

# INSPECTION REPORT

**SAINT MARGARET'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Rottingdean

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114537

Headteacher: Mrs S Coleman

Reporting inspector: Mr J Bald  
17932

Dates of inspection: 27 - 30 November 2000

Inspection number: 224759

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: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Whiteway Lane  
Rottingdean

Postcode: BN2 7HB

Telephone number: 01273 303109

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Chisholm

Date of previous inspection: June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Bald 17932	Registered inspector	Special educational needs	The school's results and achievements.
		English	How well are the pupils taught?
		English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
		History	
		Information and communication technology	
Cliff Hayes 9748	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?
Jeremy Collins 27736	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	
		Science	
		Design and technology	
		Art and design	
Teresa Manzi 23056	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Geography	Equal opportunities
		Physical education	
		Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Margaret's Church of England Primary School is of average size, with 212 pupils aged four to eleven. Over 90 per cent are white, and the pupils from ethnic minorities are not in the early stages of learning English. The school's social and economic context are favourable, and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is low. Children joining the school in the year of the inspection had reached average standards, but most earlier year-groups had joined with above-average standards. An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, including an average proportion of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need.

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

This is an effective school. Standards are well above average at eleven, and above average, overall, at seven. Leadership and management are important strengths, and teaching is good, with a significant proportion of outstanding teaching. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Eleven-year-olds reach high standards in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology and physical education, especially swimming.
- The headteacher, other key staff and governors provide very good leadership and management.
- Teaching is of good overall quality, with an above-average proportion of outstanding teaching.
- Standards at seven are above average in mathematics and science.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school, enjoy their work and behave well.
- The school supports and cares for its pupils very well.
- The school has good links with parents.

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

- In a minority of lessons, work does not meet the needs of all pupils.
- The use of time during the school day, especially the morning, is not fully effective.
- Specialist teaching for pupils with reading and writing problems is not followed up closely enough in their work in class.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about and to use computers.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own.

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

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

When the school was last inspected, in June 1998, it had serious weaknesses in its management and in the teaching and learning of pupils aged five to seven. The headteacher and governors have taken energetic and effective action to deal with these problems, and the school's overall improvement has been very good. The proportion of excellent and very good teaching in the school is now well above average, and unsatisfactory teaching is rare. There has been excellent improvement in work in design and technology. All aspects of the school's planning have been revised and improved. Coherent and consistent plans have been introduced for work with children up to five, and with pupils aged five to seven. The school improvement plan is a practical working document, with good priorities backed by effective financial planning. The school has improved its arrangements for tracking pupils'

progress, and is beginning to use information from these procedures well in planning teaching, though this needs to be done more consistently. A close and effective working relationship has been built up between the governors, the headteacher and other key staff, and the skills of new teachers have been carefully matched to the school's needs. The good standards reached by eleven-year-olds at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, and standards at seven have begun to rise – they are now above average in science and mathematics, though still broadly average in English. The school has rightly tackled its most pressing problems first, and is very well placed to improve its work further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
English	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	B	A	A
science	B	B	A	B

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

Standards in national tests at eleven are well above average overall, and were confirmed by the evidence of the inspection. They are substantially better than those achieved by similar schools. Inspectors also found high standards in experimental science and in speaking and listening, which do not feature in the tests. Seven-year-olds reached broadly average standards in reading in national tests for 2000, but standards in writing and in mathematics were well below average, and overall standards were well below average for similar schools. Standards had improved by the time of the inspection, and older pupils in this age range were reaching above-average standards in mathematics and science, though standards in English were still broadly average. Children up to five reached average standards in English during the inspection, with good reading, but weaknesses in listening and in writing. Standards in all other learning areas were good, with very good creative work.

Standards in design and technology are very good at seven and excellent at eleven, with exceptionally good work in extended projects. Pupils throughout the school reach very good standards in art. Standards in history and geography are above average, and well above average in aspects of the subjects that pupils have studied closely. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average throughout the school. Standards in physical education are above average at seven, and well above average at eleven. Too few music lessons were seen to support a judgement on standards at eleven. Standards among younger pupils ranged from satisfactory to good, and standards in music lessons taught by visiting specialists were very good.

The school sets challenging targets for improvement for pupils in each year, and is making good progress towards meeting them. Older pupils in the five-to-seven age group are reaching the standards they ought to reach in mathematics and science, and are making satisfactory overall progress towards reaching appropriate standards in English.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils work hard, complete homework conscientiously, and take an active interest in everything the school does.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Very good in most lessons, but some lapses where pupils are not given enough direction in their work. Generally very good around the school, but with occasional misbehaviour in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Very good, and a very good reflection of the school's Christian ethos. Pupils care for each other and for the world, and accept responsibility willingly.
Attendance	Above average.

Older pupils are very conscientious in looking after and helping younger ones.

### 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.*

Teaching was very good or better in 56 per cent of lessons, satisfactory or better in 98 per cent and unsatisfactory in 2 per cent. There is a substantial proportion of very good and excellent teaching in some classes, and in science, design and technology, art and physical education throughout the school. This teaching is based on clear planning and dynamic presentation, which makes learning challenging and enjoyable. Literacy and numeracy are taught to a good overall standard. Mental mathematics and most aspects of writing are taught well. The teaching of spelling is satisfactory. The single example of unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection was caused by a weakness in organisation, which left pupils with insufficient guidance. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, work is not matched closely enough to the needs of higher or lower-attaining pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs receive very good specialist teaching in literacy and good teaching in numeracy, but the learning of those with reading and writing difficulties is hampered by lack of co-ordination between specialist and class teachers. It is satisfactory overall. Teaching meets the needs of all other pupils well, including gifted and talented pupils, who benefit from very good instrumental music tuition and from a good range of learning activities outside the classroom. Throughout the school, pupils' learning closely reflects the quality of teaching they receive. It is good overall, and often very good to excellent. It is rarely less than satisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A good range of learning opportunities in almost all subjects, supported by good links with the community and a good range of clubs and visits. Some morning lessons are too long to promote effective learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall, and good in mathematics. Good specialist teaching for pupils with literacy problems is not followed up closely enough in normal lessons, and some learning difficulties need to be identified earlier.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	At the time of the inspection, these pupils did not require additional help with learning English. The quality of their learning was good overall, and similar to that of other pupils in their classes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good for spiritual development and very good for moral and social development, where it builds well on values pupils bring from home. Pupils have very good opportunities to reflect on their work and on the world, and to develop an understanding of right and wrong. Provision for cultural development has very good features in art and music, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of pupils' personal welfare, and gives very good personal guidance. It has good procedures for tracking progress in their work. It uses these well to plan in mathematics, science and most English lessons, but less consistently in other subjects.

The school works well in partnership with parents, particularly when they share its ethos. Most annual reports are good, but some do not provide enough detail on weaknesses in pupils' learning. The curriculum makes good provision for literacy and numeracy, and has outstanding strengths in science and art. However, provision for learning about and using computers is limited. Pupils have very good opportunities to learn about animals.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The school has a very strong sense of direction, based on a shared commitment to improving standards and to its Christian ethos. Development planning is very effective, and involves everyone connected with the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors have acted decisively and effectively to tackle the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. They make very good contributions to the strategic direction of the school and to financial planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school tracks its performance closely and accurately in relation to that of similar schools, and takes effective action to improve it where necessary.
The strategic use of resources	Teachers are deployed well to meet the needs of the pupils, and financial resources are used well to develop the school. Most resources, including the library, are used well, but computers are under-used in most classes.

