

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103469

Headteacher: Marie-Anne Ireland

Reporting inspector: Lorna Brackstone  
21872

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

Inspection number: 224903

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 category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Adams Hill Bartley Green Birmingham
Postcode:	B32 3QD
Telephone number:	(0121) 4766921
Fax number:	(0121) 4759407
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend W E Cownley
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Lorna Brackstone	Registered inspector	Geography History Music Under fives Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? How high are standards? a) the school's results and pupils' achievements.
Trevor Hall	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
Denise Franklin	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology Special education needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Martin James	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Physical education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Peter's RC Primary School is situated in the residential area of Bartley Green in the South Western outskirts of Birmingham. Bartley Green is an area served by both a mixture of local authority housing and private dwellings: socio-economic circumstances are below average, with very few parents having received higher education. There are currently 191 pupils on roll who are aged between 4 and 11 and approximately 85 per cent of them are of white UK heritage. This is an average sized primary school with seven single age group classes and equal numbers of boys and girls. The school is suffering from falling rolls because of a transient population who seek to move to alternative areas in Birmingham in preparation for a Catholic secondary education. As a direct consequence, Key Stage 2 is currently full but Key Stage 1 is under-subscribed. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is approximately 29 per cent and this is broadly in line with the national average. There are no pupils who use English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, is approximately 35 per cent and this is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is 3.1 per cent and this is also above the national average. Although most pupils have some form of pre-school experience before they start school, overall attainment on entry is below average.

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

This is an improving school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are rising, although standards in English are currently just below average. Pupils are keen to learn and their behaviour is good. Support for pupils is carefully planned to meet their specific needs and, combined with the good teaching, this raises the pupils' achievement. Both the headteacher and governors are committed to improving the school and they are effective. Income for each pupil is quite high, but the school still gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Standards in science are very good by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher, governors and key staff are good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress.
- Provision for moral development is very good.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are good and contribute to their overall good learning.
- Links with partner institutions are very good.

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

- Standards in English at Key Stage 2, particularly pupils' speaking and writing skills.
- Provision for Reception children, particularly planning for this age group and the development of a safe and secure outdoor area.
- Use of day-to-day assessment to guide the planning of tasks for differing groups of pupils.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997 and has made good improvements since then. The overall picture is of improving standards in the national tests at both key stages. The behaviour of the pupils has also improved significantly since the last inspection and this has had a positive impact on standards. The quality of teaching has improved considerably and recommended guidance for curriculum content is being used well to ensure that progress is consistent. The management of the school has improved and has a clear focus. Governors are now more fully involved in the life of the school and financial planning is now carefully considered. Parents now receive reports indicating clear progress in each subject and the testing of electrical items fully complies with regulations. The school has a good capacity for improvement and a determined commitment to succeed.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	D	A	D	B	well above A average above B average average C below average D well below E average
Mathematics	D	C	C	A	
Science	E	C	A	A	

Children start the Reception class with attainment below that agreed nationally. Appropriate progress is made and at the end of this year the majority are ready to start the National Curriculum. The picture is one of improving standards at both age seven and 11. Recent tests in May 2000 also reflect very good standards of achievement in science at age 11 and this is borne out in inspection findings. Results in the recent mathematics tests at age 11 indicate that average standards have been maintained and this is also reflected in inspection findings. Results in the most recent English tests indicate a significant improvement in standards as a result of specific targeting and booster groups. Inspection findings indicate that standards in English are currently just below expected levels but similar plans have been included in the plans for the current Year 6 cohort. Recent testing at age seven indicates that standards are in line in English and above average in both mathematics and science. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are good in mathematics and science and satisfactory in English. Standards in art and design are above expected levels at both seven and 11. In history, geography, information technology, music and physical education standards are in line with national expectations at both seven and 11.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and are interested in their activities. They like coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority of pupils are polite, courteous and generally show consideration to others.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between all members of the school community are good. Pupils take responsibility, show initiative and enjoy finding out information for themselves.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Unauthorised attendance is below and authorised absence is average. Lateness is minimal.

