. Pupils improve their reading skills through the challenge of more difficult books and through the development of reading skills which allow them to use reading for a range of different purposes. In a very good Year 3 lesson, pupils' good knowledge of the alphabet led to rapid progress in alphabetic ordering to develop referencing skills. In a short space of time they had mastered all the necessary skills to research information from books independently. As a result, their confidence developed quickly as they recognised how skilled they were at applying these skills independently. Higher attainers showed good levels of comprehension in their identification of key words to speed up their research. In Year 4 pupils continue to improve their reading and extend their use of expression and emphasis when reading playscripts. Although they attempt writing short scenes

independently, average attainers are not sufficiently familiar with text layout to produce dialogue rather than a narrative form of writing. By the end of the key stage, pupils in Year 6 show good understanding in their reading, especially in subjects other than English. Pupils were seen making very effective use of skimming and scanning skills when they researched life in Roman times. Pupils of eleven have good listening skills and communicate clearly and audibly in speech. Some lower attainers are reluctant to volunteer answers or to read in a group and need to be targeted to do so before they lose confidence in speaking in a formal situation. Writing remains the weakest aspect of pupils' attainment by the time they are eleven, with few pupils writing either extended pieces or in different styles for a range of purposes. The higher attainers have insufficient preparation for writing and expectations of what they can do are too low.

76. Pupils learn at a good rate when the lessons are tightly planned and they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The best of their learning is seen in lessons on reading for understanding or where well managed discussion improves their understanding of language, punctuation and grammar. In lessons where they are expected to write independently, sometimes pupils have too little guidance on what to do and their learning objectives are not clear. In such lessons the pace of learning slows and pupils are not fully engaged in activities.
77. Pupils show a great enjoyment of English when the lessons are challenging and well paced. In Year 1, pupils work at a fast pace and are keen to complete work on sentences about stories they have read. Year 2 pupils show enthusiasm when reading together as a class and listen politely to the answers of others. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 work very well together on researching information and the steady pressure from the teacher results in excitement as they share information and begin cross-referencing what they have found. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy working independently on computers and sustain their efforts well, with a minimal input from the teacher. Pupils show less involvement with the lesson when resources are not adequate or the teacher's expectations are not clear. In all lessons pupils relate well to each other and the teacher and are supportive with the work in hand.
78. All teaching in the subject is satisfactory and overall the standard of teaching is good. Examples of very good teaching were seen at the lower end of both key stages, where teachers' subject knowledge and their assessment of what pupils knew formed a very good base for their planning. In all lessons teachers show at least satisfactory subject knowledge and a good knowledge of their pupils' prior learning. As a result teachers plan lessons to provide work which is manageable but challenging for most pupils. The majority of teachers are very effective in planning for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. They provide clear instructions and guidance for classroom assistants who use time well when supporting pupils in class. As a result, the learning of these pupils is good and they often attain better than expected results. Planning for higher attaining pupils is not always so effective, though these pupils make satisfactory progress. With more challenging tasks and higher teacher expectations in some classes, these pupils would quickly reach the higher levels of attainment. All teachers manage their classes well following the format of the national literacy strategy. The quality of plenary sessions varies, but is always satisfactory. The best are those where pupils take the lead in discussion about their learning.