The contributions to management of the deputy headteacher and of staff with responsibility for co-ordination are very effective. All aspects of the school's work, including teaching, are closely and effectively monitored. The school has good arrangements for obtaining the best value from its spending, and very good arrangements for consulting parents and pupils. The school is well staffed, and has good accommodation and resources for learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• Children are expected to do their best.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school is approachable.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of information for parents.</li> <li>• Co-operation with parents.</li> <li>• Activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• Leadership and management.</li> <li>• Homework in some classes.</li> <li>• Special needs provision for younger pupils.</li> </ul>

The positive views, expressed by a large majority of parents, were confirmed by inspection evidence. Inspectors did not agree with concerns expressed by a significant minority of parents about the school's management, its co-operation with parents, or the range of activities outside lessons. They found that some annual reports to parents did not say enough about learning difficulties, and that there were gaps in provision for homework in some classes. Inspectors agreed with the smaller number of parents who said that special needs provision for younger pupils needed to be extended.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. At the time of the last inspection, in June 1998, standards were well above average at eleven, but standards at seven, and in work with children up to five, were below those that parents were entitled to expect. Since this inspection, the school has overhauled its provision for children up to five and for pupils aged five to seven. The new arrangements were complete by the start of the term in which the present inspection took place, and had brought about a good overall improvement in standards by the time of the inspection. This improvement was, however, of very recent origin, and had not had time to show in the results of national tests for seven-year-olds. In 2000, pupils reached average standards in these tests in reading, but well below-average standards in writing and mathematics. Results in comparison with those of similar schools were below average in reading, and well below average in writing and mathematics. The school has sustained the high standards reached by older pupils. Eleven-year-olds reach standards which are well above average in national tests in English, mathematics and science. In relation to similar schools, standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. High proportions of pupils exceed the standard expected nationally in all three subjects. These results are fully confirmed by inspection evidence, which also shows very high standards in experimental science and in speaking and listening, which are not included in national tests.
2. The oldest pupils in the five-to-seven age range during this inspection were reaching the above-average standards they should be achieving in mathematics, science and reading, and were making satisfactory progress towards reaching them in writing, though more needs to be done in this aspect. Higher-attaining pupils are writing to a good standard, with good expression and vocabulary, but the standards reached by lower-attaining pupils, and by some of average attainment, are still below those achieved by most pupils of their age, due chiefly to weak spelling. Seven-year-olds read fluently, with good expression, and have good skills in speaking and listening, which are cultivated very well in all lessons and especially in science. Pupils aged five to seven have developed good skills in number work, in handling data, and in problem solving in mathematics. They are reaching above-average standards in science in response to demanding questions that make them think hard and go beyond the obvious. They use scientific language very well.
3. Children up to five reach good or better standards in all of the nationally determined learning goals for their age except for language and communication, in which standards are broadly average. They count well, and apply this skill effectively in play which involves money. They develop good knowledge and understanding of the world, and learn to form good relationships with each other and with their teachers. Children have a clear idea of what they are doing and why, and enjoy their work. Standards in physical education and in creative work are very high. Children develop good early reading skills and speak clearly and well, but their writing and listening skills are less well developed. The writing of five-year-olds, who had left the reception class before the current co-ordinator for early years was appointed, was below average at the time of the inspection.
4. Standards in design and technology are very good at seven and excellent at eleven. Seven-year-olds design and make robust and attractive models, and older pupils during

the inspection achieved exceptional standards in extended projects on bread, including designing and trying out their own very successful recipes, and on footwear. Pupils throughout the school produce art work which shows imagination, skill and thoughtful reflection on what they see. They use a very good range of materials confidently and skilfully, and use their sketchbooks very well for experiments and informal trials. Standards in history and geography are above average overall. They are well above average in those aspects of the subjects that pupils have studied, but the range of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding has been restricted by lack of teaching time in response to the national priorities for literacy and numeracy. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average at eleven, and some pupils have good skills in using individual computer programs. Standards in physical education are above average at seven, and well above average at eleven. Pupils reach very good standards in gymnastics and excellent standards in swimming, although standards in the limited amount of dance observed were broadly average. Too few music lessons for older pupils were seen to support a judgement on standards. Younger pupils in the five-to-seven age range reached good standards in response to varied and well-informed teaching, but standards among seven-year-olds were broadly average. Pupils reached very good standards in instrumental music lessons taught by visiting specialists, often after they had been playing only since the beginning of the term in which the inspection took place.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory overall progress. They learn well and make good progress in lessons taught by specialist teachers and well-qualified assistants, and make good progress in mathematics and science. Specialist literacy teaching is not, however, followed up closely enough in normal class lessons, and this limits pupils' achievements. The learning of most pupils with special educational needs benefits from early identification, which allows specialist teaching to be focused on their problems. Special educational needs are properly identified in children up to five, but those of a very small number of pupils aged five to seven had not been identified early enough, and they were not making the progress they should. The school took immediate steps to rectify this following feedback during the inspection. The standards reached by the small number of pupils with English as an additional language reflect those of other pupils in their classes, and they are well represented among higher-attaining pupils.
6. The school sets challenging targets for improvement for pupils in each year, and is making good progress towards meeting them. Older pupils in the five-to-seven age group are reaching the standards they ought to reach in mathematics and science, and are making satisfactory overall progress towards reaching appropriate standards in English. Eleven-year-olds reach standards that are substantially better than in most comparable schools. Overall achievement is very good by the time pupils move on to secondary school, and the school is making very good progress towards ironing out the inconsistencies that prevent standards from rising still further.

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

7. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the school. They like coming to school and they are enthusiastic about lessons, extra-curricular clubs and other school activities. They behave well in lessons, with very good and excellent behaviour in most. There are some lapses in behaviour when pupils do not receive sufficient guidance when working independently, or when they become restless when working in rather uncomfortable conditions. Much more often, however, pupils' enthusiasm and interest in their work reflect the dynamic presentation of their teachers and make a significant contribution to learning. In physical education, for example, lower attaining pupils worked hard on basic

movements in gymnastics when they could easily have become discouraged, and were proud to present their work to the rest of the class.

8. Pupils are courteous and friendly to visitors. School and personal property is respected. No damage and very little litter were seen. Pupils show considerable care and concern for each other. They respond well to formal opportunities to act as mentors and reading partners to younger pupils, and are quick to console others who are hurt or upset. Relationships are very good between teachers and pupils and among pupils, who co-operate very well when working in groups and in pairs. They exchange ideas maturely and help each other to improve their performance. In class discussions, particularly when evaluating each other's work, they are sensitive and positive. There is no evidence of racism or sexism and rare instances of bullying are of a low-key nature and dealt with well. There were no exclusions in the reported school year before the inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and attendance is above average, with little unauthorised absence.
9. Pupils are developing very well socially. They willingly accept responsibility, show initiative in the classroom and in their homework, and take a genuine and sensitive interest in their school and in the wider community. The maturity of older pupils is a particular asset as they prepare to move on to the next phase in their education. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were strengths of the school at the time of the last inspection. This high standard has been maintained, and extra opportunities to show responsibility and initiative have been firmly grasped by pupils.

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

10. Teaching is of good overall quality, and has several outstanding features. There is an above-average proportion of very good and excellent teaching, both in most subjects in individual classes, and throughout the school in science, art, design and technology, and physical education. Teaching is good in four fifths of lessons, and there is very little unsatisfactory teaching. Part-time teaching to cover members of the senior management team is of very good quality, and sustains the impetus of learning in their classes very well. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was poor for children up to five, and unsatisfactory for pupils aged five to seven. It was unsatisfactory in a tenth of lessons for pupils aged seven to eleven. The present quality of teaching represents very good improvement on this picture.
11. The teaching of children up to five is good overall, and was very good in half of the lessons seen during the inspection. This high standard of teaching is a result of close partnership between the teacher and the well-qualified learning support assistant. The quality of learning closely reflects that of the teaching, and is enhanced by very good use of resources, including computers. All the children show very high commitment to whatever activity they engage in, and their independent learning is very good. Children have full knowledge and understanding of what they are doing. In making clay tiles, for example, one girl happily explained, very clearly, how she had to add slip to the top of the tile to draw her pattern more easily. Another child produced her own instruction booklet on how to make tiles. The small number of children in this age group with special educational needs are effectively supported and learn well.
12. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught to a good standard, both through the national strategies and through additional teaching designed either to deal with weaknesses, as in handwriting, or to build on strengths such as higher-attaining pupils' very good number work. The numeracy strategy is consistently effective, and is at the core of good mathematics teaching covering all aspects of the National Curriculum,

including very good work on shape. Teaching based on the literacy strategy is effective in reading and in helping older pupils to compose text, but needs further adaptation to meet all pupils' needs in spelling and, in some classes, to meet the literacy needs of lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs. While work is regularly marked, some marking does not pay enough attention to persistent spelling errors in basic words. All teachers contribute very well to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills.