In class, the majority of pupils listen attentively and respond well to questions. Pupils collaborate well when working in pairs or groups and the older pupils show increasing maturity in appreciating one another's comments. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection in response to new structures to encourage self-discipline. Pupils know the rewards and sanction systems well. The incidence of bad behaviour is occasional and bullying unexpected. The majority of pupils are co-operative and friendly and share equipment well. Attendance is now in line with national averages and registration is prompt and effective.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and this has a positive impact on their learning. In 97 per cent of the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better and was good or better in 65 per cent of lessons. In 10 per cent of lessons it was very good or excellent. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge through confident use of technical language and, thus, successfully promote new learning. Lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 have very clear objectives, which are shared with the class and sensitive questioning is used to evaluate pupils' learning. The best teachers are relaxed, but rigorous, secure in the subject and make effective cross-curricular links. Teachers in Key Stage 2 are particularly well organised and use questioning skilfully to move children's learning forward. They achieve a good balance between whole class and small group teaching. In contrast, methods employed at times in Reception are unsuitable for young children and inappropriate planning results in weak acquisition

of skills. Teachers have gained expertise of literacy and numeracy through in-service training and this ensures that pupils acquire new knowledge and skills. Some high quality teaching was observed in both literacy and numeracy lessons, especially at Key Stage 2. Overall, teachers and support staff use appropriate strategies to help pupils who have special educational needs. However, at times the withdrawal of pupils in Key Stage 2 from lessons detracts from its purpose and this is unsatisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. However, the quality and range of opportunities for children in the foundation stage are unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good for children in the foundation stage and Key Stage 2 and very good for pupils in Key Stage 1.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, overall. Provision for moral development is very good. The school encourages pupils very well to distinguish the difference between right and wrong. Provision for spiritual, social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Teachers know their pupils and are clearly aware of individual circumstances. They ensure that they are safe and happy and keep an appropriate check on their progress.

The curriculum provided for the under fives is unsatisfactory and the foundation stage is yet to be planned appropriately, using the early learning goals. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in relation to their targets on their individual education plans. However, insufficient use is made of assessment to inform curriculum planning throughout the school. Links with partner institutions are very good and have a good impact on the pupils' learning. Overall, the school works satisfactorily with parents, but a few feel that they do not receive an appropriate response to their concerns. Induction procedures are unsatisfactory with no opportunities provided for the young children to become familiar with their new surroundings over time. All adults in school provide good role models and relationships with pupils are good. Parents feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Both the headteacher and her deputy provide clear educational direction and delegated staff manage their responsibilities well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors play an active part in the management of the school and fulfil the vast majority of statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and deputy are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. They successfully evaluate teaching and its impact on pupils' progress is good.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of all the resources at its disposal. It compares itself to other schools and

	ensures that it gets good value from the services it provides. The spacious accommodation is well used and appropriately maintained. Numbers of staff are appropriate and are all used well.
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There is no safe and secure outdoor area. Governors do not fulfil all their requirements in their annual report to parents and in the school prospectus. However, the aims and values of the school are met.

## 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>• Their children like school and they make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils.</li> <li>• They feel staff generally deal with questions and problems.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A significant number of parents had mixed views about homework.</li> <li>• A significant number of parents expressed concerns about the range of activities outside lessons, particularly for Key Stage 1 pupils.</li> <li>• Some parents expressed concerns about levels of information on progress.</li> <li>• A few parents feel that the school does not always listen to them and deal satisfactorily with their concerns.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings support the parents' positive views and cannot find justification in the negative views expressed. No extra-curricular activities were observed during the inspection because of the earliness in the term, but evidence suggests that an appropriate range of activities is provided. These include both sporting and musical opportunities and are comparable to those found in similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that pupils are given an appropriate amount of homework and records clearly show that parents are well informed about progress. During the inspection, teachers were also observed talking to parents at the both the beginning and end of the school day and relationships appeared appropriate. At the meeting with the Registered Inspector prior to the inspection, parents expressed their unhappiness with the induction of their children into the Reception class. Inspection evidence confirms that these procedures are unsatisfactory and the arrangements for both introducing the children to school and settling them in at the beginning of the school year are weak.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The children enter the school with a wide range of abilities, but, overall, their attainment is below average. Inspection evidence suggests that during the Reception year the children make satisfactory progress and by the end of their first year in school, their attainment is in line with the expected levels for children of this age. Not all children settle immediately to the full-time routine, but the majority use the toilet independently and relate appropriately to each other. They develop an interest in books and are able to handle them confidently. A significant minority of children are able to recall key words by the time that they are ready to move on from Reception and they start to gain confidence when they ask questions. Children quickly start to count to five and beyond but their use of positional language is limited. Children make appropriate progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and start to become interested in the world around them. In physical development, appropriate progress is made in running and jumping. However, by the end of the Reception year, children are still developing their confidence when climbing and their knowledge of space is limited. Children achieve appropriate standards in their creative development and enthusiastically paint and draw, using a variety of different techniques. Children start school with little experience of role-play but they develop appropriate strategies to engage in play and interact with each other.
2. In the 1999 standardised tests in English at age 11, the performance of the pupils in English was below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 4 or above was 76 per cent and close to the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 5 or above was 10 per cent and well below the national average. However, pupils' performance in the English tests was above average in comparison with similar schools. In the more recent standardised tests carried out in May 2000, results have improved and are in line with national averages. At the beginning of this academic year, inspection findings indicate that standards are just below those expected for their age. Scrutiny of pupils' work undertaken at the same time in the previous academic year shows that standards were also just below expectations. However, additional support by the senior management team was given to pupils in Year 6 prior to their tests and this had a positive impact on the most recent test results. This is also planned to take place during this academic year. Standards in English have improved steadily since the last inspection. Although pupils at age 11 listen carefully, they have a limited range of language. They show a satisfactory understanding of stories, but use little expression when they read. Pupils confidently write for a variety of different purposes, but many do not use vocabulary that is rich and is able to captivate the reader. However, overall standards in English have improved since the last inspection.
3. In the 1999 standardised tests in mathematics at age 11, the overall performance in mathematics was close to the national average. The