79. Day to day assessment is effective and teachers give high levels of praise and encouragement in lessons. Wider assessment, such as levelling pupils' work against criteria, is being developed through a portfolio of pupils' work which has been moderated. While this is beginning to give teachers a better understanding of the different levels of attainment, the absence of a scheme of work which plans progression through the National Curriculum, means that teachers have little to guide their planning for this aspect and this is reflected in the range of tasks set and in teachers' expectations of writing. The school is well aware of this weakness and has improvement in pupils' writing as one of its priorities for the coming year. In-service training to extend teachers' knowledge and understanding has also been arranged.
80. The co-ordination of literacy is satisfactory. The staff have been adequately trained in the national literacy strategy and the co-ordinator has monitored teaching in all years. There is some scope to improve the quality of marking so that pupils are more fully informed of the progress they are making against their targets and so that teachers have a sharper focus to some marking activities. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements in attainment at Key Stage 1 and standards are rising in Years 3 and 4 as the impact of the national literacy strategy works through the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81. Standards in mathematics are high and by the age of eleven pupils' attainment is well above the national average. In 1999 almost nine out of every 10 pupils attained or exceeded the expected level 4 in the national mathematics tests for eleven-year-olds and over a quarter achieved the higher level 5. These results were well above those of most other schools and the best that St Raphael's had achieved. Although the national figures are not yet available for comparison, early results from this year's tests suggest that pupils have again performed very well and that the school has exceeded the challenging target it set for pupils' attainment. From being broadly average at the time of the last inspection, standards in mathematics have improved significantly and at a faster rate than has occurred nationally.
82. High standards of mathematics can be seen in all classes and pupils' achievements are very good. By the age of seven, pupils' knowledge of numbers and their skills in making accurate calculations are well above average. In 1999 the national test results of the seven-year-olds were above average and very good in comparison with similar schools. Interim figures from this year's tests suggest that pupils have again performed well. In the infant classes, the teachers place a strong emphasis on pupils learning and remembering number facts. They teach these thoroughly and in ways that pupils find interesting and easy to understand. Consequently most pupils know a good range of facts, such as which combinations of numbers add up to 10, and they are able to recall them quickly when they are solving simple problems. Year 1 pupils, for example, were able to draw a number of five spotted ladybirds, each with a different combination of spots, and then translate their arrangements into correct number sentences. Year 2 pupils build effectively on the secure foundation that is laid in Year 1. Teachers encourage pupils to think about and explain their ways of working. This helps pupils to learn a variety of methods of calculating and many Year 2 pupils understand clearly that they can use different strategies when adding and subtracting. A small proportion of lower attaining pupils have difficulty remembering number facts and often resort to counting on their fingers. However, they are still able to add and subtract accurately and solve simple problems, it just takes them a little longer. The very effective teaching is increasing pupils' mental abilities at a very good rate and giving them confidence in their own abilities.

83. The good progress pupils make as infants continues in the junior classes and pupils make significant gains in all the different areas of mathematics. By the age of eleven pupils' knowledge and understanding of numbers often exceeds that expected of primary pupils and many are very competent mathematicians with an enthusiasm for the subject. They tackle problems involving fractions, decimals and percentages with confidence and can solve simple algebraic equations. Teachers give pupils clear instructions on how to make calculations, allow them time to practise different methods and provide them with regular opportunities to investigate numbers. In a Year 6 multiplication lesson, for example, most pupils were able to select from the methods they had been taught the one they found the easiest to use and give a logical explanation for their choice. While lower attaining pupils are still learning to multiply a large number by a small one most Year 6 pupils have moved on to multiplying large numbers together with consistent accuracy. Pupils are provided with a broad mathematics curriculum and achieve very well in other aspects of the subject, such as geometry and data handling. Most Year 6 pupils know, for example, how to calculate the area and volume of different shapes and how to make mathematical data accessible by presenting it in different ways. The achievements of pupils in the younger junior classes are equally good. Year 3 pupils use the language of mathematics well and are able to apply what they are learning to their everyday lives. For example, they can calculate periods of time and the change they should receive when spending certain amounts of money. Year 4 pupils are able use their good understanding of number values to judge whether an answer they have obtained is reasonable and most are able to break down numbers into their component parts to make calculations easier.
84. By setting sharp objectives and sharing them at the beginning of the lessons, teachers make clear to the pupils what they expect them to achieve. This helps to keep the pupils focussed and encourages them to work at pace to meet the targets they have been set. Teachers plan their lessons well and make very good use of the national numeracy strategy to structure their teaching. In most lessons teachers organise activities so that they can give intensive support to a specific group of pupils while others are working independently. This works well and enables the teachers to move pupils' ideas and skills forward at a good rate. Occasionally teachers try to talk to all pupils while they are working in groups, but this dilutes the quality of the teachers' input and is less effective. By adopting the national numeracy strategy so thoroughly teachers throughout the school are able to share their experiences and build constructively on what pupils have learned previously. The level of challenge in most lessons is appropriately high, although very occasionally teachers push a little too hard and some children lose sight of the ideas under development. Teachers make good use of the opportunities that other subjects present to extend pupils' numeracy skills. In science for example, pupils are required to measure events and record their findings clearly and accurately. Younger pupils' understanding of number sequence is developed through the use of time lines in history and older pupils are taught to add dimensions to their designs in design and technology. The school has sensibly spent a considerable amount of money recently on resources for teachers and pupils to use, and these are put to very good use to add interest and an extra dimension to lessons. Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and use the information they gain from regular assessments well to inform their future planning.