13. The teaching of science is very good, and was excellent in a third of lessons. This teaching is founded on excellent co-ordination which ensures that all teachers clearly understand the aspects of scientific thinking that they are teaching, and also provides very good practical help with planning and resources. The teaching of experimental science is a particular strength, and pupils show very good skills both in designing experiments and in recording their work. Outstanding teaching in design and technology involves very well planned, extended projects which bring together all of the skills set out in the National Curriculum to enable pupils to produce work, such as their own recipes for bread, to a very high standard. The quality and range of teachers' skills in art are also consistently good, and are used to design a broad range of interesting and inventive activities that engage pupils and develop high levels of skill and understanding, with excellent use of sketchbooks. The very good teaching in physical education is based on a combination of carefully-designed activities for the pupils and high levels of activity, often with the teacher joining in, that ensure that pupils are fully exercised. The teaching of swimming is particularly highly skilled.
14. Teaching in other subjects is of good overall quality, but shows greater variation between classes. History and geography are taught to a high standard for older pupils, but some work for seven-year-olds is not matched closely enough to the needs of all of the pupils in the class. The teaching of information and communication technology to older pupils is very good, and excellent teaching on applications such as Powerpoint enables pupils to develop their skills quickly and effectively. However, teaching in this subject does not take place consistently in some classes for younger pupils, and the organisation of the school's resources makes teaching more difficult. In one lesson, this led to unsatisfactory teaching when the teacher worked with small groups of pupils using two computers, leaving the rest of the class with too little direction in their work. In the small number of music lessons for classes during the inspection, teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. Visiting teaching by instrumental specialists was very good.
15. Specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs, from both the co-ordinator and specialist assistants, is good in mathematics and very good in basic literacy. However, as these pupils do not receive teaching of the same quality in all classes, the overall quality of their learning is satisfactory. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language during the inspection were met well by the school's normal teaching.
16. In just under a fifth of lessons, teaching is satisfactory. These lessons have clear learning aims, which are met by a substantial majority of the pupils in the class. However, they do not contain work which is matched effectively to the needs of some of the pupils, either because it does not fully extend the higher-attaining pupils, or because it is not planned closely enough to meet the needs of lower-attaining pupils, particularly when they have problems with literacy. The pace of work in these lessons is sound, and relationships are good. Children up to five benefit from an excellent programme of carefully-planned work at home, and teachers make good use of homework for pupils aged five to seven. The use of homework for pupils aged seven to eleven is satisfactory

overall. There is homework of excellent quality in some classes but, in a minority, homework is not always set when it should be.

17. The overall pattern of learning in the school closely reflects the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching. It is of good overall quality. Pupils make a good start in the reception class, and those between the ages of five and seven are now learning effectively, though still more attention is needed to their continuing problems in writing. Learning is satisfactory overall between the ages of seven and nine, and accelerates during pupils' last two years in the school, leading to the high standards they reach at eleven.

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

18. The curriculum is of good overall quality throughout the school. It is broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements and sufficient time is given to all subjects of the National Curriculum and to religious education. National strategies for literacy and numeracy are in place. They are used well and are having a positive impact on standards. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is of satisfactory overall quality, and has good features in work in mathematics and science. The curriculum meets the needs of higher-attaining pupils well, and very well as they prepare to move on to secondary school. Pupils with English as an additional language and gifted and talented pupils are also well provided for, both through the learning opportunities in lessons, and through the school's good range of sporting and creative activities outside lessons. The curriculum includes good arrangements for all aspects of personal, social and health education, including sex education and the misuse of drugs. This work is carefully planned, and includes very effective scientific investigation of the harmful effects of smoking.
19. Each lesson is long enough to enable the teacher to plan a balanced range of activities that promote learning effectively. However, the timing of the morning sessions sometimes requires pupils to concentrate for too long on similar activities, for example when a handwriting lesson is followed by the literacy hour. The school day is of average length for children under five and for those aged five to seven, but the actual teaching time for pupils aged seven to eleven is a little shorter than in most schools. In combination with the long morning sessions, this limits the amount of time available to teach some subjects, so that, for example, standards in history and geography are good at eleven, despite very good work in topics that pupils have covered.
20. There are good schemes of work for all subjects, apart from information and communication technology, which help teachers to plan progressively more difficult work. These are particularly strong in science, art and design and technology. The curriculum for information and communication technology meets legal requirements thanks to very good work in pupils' last two years in the school, but there is too little teaching of the subject in some classes, and computers are not used effectively to support learning in other subjects. The school is making appropriate plans to improve its work in information and communication technology following its recent appointment of a new co-ordinator. The curriculum is strong in the development of pupils' reasoning and questioning skills, and these make a good contribution to speaking and listening. There are good contributions to work in literacy and numeracy in design and technology and science, and in some history and geography lessons. Numeracy skills are also improved in some lessons in information and communication technology. However, the contribution of work in other subjects to literacy and numeracy is hampered by lack of co-ordination, and in a significant minority of lessons opportunities to contribute to the

development of these key skills are lost. The use of the local environment is good, especially for geographical studies. The local community, including the Church, is used well to make the curriculum interesting, relevant and broad.

21. Children up to five enjoy a very wide and interesting curriculum, underpinned by very good planning and organisation. Their progress is tracked and evaluated continuously, and evidence from this assessment is used very well in planning teaching. Support for lower-attaining children and enhanced provision for those attaining at a higher level are quickly provided. Assessment is also used very well to evaluate the success of teaching activities, and to improve them. The curriculum for children under five is managed very effectively by its recently-appointed co-ordinator.
22. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular opportunities particularly for the oldest pupils. There are several well-attended clubs, including a chess club, sports clubs and a very lively skipping club. The school regularly takes part in inter-school sports. There are frequent visits to places of educational interest, and a very good residential visit for older pupils. There are plans to extend these activities to include an orchestra, but learning opportunities outside the classroom do not include study support.
23. Provision for equality of opportunity is good. The school actively encourages mixed football, and responsibilities taken on by pupils are not gender based. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to the curriculum. When pupils are withdrawn from class for extra help, the school is careful to ensure that this work matches that undertaken by the rest of the class. Supplementary lessons for higher-attaining pupils are very effective.
24. The school has good links with the community, often founded on its relationship with the church, and a very good range of visitors contribute to learning. These include a successful artist, a professional writer and the school liaison officer from the police. There are good relationships with local nurseries and secondary schools.
25. At the time of the last inspection, provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was a strength of the school, and the quality of this work has been maintained. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Themes for collective worship are well chosen, and pupils are encouraged to understand the needs of others. The school shows that it values pupils' reflections, for example by providing a large board for them to write them on following an assembly. Lessons provide very good opportunities for reflection. There is a daily act of worship, but hymn practice does not place enough emphasis on the spiritual element of the music. The school has strengthened its links with the Church since the last inspection, and its Christian ethos makes an important contribution to spiritual development.
26. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. They know the difference between right and wrong, and pupils in every class understand the school's rules and the reasons for them. If a pupil breaks a rule, he or she is asked to identify the broken rule and suggest the way in which they will improve in the future. All adults implement the school's behaviour policy consistently and the pupils appreciate the need for having a working set of rules to promote good behaviour. Older pupils have a very good range of opportunities to take responsibility, such as helping the younger pupils at playtime and helping them read. The pupils choose the methods for raising funds for charity. Within lessons, the pupils are often given the opportunity to plan and work together, and they do so very well. This aspect of their social development also contributes to their academic achievement, for example in science, design and

technology and physical education. The school's provision for moral and social development builds very successfully on the values which pupils bring from home.

27. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, with good features in art and in instrumental music. Pupils have good opportunities to understand their own culture, and to understand key values of other cultures in religious education, which includes a visit to a synagogue. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn about the key values of other cultures in subjects other than religious education.

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

28. The school provides pupils with very good levels of personal care and support. Pupils feel safe, and can confide in adults. They receive good first aid when they are hurt. Child protection procedures and health and safety arrangements are satisfactory. The school's arrangements to promote good behaviour include effective systems for dealing with bullying and oppressive behaviour, which are rare. The school has good procedures to promote attendance and punctuality.
29. The school monitors the personal development of pupils very closely, and uses the information from this to provide very good personal guidance. This is particularly effective for pupils with special educational needs related to behaviour, and for those suffering stress in their lives outside school. The high quality of this support, and the relationships on which it is based, make a most important contribution to the overall aims and ethos of the school.
30. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Voluntary annual tests in English and mathematics are used consistently, and the results are carefully analysed. Information provided from these tests and from teachers' assessments is used very effectively to promote progress in mathematics. The use of assessment in English is good overall, and has helped the school to address areas of weakness in handwriting and in composition, which contributes to the high standards achieved by the oldest pupils. Some spelling difficulties identified by assessment are not, however, addressed systematically enough in teaching. Assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is satisfactory. Very good informal assessment in art, science, physical education, and design and technology contributes to the high standards reached by older pupils in these subjects. There is, however, too little use of information from assessment to plan work in some subjects, including history and information and communication technology. This limits the effectiveness of learning in these subjects in lessons where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good. The assessment of the work of children up to five is of high quality, and is used very quickly to adjust learning tasks to meet children's needs.
31. Specialist assessment for pupils with special educational needs is of very good quality. It makes very effective use of information from agencies outside the school, and is used to design practical and effective individual education plans. The special educational needs of children up to five and of most older pupils are identified and assessed effectively. However, the needs of a very small number of pupils aged five to seven had not been effectively assessed at the time of the inspection, and information from the assessment of literacy problems is not sufficiently reflected in class lessons.
32. During the last inspection, the school was providing good care for pupils, but its arrangements for assessing their work, and for using assessment in future planning, were unsatisfactory. The present picture represents a good improvement on this position, even though work still remains to be done.

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

33. During the last inspection, the school received a high level of support from parents, but the quality of information it provided was satisfactory only. The school has maintained a good relationship with most parents during the major changes in its management and in the teaching staff which it has undergone, although a significant minority of parents are less satisfied with the school's work than they were at the time of the last inspection. The quality of information provided to parents has been substantially improved since the last inspection.
34. The school's newsletters, prospectus and governors' annual report are of good overall quality, and include regular letters to parents containing a summary of work to be done during the next half-term. This is a very good feature, and enables parents to provide effective support for learning outside school. Most annual reports to parents on pupils' progress provide clear information on standards, are carefully written, and indicate progress against targets set during the preceding year. Information for parents about the progress of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is good, and they are properly involved in annual reviews.
35. Parents provide effective help for the school in many ways. They help with homework, and parents and grandparents help in the library and with outdoor projects. Teachers encourage this involvement by making themselves available to talk with parents. A weekly 'Open House' morning invites parents to come into school to see their children's work and discuss it with teachers. The headteacher and other staff are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the school day. Parents are consulted formally by means of surveys in which they are asked for their opinion on any aspect of the school. Records and comments at the pre-inspection parents' meeting indicate that complaints are dealt with promptly and usually to the satisfaction of parents. There is an active Friends Association, which raises considerable funds for resources, including books for the library.

36. Parents of children up to five are closely involved in their children's learning. The class teacher gives them excellent written instructions on how to assist their children in reading, writing and mathematics. These are effectively matched to children's individual needs, and are kept under review as they make progress.
37. A substantial majority of parents support the school strongly, and expressed positive views of its performance at the pre-inspection meeting and in responses to the questionnaire. Almost all parents said that their children like school, and a substantial majority had positive views on behaviour, teaching, the levels of work expected of pupils, homework, access to teachers and provision for helping children to become mature and responsible. These views were supported by inspection evidence. The inspection evidence did not support the critical views expressed by a significant minority of parents about the management and leadership of the school, its co-operation with parents or the range of learning activities outside lessons. However, concerns about inconsistent homework in some classes were borne out, and a minority of annual reports to parents did not give enough information on things pupils were finding difficult. These included reports on the very small number of pupils whose special educational needs had not been identified at an early enough stage.

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

38. The headteacher and governors have taken energetic and effective action to address the serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. All aspects of the school's planning have been overhauled, including the significant weaknesses in planning for children up to five and for pupils aged five to seven. The school now monitors teaching and its own performance very closely, and with clear determination to improve its work wherever it can. The school improvement plan is a flexible and effective working document, which combines a strong sense of direction for the school with opportunities for teachers, parents, governors and pupils to contribute to it. It is particularly effective in tracking progress towards targets, though in some cases benchmarks for success could be defined more clearly. Very effective management roles have been developed for the recently appointed deputy headteacher, and for the co-ordinators of provision for children up to five and for pupils aged five to seven. All of these key staff have contributed to improvements in the consistency of teaching and learning throughout the school, and to its current trend of rising standards. Co-ordination is also very effective in science, art and design and technology.
39. At the time of the last inspection, the working relationship between the governors and the headteacher had broken down. There has been an excellent improvement on this situation. The governors have a very good strategic view of the school, which complements the management skills of the headteacher and key staff. They have worked very effectively with the headteacher to strengthen the ethos of the school and to address the key issues for action from the last inspection report. The school's careful appointment of new teachers, has been a major factor in its very good rate of improvement since the last inspection. These teachers have been selected on the basis of their professional skills in areas where the school was weak, and their appointment has brought about a dramatic reduction in the amount of unsatisfactory teaching, as well as a significant rise in the amount of very good and excellent teaching. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities to a very good standard.
40. The school manages its finances and additional grant well, and uses money for its intended purposes. All aspects of the school improvement plan are accompanied by appropriate financial provision, and this ensures that money is properly allocated to

meet the school's educational priorities. The school's arrangements for consulting parents and pupils are particularly wide-ranging and effective, and the headteacher and governors have good understanding of the principles of obtaining best value. Day-to-day financial control is very efficient. The school makes good use of computers in its administration.

41. The school has sufficient teachers and assistants to teach the National Curriculum and to meet pupils' special educational needs. Teachers have a good range of qualifications and specialised professional interests and are deployed well. Teaching assistants are well qualified for their work, and the school makes good use of their particular talents and interests, for example in the teaching of reading. The allocation of teaching assistants to classes is good in most cases, but in a minority of lessons the assistant is overloaded and becomes less effective as a result. The school makes good arrangements for the professional development of teachers.
42. Accommodation is of good overall quality, and is maintained well by the caretaker and his staff. There are good facilities for sport, including changing rooms. However, some classes for older pupils are cramped, and the layout of the grounds causes a problem in wet weather, as pupils bring much mud into the building on their shoes. The school has good resources for learning, including very good resources for science, design and technology and art. It has sufficient modern computers, but there is too little software, and computers are not organised to promote learning effectively. They are under-used in a third of the classes. The library is compact but well-organised, and is used extensively by the pupils.