percentage of pupils reaching level 4 or above was 76 per cent and was above the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 5 or above was 19 per cent and this was close to the national average. Pupils' performance in the mathematics tests was well above average in comparison with similar schools. Recent standardised test results indicate that standards in mathematics are in line with the national average and this is reflected in inspection findings. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. By 11, most pupils are able to add, subtract, multiply and divide with developing confidence. They work with two place decimals and use them successfully when solving both money and measurement problems. They are able to tell the time and are familiar with a variety of different types of angles. Pupils also collect different types of data and confidently produce graphs to display findings. However, a significant minority lack confidence when they use their multiplication tables.

4. In the 1999 standardised tests in science at age 11, the performance in science was well above the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 4 or above was well above the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 5 or above was 38 per cent and this was above the national average. Pupils' performance in the science tests was well above average in comparison with similar schools when free meals are used as the criterion. Recent standardised tests of May 2000, indicate that standards are well above the national average and this confirmed by inspection findings. Significant improvements in the standards in science have been made since the last inspection. By 11, pupils have a very good understanding of living things and confidently discuss the importance of healthy living. They describe the properties of different types of materials and understand processes such as filtration and evaporation. They know about electrical circuits and gravity and explain how shadows are formed. Pupils show a clear understanding of a fair test.
5. In the 1999 standardised reading tests for pupils age seven, the performance of the pupils in reading was below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 2 or above was 83 per cent and close to the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 2B was 62 per cent and below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 3 or above was 17 per cent and was well below the national average. Pupils' performance in reading tests was close to the average for similar schools. In the most recent standardised tests in May 2000, reading standards were in line with the national average. Inspection findings support this and indicate that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Most pupils read simple text with both expression and accuracy and confidently use a variety of strategies to work out unfamiliar words. Speaking and listening skills are also appropriate for their age. Their speech is interesting and they listen carefully to all adults.
6. In the 1999 standardised writing tests for pupils age seven, the performance in writing was below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 2 or above was 83 per cent and this was below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 2B or above was 45 per cent and was below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 3 or above was 3

per cent and was close to the national average. Pupils' performance in the writing tests was close to the average for similar schools. However, in the most recent standardised tests, all pupils achieved the appropriate level 2 and this represents a significant improvement in test results. Inspection findings indicate that pupils are working at an appropriate level. They are able to write for a good number of purposes that include stories, postcards and instructions and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