85. The teaching of mathematics is consistently good and has improved since the last inspection. This is one of the principal reasons why standards have risen. The enthusiasm that teachers show for the subject and their desire for the pupils to succeed is infectious and helps create an excellent atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils respond by behaving well, showing high levels of interest and concentration, and trying hard to work with accuracy. They are keen to answer questions and readily put forward their ideas of how to make a calculation or solve a problem. The productive way in which pupils of all ages and levels of attainment apply what they have been taught results in very effective learning.
86. In any one class the attainment of the pupils ranges from those that are well in front of the targets for their age to those who find numbers difficult. Teachers are skilful at providing work that challenges pupils at the correct level, making them think hard but at the same time enabling them to succeed and move their ideas forward. This is one of the main reasons why all pupils maintain a good rate of progress irrespective of their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with work that is carefully planned to help them overcome their difficulties. They receive very effective support from teachers and the adults who help in classrooms and while their knowledge and understanding builds at a steadier pace than most pupils, the gains they make represent good progress. In past years the girls have attained higher standards in mathematics than the boys. However, the work the school is now providing is stimulating both boys and girls to learn and there is no noticeable difference in attainment between them.
87. Subject management is good and has made a major contribution to the improvements that have been made. The coordinator keeps her colleagues well informed and monitors the subject well. She has a clear understanding of why standards have improved and of what needs to be done to maintain them at this level so that the school continues to meet its targets. The subject is taught well, standards are secure at a high level and pupils are receiving a good mathematical education.

## **SCIENCE**

88. In the 1999 statutory tests for the eleven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 2, the average point score of pupils was below the national average. The percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level 4 and the higher level 5, was well below the national average. The school's results were however, in line with those of similar schools. The girls have performed better than the boys over the last four years. Early results from this year's tests show a rise of 10 per cent in the pupils gaining level 4. Since the previous inspection results in science have been below the national average. Although there is evidence that there have been improvements in standards since the last inspection at both key stages, the standard reached by pupils at the end of the key stage is still below the expected level. The under achievement of these pupils is possibly linked to the findings in the previous report that these pupils received unsatisfactory teaching at the end of Key Stage 1 and the beginning of Key Stage 2. The evidence from inspection suggests that the higher attainers are not being sufficiently challenged and that the majority of pupils lack the depth of understanding in the subject expected of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. In the 1999 statutory assessments for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils achieving level 2 was very high in comparison with similar schools, while the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was well above similar schools. These improvements in standards are a result of a new scheme of work, which is giving better guidance to teachers' planning and to improvements in the quality of teaching. The attainment of boys and girls in the tests was not significantly different.

89. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have made good progress in all aspects of science. In Year 1, the pace of the lesson is good and pupils are gainfully occupied throughout. The pupils use their time efficiently and are able to investigate all five senses. This gives them a secure grasp of what their different senses detect and how they use them to monitor what is happening around them. Pupils in Year 2 are very attentive and offer good suggestions about natural and non-natural materials. They identify opposite characteristics of materials for example rough – smooth, hard – soft, transparent - opaque. High attaining pupils distinguish a range of characteristics and discuss where the materials come from.
90. Pupils' learning is good in the early stages of Key Stage 2, in particular in relation to work on magnets. There was evidence of pupils carrying out investigations which enabled them to develop their skills of investigating and recording and to understand the scientific meaning of attract and repel. Pupils in Year 4 respond very well to the challenge to move a toy car backwards and forwards across the table using two circular magnets, without pushing it with their hands. They found out through investigating that when they attracted the car moved forward and when the magnets repelled it reversed. However, the learning of pupils in Year 6 is slow because their current knowledge and understanding of science topics is quite weak. This means the teacher needs to revisit topics which should have been covered in more depth earlier in the school. Consequently the pace of learning within the lesson is slowed and pupils do not make the expected gains in knowledge and understanding which would move them on. They do make gains in appreciating the complexities of what they are taking into their bodies and are beginning to appreciate what a balanced diet constitutes. Pupils with special educational needs at both key stages are appropriately guided by their teachers and the support staff and they make good progress.
91. The quality of teaching is good in fifty percent of lessons and satisfactory in the others. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in the subject. Teachers' knowledge of the subject has improved since the last inspection. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and can consequently extend pupils' thinking well. The teachers' questions and answers are good in most lessons and this consolidates pupils' learning at the start of the lesson. This leads to good levels of interest in the pupils who respond with close attention to the teacher's questions. For example one teacher said, "What do I mean by, ' I wonder'?" The pupils respond with "You don't know something". The teacher probes again and says " So what do I do- yes I go and find out". Teachers know their pupils well and plan clear learning objectives. Lessons are well planned and detailed. There is a good focus on developing key vocabulary and clear scientific language. The pupils in Year 3 and 4 use words such as attract, repel, keeper, south pole and north pole. One pupil said " There's an invisible force between them". Teachers take care at the end of lessons to assess and sum up what the pupils have learned.
92. Teachers plan activities which encourage pupils to work together and share ideas. For example pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 work well together when they use magnets and work on forces. They co-operate and collaborate well together and discuss possible strategies they might use to solve challenges. Relationships between pupils and pupils and teachers are mutually respectful. They lead to good levels of interest, concentration and independence. These positive attitudes contribute to the improving standards found at both key stages.