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

43. In order to sustain and build on the pattern of improvement which they have established, the headteacher, teachers and governors should take the following steps. Plans to improve provision for information and communication technology are already included in the school's development planning.
  - (1) Match work more consistently to the needs of all of the pupils in each class, by:
    - using the full range of provision in the National Curriculum, including its more demanding elements, in planning work;
    - ensuring that all teachers have the skills they need to teach higher and lower-attaining pupils in their classes;
    - tracking the progress of higher and lower-attaining pupils in each class systematically.  
(Paragraphs 1, 5, 14, 16, 30, 52)
  - (2) Improve the organisation and use of time in the school day, by:
    - reviewing the length of teaching sessions in the morning so that pupils do not have to concentrate for too long on similar types of activity;
    - improving the co-ordination of work in other subjects with work in literacy and numeracy;
    - bringing teaching time for pupils aged seven to eleven at least up to the national average level.  
(Paragraphs 19, 20, 54)
  - (3) Improve provision for pupils with reading and writing problems, by:

- ensuring that all of their reading and writing tasks contribute to their literacy skills;
  - ensuring that the teaching of spelling consistently takes account of individual needs;
  - ensuring that such problems are identified and tackled as early as possible.  
(Paragraphs 1, 5, 16, 30, 31, 55)
- (4) Increase opportunities for pupils to learn about and use computers, by:
- carrying out plans to ensure that all teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology;
  - examining the contribution that computers can make to learning in all subjects, and purchasing appropriate software to promote this;
  - improving the organisation of computers in the school, and pupils' access to them.  
(Paragraphs 14, 20, 54, 85-88)
- (5) Improve opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures, by:
- including appropriate opportunities to study the values and traditions of other cultures in subjects other than religious education.  
(Paragraphs 27, 84, 91)

#### **Minor issues for action**

Improve the consistency of homework for pupils aged seven to eleven.  
(Paragraphs 16, 37, 56)

Ensure that all annual reports to parents give full information on pupils' problems with learning as well as their strengths.  
(Paragraph 37)

## 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	23

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
26	30	24	17	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	201
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	15	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	16
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	29	28	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (80)	88 (60)	97 (97)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	15
	Girls	14	15	12
	Total	28	31	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (90)	97 (87)	84 (97)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	16	14	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	16
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	27	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (87)	97 (90)	100 (93)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	88 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	15
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	26	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (77)	93 (93)	93 (93)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	9
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	166
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.8
Average class size	28.7

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	122

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	381,014
Total expenditure	395,911
Expenditure per pupil	1,922
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,976
Balance carried forward to next year	4,079

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	212
Number of questionnaires returned	77

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	30	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	35	10	4	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	48	1	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	49	8	0	5
The teaching is good.	44	45	6	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	23	26	3	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	31	9	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	36	4	3	6
The school works closely with parents.	38	32	13	14	3
The school is well led and managed.	45	35	9	6	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	49	1	1	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	43	14	13	9

## **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**

44. By the time they are five, children reach above-average overall standards. However, they but have some weaknesses in their literacy and communication skills, where they reach broadly average standards. There are 30 children in the reception class and the younger pupils attend part-time at the beginning of their school career. Standards on entry to reception vary from year to year from below to above-average levels. This year, standards are broadly average. There are some weaknesses in the children's early writing and listening skills, but they show good personal, social and physical development, and good knowledge of mathematics. At the time of the last inspection, children reached above-average standards in English and mathematics at five, but their starting point was also above-average, and progress was unsatisfactory. The current pattern of standards and learning represents a very good improvement on this position.
45. Personal, social and emotional development is very good, and children's attitudes to learning are excellent. During the more formal teaching sessions they are most attentive and well mannered. Children show respect for others, and develop particular maturity in taking responsibility for their own work. They are quick to share and to help one another, play happily in dressing up, and engage visitors in their games. The children love showing and discussing their work. The excellent example given by the adults in their caring and listening makes an important contribution to teaching children how to behave appropriately. One little boy, who was identified as being very shy by other children, showed growing confidence and spoke happily to visitors to the classroom. Early learning goals are quickly achieved in this area, and the work makes an important contribution to the aims of the school.
46. In communication, language and literacy, children reach broadly average standards, and their learning is satisfactory. While there are examples of good speaking and listening, for example in describing the differences between a single and a double-decker bus, the children do not always listen well to each other, a problem that is being addressed effectively during discussion time. The children enjoy books, handle them carefully, and can repeat stories in good sequence. They make good progress in learning to match sounds and letters in response to well-paced teaching. The children recognise sounds accurately, voluntarily pointing to them in the text when sharing a book. They increase their vocabulary in the planned sessions of role play, such as travelling on a bus. The children recognise their names, and over half during the inspection were writing their names independently after their short time in school. Others were copying the letters in their names well, but misplaced them. A minority of pupils can write simple sentences well, using capital letters and full stops, for example 'I saw a cat'. Many, however, could form recognisable letters but not words.
47. The early learning goals in mathematics are being met well, and standards are good. All the children can count and order numbers to ten very well, and can identify zero. Most children can count confidently to 20 and beyond. The children can also find one more and one less and count back from ten. The class teacher uses registration time well, and gives the children the opportunity to use numbers up to 30. One child showed how well she could match shapes to number cards. Teaching in this area is good overall, and there are a variety of activities that are interestingly presented to enthuse the children. For example, they put people on and off a bus to practise subtraction, using dice to find the number. The children also work well independently. In their role

play on the bus, they have a good opportunity to use and count real money to buy tickets. There is constant provision to develop their understanding of volume through water and sand play. Many opportunities are given for children to solve practical problems, such as ordering numbers in jigsaws.

48. In knowledge and understanding of the world, the children show great interest in everything around them. The schools liaison officer from the police visited at the time of the inspection and the children learned very well about the need for safety in many areas, particularly in road safety. They show good basic knowledge on where to cross a road safely. When they are investigating, they make very good observations on what is happening. In an experiment with angel delight and water, a child clearly described how the water became '...like strawberry slip, and is squashy and slippery'. The children tested its quality for blowing bubbles and found it to be unsuitable. They experimented very well with their own large plastic bricks, making a more stable wall after examining patterns in the brickwork outside. Whilst sweeping up the leaves in their own secure play area, they examined worms and woodlice very closely. The children have worked hard on planting a garden at the side of their classroom. They have good knowledge of the wider world. One of a group of children constructing a zoo theme park mentioned that the polar bears were on the north side '...because that's the coldest part'. The children can also access and control programs successfully on the computer, and are beginning to collect data on lunch preferences for analysis under the guidance of their teacher.
49. Children reach a very high standard in physical development. In physical education lessons, they listen very well to their teacher and show good control of their actions, for example, by creeping slowly when asked. They move around the hall at speed but avoid each other well. The children are developing control and balance very well on balancing beams and by walking on upside down pots. The teaching assistant works well in supporting those with co-ordination problems. Children show good skills in changing for physical education. They use the good outside facilities, large tricycles and a climbing frame very effectively, and enjoy freedom of expression in their outside play. The teaching staff also arrange structured games outside using hoops and quoits. The children work with scissors cutting out small pictures of different vehicles to improve their fine motor skills, and some show great care in colouring these pictures, using fine pencil colours. The children use their hands well when colouring, and when squeezing play dough and clay.
50. Creative development is an important strength of work with children up to five. The children display good observational skills and explore colour, texture and shape in their artwork. They work very confidently in paint, collage and play dough, and construct objects from junk materials. The children can name primary colours well. They enjoy listening to music and singing songs and rhymes. They know many of these by heart, and their teacher makes good use of them in their learning to read. Teaching and learning are very good in creative development. The children learn good skills and effective techniques, particularly in working with clay. During the inspection, the children made some very effective tiles and showed a good knowledge of their craft in terms of skill and vocabulary. More importantly they are able to express their own ideas and develop their imaginations.

## **ENGLISH**

51. At the time of the last inspection, standards were well above average at eleven, and average overall at seven. The high standards at eleven have been maintained. The school has made good recent progress towards raising standards at seven, and has

made satisfactory progress in this aspect since the last inspection. Eleven-year-olds' results in national tests for 2000 were well above both national average levels and the standards reached in most similar schools. The oldest pupils' standards during the inspection were also well above average in all aspects of English. Standards in national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 were average in reading, but well below average in writing, where they nevertheless showed a significant improvement on poor results in 1999. In comparison with similar schools, results in 2000 were below average in reading and well below average in writing. The oldest pupils in the five-to-seven age range during the inspection were reaching above-average standards in reading and in speaking and listening. However, standards in writing were still broadly average, and were below-average for the youngest pupils, who had just begun work on the National Curriculum. The school has taken the necessary action to deal with this through its review of teaching and the curriculum for children up to five, who are now making satisfactory progress.