7. In the 1999 standardised mathematics tests for pupils age seven, the performance of the pupils in mathematics was well below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 2 or above was 90 per cent and was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 2B or above was 55 per cent and was below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching level 3 or above was 7 per cent and was well below the national average. Pupils' performance in the mathematics test was below average in comparison with similar schools. In recent standardised testing in May 2000, results were above average with all pupils achieving the appropriate level 2. This represents an improvement since the last inspection report. Inspection findings indicate that pupils are achieving appropriately. At the start of this school year, the vast majority of pupils are able to count to 100 and understand the difference between odd and even numbers. Most pupils identify both 2D and 3D shapes, understand halves and quarters and use a variety of different types of measure. However, although pupils are confident with practical activities, at times many struggle with mathematical vocabulary and have difficulty with problem-solving activities.
8. There are no standardised tests in science at age seven, but in the 1999 teacher assessments, the performance of pupils reaching level 2 was well below the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching level 3 or above was above the average for similar schools. In recent teacher assessed tests in May 2000, 96 per cent of pupils reached the appropriate level 2 and this was good. This is reflected in inspection findings that indicate that standards are above the national average. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. By seven, pupils are able to identify the main external features of the body and know that food is needed to survive. They understand the effects of heat and know that both light and sound come from a variety of sources.
9. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the performances of the pupils at age 11 in English was close to the national average. The performance in both mathematics and science was below the national average. The trend in the National Curriculum results for all core subjects is broadly in line with the national pattern. At age 11, there were no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls in English. However, the performance of boys in both mathematics and science was better than the girls whose results were below the national average in these subjects. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the performance of the pupils aged seven, in both reading and mathematics, was close to the national average. Their performance in writing was above the national average. During this period, the performance of boys in both reading and writing was better than the girls. There were no differences in

the performances between boys and girls in mathematics. No differences between boys or girls were observed during the inspection.

10. Achievement in art and design is better than expected at both seven and 11. Good progress is made in their learning and ideas are recorded with confidence. Standards in design technology are as expected at both seven and 11. Overall standards in music are satisfactory throughout the school but all pupils sing well with good pitch and rhythm. Achievement in history, geography, information technology and physical education are appropriate at ages seven and 11. Good standards are achieved in swimming by the age of 11.
11. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, particularly in literacy and numeracy and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The school appropriately identifies the needs of both gifted and talented pupils and provision for them is satisfactory.
12. The school has set appropriate targets for overall improvement. Analysis of pupils' previous and current achievements have enabled the school to set targets which are realistic but challenging. The school is well placed to meet these targets and to further improve attainment and progress.

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

13. Attitudes are good, overall, and, particularly in Key Stage 2, have improved since the last inspection. Parents strongly feel that their children like school and make good progress.
14. In class, the majority listen attentively and respond well to questions. They are keen to talk about what they are doing. They contribute well to the short dialogues and older pupils show increasing maturity in appreciating one another's comments. The great majority of pupils enjoy their work and will cheerfully correct their mistakes. Most work well independently, for example, making investigations in science lessons. Pupils also collaborate well when working in pairs or groups and purposefully discuss projects.
15. Behaviour is good and has improved since the last inspection. The previous inspection report indicated that the behaviour of a small number disrupted progress for others. This is still a constant problem for this school. However, in response to this, new structures to encourage self-discipline have been shared with the pupils who formed the Peaceful Playground Play rules. Pupils now know the rewards and sanctions systems well. Older pupils are familiar with the home/school agreement and understand its implication for them and the whole family of the school. The incidence of bad behaviour is occasional and bullying is unexpected. There has been only one recent exclusion. Consequently, there has been a real improvement in behaviour and this is a credit to the pupils.
16. Personal development is good throughout the school. The majority of pupils are co-operative and friendly, both in classroom and about the school. They are willing to share ideas and equipment. They are courteous and move around in a sensible manner when collecting their meals. They are well

behaved and enjoy happy conversation over lunch. During breaks they play very well together in large or small groups. Young and older pupils respect the areas of the playground for their use and very few bumps are received. Older ones look after younger ones. Reception pupils soon learn simple monitoring roles, which are developed as they move up the school. Older pupils enter enthusiastically into the house point system and older pupils assist in assemblies. Pupils enjoy singing hymns and join in the moments of prayer and reflection. They applaud their classmates' successes at Good Work Assemblies. Year 6 pupils develop more independent work skills in preparation for secondary education and this is an improvement since the last inspection when inspectors considered that pupils did not take appropriate responsibility for their own learning. They mature on the residential trip to Alton Castle by deepening their appreciation of their environment, enjoying the activities and working together in a community spirit.

17. Most pupils understand the feelings of others. They are respectful to adults in school and have good relationships with one another. Pupils are respectful of property. They enter school in an orderly manner, are tidy and know where to put their things. Children in the Reception class behave sensibly, respond to adults well and most start to grow in confidence. However, a significant number of these young children do not adapt quickly to the routines of the school and become distressed at times during the long day.
18. Attendance has improved since the last inspection. Some inaccuracies in computerised reports, producing variable results in the last year, appear to have been resolved. Attendance is now in line with national averages. Unauthorised absence is below and authorised absence is average. Registration is prompt and effective and lateness minimal. Pupils share quietly in the short prayers that follow. This is a good start to the day.