93. All elements of the National Curriculum are taught and pupils are given appropriate opportunities to be directly involved in scientific activities in the classroom. Teachers assess children's understanding in lessons and use the outcomes in subsequent planning, so that all pupils' work is set at an appropriate level. Currently there is no formal or whole school assessment in place apart from a comment on the pupils' annual report to parents. However, the school has bought various resources to improve assessment. All teachers in Key Stage 1 and Key stage 2 are using the assessments, to give them a general idea of how high the standards are and how well all children are achieving.
94. The co-ordinator for science is committed to raising pupils' standards and the school's performance in the subject. The subject policy has been updated and a new scheme of work was introduced two years ago. The subject is adequately resourced for all aspects and the school has invested in additional teachers' books for increasing knowledge in the subject. The co-ordinator monitors planning and scrutinises samples of pupils' work for progression and continuity. At present the teaching of the subject is not monitored, as priority has been given to monitoring the teaching of literacy and numeracy. This is a weakness and the school should consider allocating time to monitor science teaching, especially at upper Key Stage 2 where standards need to be improved.
95. The development of science since the last inspection has been good. Standards in Key Stage 1 and the lower ages of Key Stage 2 have improved. There is now a scheme of work to provide a co-ordinated approach to the planning and teaching of the subject. There has been appropriate in-service training to improve teachers' expertise in the subject. This, together with whole school planning in the subject is having an impact on raising standards. Although assessment procedures are still developing, the co-ordinator has compiled a portfolio of pupils' work which has been moderated and graded and provides good examples of the different levels of attainment that pupils achieve. This is proving useful in giving teachers a better understanding of the levels of attainment and of the progress pupils make. In the previous report, there was unsatisfactory teaching in science at the end of Key Stage 1 and the lower stage of Key Stage 2 this is no longer the case and the quality of teaching overall has improved.

## **ART**

96. At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in art is in line with national expectations. This standard of work has been maintained since the last inspection.
97. By the age of seven, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils record and communicate their ideas using an appropriate range of materials and techniques. Colour mixing builds on work completed at the foundation stage and pupils are able to match the shade of natural objects such as a pebble, leaf or feather using a limited palette. Using first hand observation, pupils draw and paint items from the environment. They use clay to develop skills such as coiling and pinching. In a successful school-wide sculpture project, they had produced clay models of mini-beasts, including snails; also tiles which reflected images from the school environment. Gaily decorated 'rhythm sticks' were used to accompany work in music.