52. Older pupils in the five-to-seven age range during the inspection were reaching good standards in reading and in speaking and listening. Most read with good rhythm, expression, and understanding, although some lower-attaining pupils are not yet reading simple texts independently. Higher-attaining pupils reach above-average standards in their writing, with good imaginative writing and good vocabulary. This is a significant improvement on the low standards reached by such pupils during the last inspection. Pupils of average and below-average attainment, however, have not yet recovered fully from the weaknesses in teaching writing identified in the last report. While most write simple sentences, though with little punctuation, to a standard just a little below average for their age, a small number are confused about letter formation and the links between letters and sounds, and do not write recognisable words. The school has identified this problem and is beginning to take effective action to deal with it, for example through regular handwriting lessons of good quality.
53. Pupils make good overall progress between the ages of seven and eleven. They make very good progress in speaking and listening over the whole of this period, and in reading and writing between the ages of nine and eleven. They learn good research skills, involving purposeful use of computers as well as books, to explore the meaning of texts beyond their surface features. They learn to write effectively, deliberately composing text for specific purposes, using a good range of vocabulary and grammatical structures in response to carefully thought-out teaching. Some, however, still have problems with spelling which can be traced to weaknesses identified during the last inspection. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed to a very high standard in all lessons thanks to teachers' consistent emphasis on reflection and thinking in sessions involving the whole class.
54. Work in science and in design and technology makes a very good contribution to literacy and to speaking and listening skills throughout the school. There are also very effective contributions in work in some history and geography lessons to reading and writing skills, especially for older pupils. The contribution of some writing tasks for younger pupils is limited by a lack of integration of written work in the literacy hour with written work in other subjects. Some English lessons make a good contribution to pupils' skills in using computers, but the use of computers in English lessons, including their use in work with pupils with special educational needs, is underdeveloped.
55. Pupils with special educational needs related to English make satisfactory progress overall. Their learning is very good when they receive specialist teaching, both from teachers and from a specialist teacher assistant, but reading and writing difficulties, including problems with spelling, are not followed up sufficiently closely in their class

work. A small number of parents were concerned that their children's learning difficulties related to reading and writing had not been identified and tackled early enough, and inspection evidence supported this view. The learning and standards of pupils with English as an additional language follow a similar overall pattern to those of other pupils in their classes, with high standards among the older pupils.

56. The quality of teaching and learning in English ranges from satisfactory to excellent, and is good overall. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum and of the National Literacy Strategy. Their knowledge of patterns in learning among lower-attaining pupils in English is satisfactory overall, but has weaknesses that limit the quality of learning when these pupils are taught in groups. Long-term planning is of good overall quality. In the most successful lessons, the structures of the National Literacy Strategy are adapted well to meet pupils' needs, but in some lessons, particularly for pupils aged five to seven, they need to be used more flexibly in order to deal with pupils' difficulties with writing. Lessons contain an imaginative range of activities that engage pupils well, and contribute effectively to their personal development by having them think hard about emotions and important issues. Teachers in almost all classes manage group work very effectively, encouraging pupils to work independently and responsibly, though some of the very youngest pupils needed more guidance and support in this part of the lesson. Teachers promote independent reading effectively, encouraging pupils to use the library and the internet well for their own purposes. They give good guidance to pupils on improving their written composition skills in marking, but some marking does not focus closely enough on the basic spelling errors which persist in the work of older pupils. The overall quality of homework is good, with regular reading and spelling work, and some excellent history homework for older pupils which hones research, writing and presentational skills to a very high level. There are, however, gaps in homework in some classes, and some does not take enough account of individual learning needs.
57. There are effective arrangements for co-ordinating work in English, and the curriculum for pupils aged five to seven has been re-organised very well to deal with problems identified during the last inspection. Assessment is used very well to track pupils' progress, both over their whole school career and from year to year. While some of these arrangements have been fully in place only since the beginning of the term in which the inspection took place, the school has rightly tackled the most serious issues first, and is very well placed to make further improvements in its work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

58. The school has maintained the high standards in mathematics for eleven-year-olds observed during the last inspection, and has brought about a good improvement in the standards reached by seven-year-olds. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
59. Eleven-year-olds' national test results for 2000 were well above average, and well above those achieved by most similar schools. The oldest pupils in the seven-to-eleven age range have a broad range of number skills, which they use and apply quickly and effectively. They work with decimals to three places, and mentally to convert fractions to decimals. They are very good at seeking patterns in numbers and at explaining their strategies for solving problems. They use effective checks to ensure that their answers are reasonable, and have very good knowledge and understanding of mathematical language. They use the correct terms for different shapes such as 'nephroid', and know the angle sum of a triangle.

60. Seven-year-olds' results in national tests for 2000 were above average, but well below the average for similar schools, as few pupils reached higher than the expected level in the tests. The standards reached by older pupils in the five-to-seven age range during the inspection were above average, and the quality of their learning was excellent. Pupils are quick and eager to work out problems, and explain clearly how they worked out their answers. They willingly try different approaches when solving problems. Their measuring skills are good and they achieve good standards in data handling. They collect data and construct and interpret bar charts and tally charts. The pupils are developing a good understanding of place value. The numeracy strategy is having a positive impact upon improving the pupils' mental arithmetic skills. Overall, standards at seven in mathematics show good improvement since the last inspection.
61. Pupils throughout the school learn effectively in mathematics, and make excellent progress in response to teaching of exceptional quality in some classes. Overall, the quality of teaching of this subject is very good at Key Stage 2 and good at Key Stage 1. Teachers have very good knowledge of the National Curriculum for mathematics, and of the National Numeracy Strategy, and use specific vocabulary very well. There is a very fast pace in the most successful lessons, and the pupils are constantly challenged. The teachers expect much of their pupils, but also match work well to their needs. They give clear explanations, so that the pupils are confident to try different strategies to arrive at their answer. Mathematics is made interesting and fun. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with special needs. The teacher with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs works closely with the class teachers. When these pupils are withdrawn for extra work, this helps them when they are in class. Additional teaching for higher-attaining pupils is excellent, and enables these pupils to work to the limit of their ability. Teachers mark work well and give good suggestions for pupils to improve their work. Pupils' skills in mathematics, and particularly in numeracy, are further developed by work in geography, history, design and technology and science, and in some lessons in information and communication technology which involve handling and presenting data.
62. The co-ordinator for this subject is highly qualified and provides a very strong lead for other teachers throughout this school. He has observed lessons and taught alongside other teachers. This has helped improve the quality of teaching in the subject. Strengths and weaknesses identified in tests and through the examination of pupils' work are being addressed well. The school is in a very good position to improve its work further.