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

19. The overall quality of teaching is good. The inspection took place during the second week of the new school year when many of the staff had recently changed year groups. One member of staff was newly qualified. However, in 97 per cent of the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better and it was good or better in 65 per cent of lessons. In 11 per cent of lessons it was very good or excellent. Only one unsatisfactory was observed.
20. Overall, the teaching for both the Reception class and Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The quality of teaching throughout Key Stage 2 is good and is at times very good or excellent. This good quality teaching means that the majority of pupils are able to reach their full potential as they prepare for secondary school. Subjects with particular teaching strengths throughout the school are English, science, art, and music. Frequently, history and geography are well taught at Key Stage 2.
21. Although teachers' subject knowledge is judged to be satisfactory, overall, it is variable throughout the school. Currently, knowledge and understanding of the needs of the young children in Reception have some weaknesses and preparation for the new foundation stage has been insufficient. For example,

the children are required to start school immediately on a full-time basis and there is no provision of a safe and secure outdoor area. Subject knowledge is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. This is evident through the good explanation and demonstration skills. For instance, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 5, the teacher provided a clear explanation of decomposition and this enabled the pupils to confidently use this technique to solve some mathematical problems.

22. Most of the lessons are appropriately organised and endeavour to involve all pupils and encourage them to complete tasks within allocated time scales. Staff interact well with pupils to check their understanding and to ensure that they remain on task. In Key Stage 2, humour is frequently used to maintain the interest of the pupils and this results in very good lessons. Relationships within the classroom promote a positive learning environment and this motivates pupils to work and receive praise for their efforts. For example, this was very evident in a Year 6 science lesson where very good relationships had been established between the teacher and class. This enabled the pupils to undertake their respective work with both confidence and enthusiasm.
23. Teachers in Key Stage 2 are particularly well organised and use questioning skilfully to move children's learning forward. They achieve a good balance between whole class and small group teaching. There is a purposeful atmosphere, which means that teachers do not have to spend time on managing behaviour. Time is set aside at the beginning and end of lessons for both teachers and pupils to reflect on the key facts, ideas and skills they have learnt. In contrast, methods employed in Reception at times are not always suitable for young children and result in weak acquisition of skills. Planning is based on National Curriculum subjects and fails to take account of the needs of these very young children.
24. Teachers have gained expertise of literacy and numeracy through in-service training. Some high quality teaching was observed in both literacy and numeracy lessons, especially at Key Stage 2. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge through confident use of technical language and, thus, promoted new learning. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, a poem was shared with the whole class. Through the use of good questioning skills, pupils were able to clearly understand the vocabulary that was being used. In a Year 4 literacy lesson excellent strategies were used to make learning fun and this resulted in a session that provided high quality learning. In Reception, an appropriate knowledge of the literacy and numeracy strategies ensures that the children in Reception are taught many useful songs and number rhymes.
25. Lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 have very clear objectives which are shared with the class and sensitive questioning is used to evaluate pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 3 music lesson, good subject expertise was used to promote creative skills and to provide the pupils with new concepts and learning opportunities. In this lesson the teacher gave pupils specific details to listen for when music was played. Expectations of achievement were high and this suitably stimulated the pupils who listened and responded well to the music. Another feature of this lesson was the good organisation, the use of suitable

resources and the opportunity for the pupils to evaluate each other's work.

26. Lessons in both Key Stages 1 and 2 are satisfactorily planned and, when taken at an appropriate pace, lead to good progress in pupil's learning. For example, successful features of good lessons include the provision of exciting activities, which carefully build on prior knowledge, challenge development and encourage pupils to think for themselves. For instance, in a Year 5 art lesson, pupils were encouraged to focus on a range of effects and tones that could be achieved through the skilful use of pencils. A good recap of the previous week's lesson was used to consolidate their understanding of a newspaper image. Good use was made of the pupils' own work to demonstrate the teacher's expectations and this motivated the pupils' learning as they developed an understanding of tone.
27. The best teachers are relaxed, but rigorous, secure in the subject and make effective cross-curricular links. For example, in a good music lesson in Year 6, the teacher successfully made relevant references to their history topic of the 1930's. Good use was also made of resources to capture the pupils' interest and key features of this successful lesson were the good relationships and mutual trust between the pupils and teacher as they worked together.
28. Teachers and support staff use appropriate strategies to help pupils who have special educational needs. However, at times the withdrawal of pupils in Key Stage 2 from lessons detracts from its purpose and this is unsatisfactory. This was an issue raised in the previous report. There are also a number of lessons where little or no allowance is made for the varying needs of lower achieving pupils. However, the quality of pupils' individual education plans is good. Targets are broken down into small steps and tasks appropriately matched to the pupils' individual needs. Teachers focus on specific targets and help pupils to achieve them. Clear assessments of pupils give teachers an accurate understanding of their abilities. Pupils with statements are making good progress in meeting their targets and there is evidence that at least one pupil has made very good progress and no longer requires the level of support he received earlier in his education.
29. Pupils' work is regularly assessed, but results are not always used to inform future planning. The marking of pupils' work is generally consistent throughout the school and comments are used to provide challenge and to give encouragement to them. Prior to the inspection, a significant number of parents expressed concerns over homework. Inspectors found it to be used well in both Key Stages 1 and 2 to extend what was learnt in school and pupils were given relevant activities to do at home.
30. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and makes a positive contribution to the standards attained and the quality of education provided.