98. By the age of eleven, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They compare and comment on the methods and approaches used. Pupils had completed design and make sheets when working with clay and other model making materials. Having used sketches and plans of their designs of mosaic pictures or a torch, they evaluated their work and suggested ways it might be modified and improved. Using the style of artists such as Brueghel and Klee, pupils developed their work using collage and paint to take account of the artists' intentions. They had made colourful masks to accompany a playscript and performance of the Rama and Sita story. The outcomes of work in art across the school are satisfactory. Average presentation and the lack of extension of some skills prevent progress from being good, with the exception of work in sculpture.
99. Only one lesson in art was seen during the inspection, so evidence is insufficient to make a secure judgement about pupils' response and the quality of teaching. The examination of pupils' work, however, suggests that teaching and pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. In the art lesson observed, teaching was good. The teacher used the work of Kandinsky and the music of John Gage to enable pupils to respond to the picture and sounds using pastels on black paper. An impressive link was made between art and music. Similar links were observed in music lessons and in the range of art work across the school, for example, Aztec and Aboriginal art. In religious education, colourful weaving with wool reflected the joy of new life and Creation. Effective teaching and planning in the lesson seen, contributed to the progress pupils made and to their good behaviour and response. The teacher provided good feedback so that pupils knew how to improve their work.
100. In both key stages, there is a consistent and thorough approach to planning and the subject is effectively led and managed by an enthusiastic coordinator. Assessment informs the next stage of planning and details of future action are included. This ensures that there is continuity across the school, as in the school millennium sculpture project. Resources are satisfactory, but the method of storing materials in each classroom is inefficient. The school's art policy is about to be reviewed in the light of the new curriculum. The scheme of work effectively draws from the national and Stockport documents. Information technology is used to support some aspects of art. Since the last inspection, there is better coordination of the subject, planning and assessment. This is beginning to bring about improvements in standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. By the age of eleven, standards of work in design and technology are typical and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils have a better grasp of how to design than they had at the time of the last inspection and the weaknesses reported have been satisfactorily addressed.
102. Sound foundations are laid in the infant classes. Here, pupils learn to draw their ideas for models, construct and then evaluate them. Only one lesson was seen in the Key Stage 1 classes but indications from this and from pupils' previous work are that teaching in Years 1 and 2 is at least satisfactory and often good. In the Year 1 lesson pupils were being helped to construct 'rhythm sticks' to accompany their music lessons. The teacher struck a good balance between showing pupils what to do and allowing them to make some of their own decisions. Consequently all pupils succeeded in producing sticks which they were justifiably pleased with. Not only did the lesson develop pupils' designing skills, but it also raised their self esteem and gave them a confidence in their own abilities. Year 2 pupils are given a good range of experiences which include using simple mechanisms to make the limbs on a teddy bear puppet

move and building toy cars. This effectively extends pupils' knowledge of different materials and components and develops their making skills.

103. Throughout the school, pupils are taught all elements of the design, make and evaluate process and maintain a satisfactory rate of progress. Consequently by the time they are eleven pupils have a secure understanding of the stages they must go through to turn an initial idea into a satisfactory finished product. They know how to draw different perspectives when designing and are able to use ideas from commercial products. In a Year 6 lesson for example, pupils were making sensible evaluations of commercial bird feeders and identifying how they had been constructed. Although the teaching in the junior classes is satisfactory overall, and pupils are given regular opportunities to design and construct, the range of experiences they receive is not as good as in Key Stage 1. For example pupils have little knowledge of how to employ sheet materials and their understanding of how mechanisms can be used to create movement is under developed. The school has an insufficient number and range of tools and an insufficient selection of materials, particularly for the larger Key Stage 2 classes. This places some restrictions on what can be taught and how often pupils can be involved in making.
104. As part of a whole school project on the use of clay, pupils of all ages have constructed attractive tiles, pots and models to a good standard. The pride the pupils show in their own and other's achievements is typical of their positive attitudes. They are keen to create products that are of a good quality and function well. Most concentrate well and show perseverance. This was very evident in a lesson seen in Year 1. One pupil remarked that it was taking her a long time to produce a quite complex repeating pattern to decorate her rhythm stick, but kept to the task until she had completed it to her satisfaction.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

105. Pupils' attain satisfactory standards in geography and by the time they leave at the age of eleven most pupils have the skills, knowledge and understanding expected of the age group.
106. Sound teaching in both key stages helps pupils maintain a satisfactory rate of progress in all aspects of geography. Although no lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, the pupils' past work shows clearly how teachers progressively build pupils' knowledge and give them the skills to find out about the world in which they live. Year 1 pupils are able to label common geographical features, such as rivers and lakes on pictures and can identify parts of the school on a basic plan. By Year 2, pupils are able to identify different geographical regions by their characteristics, such as town, countryside and seaside. They make good use of their developing mathematical skills when recording the weather and by the age of seven most pupils have begun to recognise links, such as how living on an island affects the occupations of the inhabitants.
107. Teachers in Key Stage 2 build on the firm foundation laid by the infant teachers. In Year 3, pupils are taught how to extract information from photographs and they begin to use atlases and more detailed maps to answer questions about different parts of the world. Teachers make good use of the resources the school has purchased to stimulate pupils' interest and challenge their thinking. This was very apparent in a Year 4 lesson in which pupils were asked to use an aerial photograph of the locality in conjunction with a large scale map of the area to describe in detail their route home. Most pupils found this a difficult task to master, but the unusual perspectives of familiar places plus the teachers well judged inputs of information, encouraged them to try hard. By the end of the lesson, many had achieved a good level of success. The curriculum that

teachers provide is broad and covers a wide range of different aspects of geography. By Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of how the decisions people make impact on the environment. For example, when looking at the materials that staff and pupils had thrown away over the period of just one day, pupils in the Year 5/6 class were able to analyse their findings constructively and discuss the implications of what they had discovered in an informed manner. Pupils appreciate how other parts of the world differ from their own and understand that features such as mountains and valleys were caused by physical events, some of which are continuing.