## SCIENCE

63. In national tests for 2000, all eleven-year-old pupils reached the expected level, and over half exceeded it. This achievement is well above the national average and above average for similar schools. This result does not fully reflect pupils' very good skills in experimental science, as these are not included in the national test. The school is making every effort to improve on this by setting higher targets for 2001. There has been a substantial improvement in standards in science since the last inspection.
64. The rising standards of all pupils in science are due to the school's consistent and detailed approach to the subject, using scientific enquiry as the basis of learning. This presents constant challenge to the pupils, who respond very well and at times excellently. The pupils produce well-thought-out conclusions, and raise further questions for deeper study. Even those aged five to seven are challenged in this way by the teaching. In their study of ice and its properties, for example, pupils went beyond the obvious to question why the ice they saw had cracks in it, why bubbles, why different shapes? In excellent sessions at the end of lessons, pupils tried to answer these queries, suggesting that, 'There is air in the water and it is trapped when it's frozen', and 'Ice becomes very slippery when it melts and there is a bit of water on the top'. These answers served to drive pupils on, and they became more enthusiastic and thoughtful in their investigations. Five-year-old pupils also began to ask questions when they discovered that magnets do not attract all metals. They made good predictions based on their own experience and began to make further investigations, as their previous ideas were not confirmed. This approach heightens the pupils' spirit of enquiry and deepens their interest in science. Pupils aged five to seven use very good scientific language, selecting words such as *transparent*, *expand*, *attract*, *poles* and *predictions*. They record their investigations very well, usually in tables.
65. The process of enquiry develops very well among pupils aged seven to eleven. After discovering that magnets can attract other objects through non-magnetic materials, seven-year-olds showed an almost tangible resolve to seek out some materials which prevent the magnetic field penetrating. They made good and exciting discoveries, for example that balloons stop 'the pull', and that tin foil allows it to pass through whilst aluminium foil does not. During this very good lesson, the pupils carried out the experiments, making one change in the elements involved each time, showing clear understanding of the requirements of a fair test. They used scientific language very well, one concluding that 'Magnets can attract and repel depending on the North and South poles'.
66. Further learning in this age-range included relating the forces of friction and gravity, selecting a very wide range of materials and surfaces to see how far different sized marbles will travel. This was recorded very well, first in tables and then in very accurate bar graphs. Nine-year-olds devised very effective tests in response to the demanding task of devising their own test to discover the amount of tar produced by cigarettes, as part of an investigation of the harm smoking does to the body. The oldest pupils in this age range were considering why some changes are reversible and some not. These questions led on to the ideas of chemical reactions and of the differences between mixtures and compounds, and of the natures of solutes and solvents. Pupils recorded their findings very carefully and accurately, under the very clear guidance of the teacher.
67. Teaching and learning in science are of very high quality. Five lessons out of six observed during the inspection were very good or better, and the remaining lesson was good, with some very good features. This teaching is a major strength of the school. It

is very well planned, with learning aims that are very clear to the pupils, so that they make very good progress or better. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. All the teachers have subject knowledge which is at least good and at best excellent. This enables them to ask taxing questions and to encourage pupils to think clearly for themselves. The centre of this very good teaching lies in the school's emphasis on scientific enquiry. The teachers use a very wide range of resources to good effect and this has a very good impact on the pupils' learning, as they have all the apparatus to hand for their experiments. The pupils are always most enthusiastic and work very well together. These factors contribute very positively to their learning and personal development.

68. The co-ordination of science is excellent, and makes a significant contribution to the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator has targeted areas for improvement on the basis of pupils' performance in the last series of national assessments, and he and the staff discuss what needs to be done to raise standards. The curriculum is well developed throughout the school, and gives pupils a wide and interesting foundation in scientific method and knowledge. Assessment procedures track pupils' progress well, and are used effectively in planning. Resources are very good, though in some classrooms pupils and teachers need to make the best of rather cramped conditions.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

69. The pupils' work in art is strength of the school. The very good standards of art work noted in the last inspection report have been maintained in Key Stage 2 and the good standards in Key Stage 1 have improved. Standards are now well above average throughout the school.
70. Older pupils in the five-to-seven age range mix paints to match colours and create a very good variety of subtle shades. They use charcoal, chalk, pastels, paint, clay and a variety of other media confidently and very effectively. They make sensible choices of the materials they need to complete tasks, and draw detailed pictures of leaves using very soft pencils. They show exceptional inventiveness in imitating the work of established artists, such as Jackson Pollock. Ten and eleven-year-olds produce realistic drawings of seed heads using both pencil and pen, following close observation through magnifying glasses. Throughout the school, pupils experiment and combine a mixture of techniques and materials imaginatively, and handle new techniques, such as tie-dying and screen printing on fabric, confidently and very well. Pupils give and accept critical judgements of their work. They are used to practising their drawing techniques and are keen to improve them.
71. Progress and learning are very good throughout the school. A good example of this is in sketchbooks, which pupils use to plan and to experiment with a variety of pencils, charcoal and pastels. Five-year-olds who had closely observed a sunflower used the technique of placing water over ink to produce a 'bleeding' effect very well. Seven-year-olds observed each other closely, and drew good portraits showing body posture. Seven and eight-year-olds have made imaginative and attractive models of the school's ducks using a mixture of papier mâché, paint and feathers, as well as clay.
72. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good, with some outstanding features. Teachers are well organised, and have good knowledge and understanding of the subject, planning consistently interesting and challenging activities for the pupils. Pupils enjoy their work, and relationships and pace are good. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to art activities by helping to organise the class and demonstrating techniques. Where the teaching is very good, these qualities are

enhanced by personal enthusiasm and dynamic presentation that accelerates learning. The teacher in one very good lesson worked effectively with each group in turn, questioning and extending pupils' learning all the time, and completing her own picture, giving a good example to the class and creating an atmosphere of shared learning. Most teachers manage time well and very good links are established with other subjects, such as English, history and religious education. However, in some lessons the balance of time is rather more directed to English than to art. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, weak organisation causes too much time to be spent in sorting out pupils' work. Teachers display pupils' work well, and extend their reading skills by means of careful labels which explain the techniques used, and pose questions that encourage pupils to read to discover the answers.

73. Curriculum management is very good. There is a good scheme of work, which covers the whole school and helps all teachers to plan their lessons efficiently, knowing what has been taught before. The co-ordinator for this subject is knowledgeable and helps her colleagues very well. The high standard of art is celebrated throughout the school and through exhibitions in the Church.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

74. Standards are very good at seven and excellent at eleven. This represents excellent improvement on the average standards reached throughout the school at the time of the last inspection.
75. Pupils aged five to seven did very good work on winding mechanisms, based on the nursery rhyme 'Incey, Wincey Spider'. The teaching ensured robust models that are standing up well to being publicly displayed. In their planning, pupils wrote their ideas for lifting the spider very well, and drew good design diagrams. Some pupils clearly realised that they needed to make the spout to scale, so that the spider could fit into it. Pupils evaluated their work very well, and had good ideas for improving their designs. One said, 'I think the best part of our model was the spider. It would be better if we could make the raindrops go up too'.
76. The standards reached by ten and eleven-year-old pupils are excellent, and they often work very successfully to a standard well above that expected for their age. Ten-year-olds, for example, not only produced bread of high quality in taste and texture, but devised original recipes of professional quality. Eleven-year-olds were working to an equally exceptional level when designing and producing slippers.
77. Both of these projects take place over an extended period of time, and their excellence stems from a high and sustained level of commitment from the pupils and their teachers. Pupils began their project on bread by collecting information, including research on shop and supermarket bread. In their evaluations they considered the advantages of home-made bread – it was fresher and they knew what goes into the making. The pupils devised, through discussion, a very detailed sheet to evaluate the bread they produced, including key questions such as 'Why?' or 'Why not?' at each stage, and 'Did we follow the recipe properly?'. This question brought forth honest replies, which focused pupils' attention on ways of improving upon their product. The project on slippers also showed excellent research, evaluation and continuous improvement, with detailed attention to practical issues in design, such as the size of the sole in relation to the rest of the slipper. The pupils very much appreciated the help given by parent volunteers and teaching assistants working as volunteers. This helped them understand the need for co-operation in large-scale projects.