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

31. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. However, the quality and range of opportunities for children in the foundation stage are unsatisfactory. The curriculum planned for this age group does not take into account the needs of these very young children. A lack of a safe and secure outdoor play area also results in unbalanced provision that limits progress in both physical skills and informal role-play.
32. The school provides an appropriately balanced curriculum for its pupils and has ensured that the time allocation for each subject is satisfactory. The school also successfully promotes pupils' personal, social and health education well through its good Family and Life Education policy. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and give clear guidance on what needs to be taught in each year. This has been successfully addressed since the previous inspection. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, overall, but there are some inconsistencies that result in differences in the delivery of lessons. For example, there is occasionally little difference between their termly and weekly planning. Good use is made of some specialist teaching in some subjects such as design technology and art and design and this has a positive impact on teaching and learning. Most pupils have equal access to the full curriculum except a small minority of pupils who are withdrawn for special needs support during the literacy and numeracy hours, miss the whole class sessions and have opportunities to share their work with their peers in plenary sessions.
33. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good for children in the foundation stage and Key Stage 2 and very good for pupils in Key Stage 1. Both support staff and teachers ensure that pupils receive good support in the classroom through activities planned to meet their specific needs, although this is still inconsistent across the school, particularly in some numeracy lessons. Individual education plans have clear, measurable targets, which are regularly reviewed. For example, a pupil in Key Stage 1 received very good support to develop his vocabulary and observational skills from a learning support assistant during an art lesson. However, some pupils are still withdrawn from lessons at inappropriate times, mainly in Key Stage 2. This was identified in the previous report and has not yet been fully addressed to ensure equal access to a balanced curriculum. Good provision is made for small groups of pupils to develop their social skills.
34. The school has satisfactory strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. The literacy and numeracy schemes are having a positive impact on raising standards and the booster classes for pupils in Year 6 also impact well on learning. Literacy is also effective across the curriculum, for example, in developing understanding of specific vocabulary in art.
35. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The range includes various sporting activities and a sing-a-long session. Although some parents expressed concerns about the number of activities available, the inspection team felt that satisfactory provision is made for the pupils during the year.
36. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. There is an effective system of home-school reading diaries and parents are encouraged to

support pupils with homework. Although some parents were concerned about the quality and consistency of homework, no evidence was found to substantiate this concern. The school has good links with the church and clergy visit regularly. Pupils are able to visit the local library, art galleries, theatres and cinemas. There are good opportunities for pupils to be involved in sporting activities with professional coaches and in community projects, for example 'The Children of the Millennium' when pupils took part in a celebration at the National Indoor Arena. Pupils also benefit from local visits and visitors to school, including elderly people in the community talking about their experiences during the war. Pupils in Year 6 benefit well from an annual residential trip, which not only gives pupils good opportunities to take part in outdoor activities, but also provides good opportunities for spiritual development.

37. The links with local schools and the teachers' training college are very good. There are good opportunities for pupils to visit their next secondary school and activity days are held regularly at the local secondary school, for example, in science and design technology. Sixth formers from the local comprehensive worked with children in the Reception class to produce a mural in their cloakroom. There are also very good links with Newman College where staff and pupils are able to use facilities for working with special materials such as ceramics.
38. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall. Good opportunities are provided to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the values and beliefs that the school promotes. Acts of collective worship are well planned. The school entrance area has a calm water feature and each class has a small area where pupils focus, think and reflect. The school has recently provided a quiet area in the playground in which pupils can sit, in memory of a previous member of staff. This provision has improved since the previous inspection.
39. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and is good for social development. Pupils are clearly taught what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour during assemblies and during times when they sit together in a circle. Pupils can also anonymously put their concerns in writing to be discussed. The school provides opportunities for some pupils to take part in special group activities to develop their social skills. Mid-day supervisors have been trained to support pupils in developing appropriate social skills at lunchtime, both in the dining hall and in the playground. Equipment is provided so that the pupils can learn to play together successfully. Pupils have been involved in writing playground rules, which are clearly displayed in the playground. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to take on responsibilities around the school. For example, some are prefects, others house captains and some pupils support the younger ones at lunchtime. Each year a group of pupils in Year 6 organise and entertain a group of elderly people in the parish at Christmas.
40. Provision for cultural development is good and has improved since the previous inspection. This has involved pupils in drama workshops with theatre groups, visits to the cinema to review a film and to the local library. Opportunities to