108. Teachers make the subject interesting and pupils respond by working hard. They are keen to learn and to find out about their own locality and places further afield. Pupils' behaviour in the limited number of lessons seen was good. A very positive feature of those lessons was the level of cooperation between pupils and the quality of the discussions between them. By the time they transfer to the high school, most pupils have a sound understanding of people and places and a range of skills that they can use to find out more. The subject is led well by the coordinator who has ensured that the subject has continued to develop since the last inspection. She has also ensured that the school is prepared for the changes to the National Curriculum.

## **HISTORY**

109. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in history. By the age of eleven pupils knowledge and understanding are typical of this age group. Their skills of enquiry are better than expected. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the additional support they get from teachers and classroom assistants.
110. Pupils are taught from an early age to learn from artefacts by asking questions and making suggestions. In a Year 1 lesson comparing household equipment of today with that at the beginning of the last century, pupils learned at a good rate by examining such items as carpet beaters, flat-irons and washboards and discussing how they differed from what is used in their own homes. In Year 2 pupils learn about chronology and make good use of their mathematical skills when they place teddy bears in date order, from oldest to youngest. Higher attainers have no difficulty during this activity with four figure numbers when they work out which came first. Although pupils are developing good discussion and numeracy skills during these lessons, there are not enough planned opportunities for writing for different purposes.
111. At Key Stage 2, pupils learn about different eras in history, significant events and people. At the lower end of the key stage, pupils in Year 3 and 4 research their own information about life in Ancient Egypt. They have been well taught to use referencing and research skills in literacy lessons and apply these well when finding out about farming and embalming practices of the time. They consolidate their understanding of chronology by placing events in order on a time line. Year 4 and 5 pupils develop their enquiry skills when they use pictures and artefacts to discover the leisure and domestic habits of Ancient Greece. Higher attainers begin to suggest hypothesis for how things may be related, for example, deciding the status of people represented on pottery from the clothes they wear. Pupils in Year 6 make good use of research skills to discover information about a range of topics connected with the Romans. They know that the Romans were invaders who settled in England introducing new ways of doing things in transport, building and domestic life. They understand the difference between invaders and settlers and higher attainers are able to recognise this pattern of migration in other eras of history such as the voyages of discovery. In all of this work, pupils show good recall of information and make very good use of their reading skills to learn independently. Again, they do not have enough planned opportunity to write and

develop this skill in a range of styles. Recording information tends to be in lists or in simple notes and pupils, especially the higher attainers, would derive great benefit from having to shape their new knowledge and understanding into different forms of writing.

112. Teaching in the subject is good overall. By using a range of teaching and learning styles they stimulate pupils to show a keen interest in the events and artefacts of the past, listen closely to stories or explanations and relish the opportunity to put forward suggestions and hypothesise. From an early age pupils work well as independent researchers, supporting and encouraging each other as they work. Year 4 pupils showed great delight when explaining to others in the class the gory details of embalming in Ancient Egypt.
113. Teachers enjoy teaching history and this enthusiasm for the subject communicates itself to the pupils, motivating them to work hard and reach the standards teachers expect of them. All teachers make good use of resources to interest and challenge the pupils and, as in a Year 6 lesson, provide pupils with books that match the pupils ability and allow them to work independently. Teachers plan carefully and they integrate history with other subjects. For example a lesson on the importance of the Nile to Ancient Egyptians included reference to river action and the effects of flooding. Teachers are now making good use of artefacts and this marks an improvement since the last inspection, when the school had few resources for the subject. The subject is brought to life for pupils during the visits they make to historical sites and museums. At both key stages, pupils' understanding and appreciation of the past are enhanced by visits to Bramall Hall, Styal Mill and Saddleworth Museum. Teachers also invite local people to describe events in the past to pupils, as when a visitor talked to the upper juniors about being evacuated in wartime. Teachers assess pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding according to the new scheme of work and decide whether pupils are working at, below or beyond the expected level.
114. The subject has been well led since the last inspection and there have been a number of improvements. There is now a scheme of work for the subject throughout the school. The co-ordinator monitors planning and standards of pupils' work and progress are at least satisfactory throughout both key stages. The quality of teaching overall is good and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. The co-ordinator maintains a portfolio of pupils' work which informs colleagues of expected standards and gives ideas for future planning. There is now a better range of resources, including artefacts, from which pupils learn and these have led to the development of good enquiry skills.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