78. Teaching is very good overall, and often excellent. This shows a significant improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject. The learning of new skills in planning and evaluation reflects the high quality of the teaching. The most telling characteristics of these lessons are the excellent organisation and professional understanding embedded in the teaching. This allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to progress to a high degree of competence, encouraging very positive attitudes in the pupils and building self-esteem.
79. Co-ordination in design and technology is far-reaching and very effective. There is an updated policy and staff have had extensive additional training in using clay, joining techniques and many other skills necessary to develop the subject's high profile and standards within the school. The co-ordinator's support for the teaching staff is exemplary, not least in the way she has build up the school's collection of books and resources. There is a now large selection of recycled resources, and all equipment and tools are readily available for the staff. Accommodation is satisfactory, though the available work area is limited at present.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

80. Eleven-year-olds reach good standards overall, and very good standards in those aspects of these subjects that they have studied. In both subjects, there were limited opportunities to observe work for pupils aged five to seven. Pupils reached good standards in the topics they had covered, but the range of their work has been limited by the time available for teaching. This is mainly due to the school's attention to national priorities for literacy and numeracy, but is also partly caused by the balance of lesson time during the school day. The overall pattern of standards is similar to that during the last inspection, but standards reached by pupils aged five to seven have improved in the units of work they have completed.
81. Pupils aged five to seven develop a clear idea of past and present, and of basic differences between life now and life in the past. They develop a clear sense of place, and of the differences between hot and cold countries. They know that they need to take different clothes for a holiday in a hot climate than for a holiday in England in the winter. They draw maps and plans of the school and adjacent areas and use grid references. On their maps they identify different features such as the village and the forest.
82. Eleven-year-olds reach very high standards in their study of Britain since 1930, considering life on the home front in World War 2 in great detail, and analysing the reasons for change during the period very perceptively. In geography, pupils show good use of specialised vocabulary such as *confluence*, and *tributary*, and use the internet effectively to find information about rivers, preparing their questions in advance. During the inspection, ten-year-olds had made good models to show the contours of a locality which was different from their own, and nine-year-olds were constructing good questionnaires to use as part of a local survey on the issue of closing the High Street to traffic. Pupils study the school grounds well, organising their information effectively and making suggestions for improving the drainage. Seven-year-olds during the inspection were reaching above-average standards in their work on ancient Egypt, with good knowledge of the structures of Egyptian society.
83. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. Work is well planned, with good use of material from the schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and teachers make very good use of questions

and answers. Teachers have good overall knowledge and understanding of both subjects, with very good knowledge of individual aspects of each. They manage their pupils well and provide effective support for lower-attaining pupils. The teaching of pupils in their last two years in the school is consistently very good, and makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development and to their preparation for the independent work needed in secondary school. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, sound planning enables pupils to reach the above-average standards they should be reaching, but work does not fully extend the higher-attaining pupils in the class. Homework for older pupils is very effective, and makes a crucial contribution to the high standards reached in the topics that have been studied. The school makes good use of visits and of the local environment to promote learning.

84. The co-ordination of history and geography is satisfactory. Work in both subjects makes good contributions to pupils' understanding of their own culture, but its potential contribution to their knowledge and understanding of other cultures is underdeveloped.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

85. By the time they move on to secondary school, pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are well up to national average standards, with above-average skills in using some computer applications, such as Powerpoint. Older pupils during the inspection were also developing good skills in presenting data from investigations using different types of graph, and in using the internet effectively by preparing their questions in advance. There were examples of outstanding work produced by pupils in the previous year for homework, which included desk-top publishing to a high standard. Older pupils in the five-to-seven age range reach broadly average standards. They can use computers independently, operating programs and loading and printing their work. They give effective instructions to floor robots, and use computers effectively to create simple pictures. At the time of the last inspection, standards in the subject were broadly average throughout the school, with some good features in work with seven year-olds. The present position shows a satisfactory improvement, due to the high quality of work with the oldest pupils.
86. The quality of teaching and learning in the subject is satisfactory overall, but ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. There are also some classes in which the subject is not specifically taught. The standards reached by eleven-year-olds are chiefly the result of outstanding teaching during pupils' last two years in the school, which enables them to use computers critically and to develop advanced skills in specific areas of the work. While some teachers have excellent knowledge and understanding of these areas, which they use to present complex issues very clearly to their classes, others do not have the skills they need to teach the subject with confidence. There is at present no consistent system for assessing pupils' work in ICT. Despite isolated examples of good work, computers are not used effectively to contribute to learning in other subjects across the school. This problem is made worse by the limited range of software available to teachers.
87. The school has sufficient computers to teach the National Curriculum, but they are organised in a way that makes it difficult to teach ICT to a class. In one excellent lesson for older pupils, the teacher had to work very hard to keep the attention of a whole class focused on a small monitor, despite the intrinsic quality of her presentation. A lesson for a class of younger pupils, in which just two computers were available, left most of the class with too little direction in their work, and was unsatisfactory overall.

88. The newly-appointed co-ordinator for ICT has good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and has taken good early steps to identify and tackle the issues facing the school. She has carried out an audit of teachers' skills, and has arranged appropriate training. The school purchases good technical support for ICT, which ensures that computers are kept in working order.

## **MUSIC**

89. Because of timetabling, there was too little evidence during the inspection to support a judgement on standards at eleven, or to make a reliable assessment of improvement since the last inspection, when standards were good. Younger pupils in the seven-to-eleven age range reach satisfactory standards in singing, and five and six-year-olds reach good standards. These pupils use the correct names for different notes, and have good understanding of high and low notes. They follow a rhythmic pattern well and respond well to signals from the teacher when she acts as conductor. Standards of singing in assemblies range from average to good, and pupils reached very good standards in response to specialist instrumental teaching.
90. The quality of class teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory or good in equal measure, and specialist instrumental tuition was very good. All teachers observed had very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, including specialist qualifications. Class lessons were well planned. Classes shared their teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and benefited from their good example of singing. Where the teaching was satisfactory rather than good, the teacher expected too much of the pupils, and did not support their work with enough guidance and explanation. Specialist instrumental music teaching was based on outstanding knowledge of the instrument and of patterns in pupils' learning. The teacher expected much, but made each step clear to the pupils, so that they enjoyed learning and made outstanding progress, even though some had been playing for a short time.
91. The curriculum leader has good subject knowledge, but arrangements for co-ordination are limited. Another newly-appointed teacher, who also has very good subject knowledge, plans to start a school orchestra. The school has adequate resources for music, but does not have any musical instruments from other cultures. This limits the contribution of music to pupils' knowledge of cultures other than their own.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

92. Standards are good at seven, and very good at eleven. Teaching and learning are of a very good overall standard, with excellent teaching in swimming and in some lessons for pupils aged five to seven. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection when standards and teaching were sound, with good features.
93. Pupils aged five to seven work very enthusiastically in gymnastics and enjoy the challenge set by the teaching. They have to think deeply, as the teachers' expectations are very high, and shape, style and fluidity are demanded from them throughout the session. Pupils understand the meaning of rotation, and build this very successfully into their sequences. They travel at high and low levels, and show very good imaginative movements as they twist, turn, jump and roll. The teacher models the work very well as she joins in the activities from time to time. The pupils emulate her enthusiasm. In all the exercises, there are brief moments for reflection and demonstration. The greatest challenge comes when pupils have to transfer their sequences to the varied apparatus to include balance. There is a timely reminder on the aspect of safety to which the pupils respond very sensibly. There is support for less able pupils but they prefer to develop their skills independently and they make the same very good progress as their peers. In such a situation of demanding challenge the pupils have the opportunity to develop their full potential.
94. Pupils aged seven to eleven follow the same pattern of challenge and high expectation in gymnastics. Their standard of control is good and their sequences of movement show good skill, synchronisation and flair. Lower-attaining pupils make very good progress, particularly in turning and balancing. On the other hand, pupils reached average standards in dance lessons, moving with appropriate expression, but with limited fluency. All pupils evaluate their work constructively, and use the outcome to improve their performance.
95. Standards in swimming are exceptionally high and contribute greatly to pupils' confidence. Over half of the oldest pupils achieved their gold standard in the Swimming Challenge Awards during a lesson observed during the inspection. Most of the remainder have already achieved their silver standard and are working towards their gold. The final phase requires swimmers to complete a 500-metre swim, which is 20 times minimum distance expected nationally. The advanced pupils showed excellent style in the crawl stroke and back crawl, and all of them completed this exceptionally demanding hurdle with ease. The teaching at this level is excellent. Lower-attaining pupils have great confidence in their teachers and show that they can swim to a satisfactory standard. Pupils in practice show very good style in breaststroke and butterfly. Swimming is very much a strength of the school. Virtually all pupils reach the standard expected nationally, and many participate in inter-school galas.
96. The co-ordination of physical education is very good, and the curriculum is well extended into extra-curricular activities and tournaments. The many clubs include football both for girls and boys (with awards), netball, cricket and skipping. There are also Outward Bound courses for all pupils aged seven to eleven, with residential ones for ten and eleven-year-olds. Progress is assessed informally, but effectively. Resources, including accommodation, are good, and include a large field and a good-sized hall.