develop awareness of other cultures are through such activities as Africa Week when pupils were taught about African culture through dance, art and music. Visitors to school also enhance the pupils' learning opportunities through talking about their experiences during the war. The school also makes good use of the Health Awareness caravan, which supports both pupils and parents.

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

41. Procedures for ensuring child protection and pupils' welfare are satisfactory, overall.
42. All adults are aware of the criteria for child protection, although lunchtime supervisors have not had formal training. There are no health and safety concerns within the general framework of the school day. A few minor matters of signs are having attention.
43. All adults in school provide good role models for the pupils and have a good rapport with them. Parents believe teachers have high expectations of their children. They feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Teachers work well together to ensure that all pupils are consistently supported as they move through the year groups. Lunchtime supervisors stimulate good interactive play, especially for the youngest groups. Consequently, pupils can confidently share their thoughts and concerns with more than one member of staff.
44. The majority of parents feel comfortable in formally raising individual questions or problems. However, where informal representations are made, a few parents feel they do not always receive satisfactory replies.
45. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are thorough. However, parents are not made aware of the criteria for absence through the school prospectus and the governors' annual report. Details of attendance are not published in the school prospectus. These matters are now being addressed.
46. The school has a wide range of successful policies and strategies for promoting good behaviour. The procedures are constantly reviewed to meet the changing needs of pupils as they move through the school. Teachers work hard to build up pupils' self esteem through the systems of rewards and sanctions. These measures also promote good attitudes to work and endeavour, as well as good behaviour. A few pupils have individual behavioural problems which are a constant concern of teachers. Pastoral care of these situations is discussed daily. Tendencies towards bad behaviour or bullying are viewed very seriously. Infrequent situations are dealt with fairly but firmly, involving pupils and their parents.
47. Assessment procedures for special educational needs are good and the school makes good use of the criteria set out by the authority, which includes an audit of the needs of children in the Reception class. Teachers make appropriate use of their own assessments, of the end of Key Stage test results and results from the optional tests to identify pupils who have additional needs. Behaviour

books and behaviour plans support pupils who find it difficult to conform to the school behaviour policy. Targets on the individual education plans are reviewed regularly and new ones set to meet the pupil's needs.

48. There are good links with the educational psychologist and other support services, but links with the speech and language service are less frequent, often because of staffing difficulties.
49. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, overall. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, assessments are undertaken at the end of suitable topics of work and teachers keep records of pupils' current attainment. Samples of pupils' work are also retained in individual portfolios and these provide further evidence of attainment. However, the use of this assessment information to ensure that pupils are provided with work that is suited to their individual needs is inconsistent in the school. This weakness in planning was also noted during the last inspection. Good use is made of the information in mathematics to place pupils in sets. In a majority of other lessons, suitable work is also provided. However, pupils' work shows that, in a significant minority of lessons, little or no allowance is made for their varying needs. In these circumstances lower attaining pupils, in particular, are provided with work that is too difficult for them. As a result, they make limited progress during that lesson. In the core subjects, procedures for monitoring pupils' progress through the school are satisfactory. Extensive records are kept, pupils' progress is plotted, targets for improvement are set and predictions are made. In subjects of the curriculum, other than information and communications technology and swimming, where suitable information is kept, little formal assessment takes place. Assessment opportunities are often listed in teachers' planning, but few records are kept. As a result, little information is available, either to judge pupils' present attainment or to provide suitable work for the future.