115. At the ages of seven and 11, attainment is average and both infant and junior pupils achieve satisfactory standards. Pupils leave the school at the end of their primary education with the expected skills and knowledge in most aspects of information and communication technology. The school has made a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory. Resources for teaching the subject are much better and no longer restrict what can be taught.
116. In the Key Stage 1 classes, teachers place strong emphasis on the development of basic skills, and they regularly give pupils work to do on the computer. As a consequence, pupils learn to use the keyboard and mouse effectively when carrying out simple tasks such as writing words or drawing patterns using an art program. Year 1 pupils, with the help of a student teacher, were writing their names correctly on the screen and then printing them off so that they could be displayed on the wall. By Year 2, pupils are writing longer pieces of text and constructing lists of words correctly. Most Year 2 pupils can select the correct keys when punctuating a piece of text they have been given. With a little help, they are able to retrieve work that has previously been saved in the computer. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to construct simple graphs from information they have collected, such as holiday destinations. They have also developed an understanding of how to control electronic devices and can instruct a floor robot to take a particular path.
117. Teachers in Key Stage 2 classes build on what has gone before and continue to develop pupils' skills while extending their understanding of the capabilities of the technology. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the teacher's well structured questions encouraged pupils to recall prior experiences of highlighting so that they were able to quickly grasp the new skill of cutting and pasting pieces of text. Younger juniors learn to save, retrieve and print their own work and use facilities such as toolbars and drop down menus with confidence. Older pupils have begun to load programs themselves and write their own instructions to control the actions of an on-screen model. They appreciate how the computer can be used as a source of knowledge and can extract information from a CD-ROM to help their work in geography or history. Higher attaining pupils, and particularly those who have computers of their own at home, work quickly and show dexterity when controlling the mouse and carrying out other operations. Some pupils work more slowly because they are not as familiar with the key positions or find the mouse a difficult tool to control. There are however, very few pupils who do not have satisfactory basic skills and an understanding of what the computer can do.
118. Teachers employ simple but effective teaching methods and pupils throughout the school maintain a very satisfactory rate of progress. Teachers often demonstrate an aspect of the computer's facilities to the whole class and then provide pupils with the opportunity to practise individually or in pairs what they have been shown. Early in the inspection week, Year 3 pupils were shown in a clear manner how to change the font of their writing. By the end of the week, after they had all had chance to practise, pupils were doing this quickly for themselves and were ready to move on to the next stage. Teachers' very direct approach to the teaching of skills has brought about an improvement in pupils' learning and has been made possible by the increased number and quality of computers and other resources in classrooms. Pupils use the improved resources with enthusiasm and high levels of interest. They are keen to learn what the computer can do and willingly share what they know with others. They follow instructions carefully, but many do not yet have the confidence in their own abilities to extend their learning beyond what they have been asked to do. Pupils behave well when working at the computer and readily help each other.

119. Teachers' knowledge of computers and their understanding of their use in the primary classroom are sound and have increased since the last inspection. Computers are used regularly to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects, such as science, history and geography, and to help develop their literacy and numeracy skills. The school has come a long way in bringing the subject up to date and has well structured plans for future developments. These include providing Internet access for staff and pupils and increasing the range of programs that can be used on the computers. Teaching is satisfactory overall and has the capacity to improve further when the school's plans are complete.
120. Subject management is good. The coordinator has led the development of the subject well and managed the acquisition and installation of new equipment very effectively. The subject is considerably stronger than it was at the time of the last inspection and well placed to improve further.

## **MUSIC**

121. At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in music is in line with national expectations. This standard of work has been maintained since the last inspection.
122. By the age of seven, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils explore how sounds are organised. They interpret pitch and rhythm in a piece of music using fingers, voices and untuned instruments to differentiate between high and low; long and short sounds. They recognise how the musical elements can be used to create different moods and effects, such as representing line and shape in a Kandinsky picture. At the beginning of the key stage, pupils can recreate the mood and rhythm of a song or poem using facial expression, voices and untuned instruments, including decorated 'rhythm sticks' which they had made in the art lesson. Pupils sing tunefully and with a sense of the shape of the melody.
123. By the age of eleven, pupils compose and perform using symbols to write basic pieces of music. They use untuned instruments and chime bars to perform in groups and can suggest improvements to their own and others' work. They discuss performance and understand terms such as beat, speed, tempo and notation. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection, so evidence is insufficient to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching and pupils' response. In Key Stage 1, in the lessons seen, however, teachers used effective strategies to enable pupils to respond well to taped music. Teachers' positive feedback was constructive and helped pupils gain confidence and improve their work. Planning, objectives and resources were appropriate and pupils responded enthusiastically expressing well in music, mood, feelings and beat. At the end of Key Stage 2, the plenary session effectively consolidated work and presented future objectives. Teaching, however, did not always ensure that all pupils were on task and in some instances pupils made less progress than others. Links with art, poetry and religious education help pupils to appreciate the unity between all the arts. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory.

124. In both key stages, there is a consistent and thorough approach to planning and the subject is effectively led and managed by enthusiastic coordinators. Assessment informs the next stage of planning and details of future action are included. Plans are monitored and a portfolio of written work is being compiled to aid monitoring and evaluation of the development of pupils' written response, musical appreciation and notation. Resources are satisfactory but the location of them can mean that some are not fully used for pupils' learning. Network meetings for local coordinators are attended by staff and are currently focusing on links between the work of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. The policy for music is about to be reviewed. The Carousel scheme is used and contributes to the standards pupils achieve. The Manchester Music Scheme is about to be trialled. There is an effective programme of extra-curricular activities. Several initiatives represent a significant improvement since the last inspection and are beginning to bring about an improvement in standards.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

125. It was not possible to observe the full range of work in physical education during the time of the inspection. However evidence from the lessons observed, the policy, schemes of work and discussions with the co-ordinator all indicate that the school teaches an appropriate curriculum. Gymnastics, dance, games, swimming and athletics are taught at different times throughout the year and swimming is taught to all junior pupils at different times of the year. During the inspection two lessons were observed in gymnastics and dance. On the basis of the above information the standards in the school are in line with national expectations.
126. In Key Stage 1, the Year 2 pupils listen attentively to instructions. They make good use of space and they work with confidence and safety. They have a clear understanding of the effects of exercise on the body. The pupils are able to remember, repeat and link combinations of gymnastics, actions, body shapes and balances with control and precision. Pupils understand the need to warm up and the effect of vigorous exercise on their bodies.
127. In Key Stage 2, the Years 4 and 5 pupils learn country dance steps and understand the importance of keeping time and counting rhythm. They are able to practise, improve and refine their performance in dance and are sensitive to evaluating their own and other pupils' responses. Pupils learn the importance of keeping time and stepping to the count of eight.
128. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was very good in gymnastics and good in dance. Lesson plans have clear learning objectives. All pupils are praised highly by teachers and this supports effort and self-esteem. As a consequence pupils develop very good attitudes to the subject. Pupils are managed very well and teachers ensure that pupils not only learn new skills, but that they also enjoy their activities. They work with enthusiasm and good concentration and as a result their learning is good. Teachers are very good role models for pupils. They change into appropriate clothing and involve themselves actively in lessons and give good demonstrations. Whenever possible the subject is linked to other subjects, particularly mathematics and English. Teachers develop literacy skills by expecting pupils to listen carefully to instructions and use the correct vocabulary.

129. Extra-curricular sporting activities are extensive and enrich the curriculum. Such activities provide pupils with opportunities to mix socially with pupils from other schools. At present the extra-curricular clubs include football, five-a-side football, netball and athletics. The school has bought in coaches to advise and train pupils from reception to Year 6 in ball skills, focusing on basketball, hockey, and athletics. The annual sports day events have been re-organised, so that all pupils are able to partake fully in the sports. The Years 5 and 6 pupils attended a residential outdoor adventure centre for three days. They experienced problem solving, caving, archery, nightlines, quad bikes, climbing and orienteering.
130. The subject is well co-ordinated. The schools' policy and guidelines have been revised and are relevant to all pupils' needs. The co-ordinator has attended courses and has arranged for a full day's training for all staff in gymnastics and ball skills. Accommodation and resources for physical education are good. The school has recently received private funding for an all-weather pitch and the school has received additional equipment from being sponsored by local companies and collecting vouchers.
131. The school has maintained the standards in the subject since the last report. The school now has schemes of work for all aspects of the physical education. The amount of extra-curricular activities has increased and provision for these has been extended to all junior pupils and some older infant pupils. Resources have improved and strong links with the community to sponsor the school has also improved.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

132. Although some religious education was observed to gather evidence about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision for pupils, it is the subject of a separate inspection by the diocese and does not form part of this report.