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

50. Parents are broadly satisfied with what the school provides and achieves, but a minority have mixed views.
51. Most parents feel that they are well informed on all matters relevant to school. Overall, this is so, but there are matters requiring attention. The comprehensive school prospectus includes a good mission statement and, further to omission at the last inspection, now includes a clear statement on sex education in line with the Catholic archdiocesan policy. However, the governors' annual report carries a summary rather than a full financial report. It lacks information of progress on the action plan for issues raised at the last inspection. Omissions regarding attendance are mentioned in the section on how the school cares for its pupils. There are good regular newsletters.
52. Some parents would like more information about their children's progress. This was highlighted at the last inspection. However, the inspection team found that the quality of information to parents about their children's progress is good. There are ample opportunities to talk to teachers throughout the year.

Consultation evenings are extremely well attended when target setting is discussed. Personal profiles of pupils' work are always available. Annual written reports are individual to the pupil, detailed and have an element of evaluation. Regular communication and information for pupils with special educational needs are very good.

53. The home/school agreement has had a very good response from parents, although some parents do not feel the school works closely enough with them. A few parents help regularly in school. The home/school reading records are well used by many parents and this builds up a valuable dialogue between home and school. Most parents feel that there is the right amount of homework, although a significant number express concerns. The inspection team found levels of homework consistent with those of similar schools.
54. Procedures for introducing the youngest children to school are limited. Parents and their children are invited to a formal meeting at which the headteacher, reception teacher, chair of governors and school nurse all speak. Many parents feel that this proves to be a long time for small children to sit still. There are no opportunities for these children to spend time in the reception class and to become familiar with new surroundings. Consequently some children find it difficult to settle in quickly on the immediate full time basis that the school requires, particularly as children are expected to say goodbye to their parents at the classroom door.
55. A large number of parents appreciate opportunities for sharing in a variety of school events, in particular the Good Work Assemblies, fortnightly masses and the Christmas and Easter festivals. Several of these events take place in the church. All parents are automatically members of the Parent, Teacher, and Friend Association. The small, but enthusiastic, committee promotes regular social and fund raising events, thus providing resources otherwise outside budget limits.
56. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed of their child's progress through an annual written report from the special needs teachers. Parents of pupils in Key Stage 1 receive copies of their children's individual education plans and, wherever possible, the targets are discussed. In Key Stage 2, parents of pupils with special needs have the opportunity to meet with the special educational needs co-ordinator to discuss targets, but do not receive copies of their children's plans.

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

57. The governors, headteacher and staff make a good contribution to the quality of education in the school and the standards that pupils achieve. The leaders of the school share a common purpose, based upon Christian values and high moral principles. This commitment underpins the school's aims and they are fully reflected in the life of the school. Teamwork is well established and delegation to staff with management responsibility is good. They take active steps to improve both their knowledge and those of the other staff. The monitoring of teaching and learning was considered weak in the previous inspection report. This has been improved and both the headteacher and her deputy are rigorously involved in this process. Governors have a good sense of

the strengths and weaknesses of the school and work positively with staff. The governing body has good levels of expertise and governors are well organised and thorough in their approach. They take a keen interest in both the achievement and welfare of the pupils. Governors now meet the vast majority of their statutory responsibilities. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when the role of the governors was considered weak.

58. Those with responsibility for special educational needs effectively ensure that all necessary paperwork is well organised and reviews regularly take place. There are regular meetings with learning support assistants. Staff development opportunities are good, particularly for the learning support staff. The special needs governor is supportive and is actively involved to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met. She is knowledgeable about the procedures and keeps governors well informed.
59. The financial resources of the school are used well. The school development plan was criticised in the last inspection report, but it now successfully takes account of the needs of the school and has been appropriately formulated. The pupils have a much higher than average amount of money allocated to them, but all funds, including specific grants, are carefully matched to the priorities that have been identified. There are clearly defined routines which are well established and enable the headteacher and governors to monitor the deployment of resources and to establish best value for money principles when measuring improvements in the quality of teaching, standards achieved by the pupils and when purchasing resources. This is an improvement since the last inspection when governors were judged to have insufficient involvement in financial planning.
60. The day-to-day administration of the school finances is undertaken very efficiently. The school secretary supports the school very well, by working to aid its smooth running and keeping intrusion into the working day of pupils and staff to a minimum. The recommendations raised in the most recent auditor's report into the school's finances are being dealt with appropriately.
61. The school has moved forward well since the last inspection. It has started to monitor and self-evaluate its performance and is moving positively in all areas.
62. The overall number, qualifications and experience of both teachers and classroom assistants, match well the demands of the school curriculum and in special educational needs. It is weaker in the foundation stage. Pupil teacher ratios are good. New teachers are supported well and are made to feel part of a close team. The school is very well placed to offer placements for students on initial teacher training. The number of midday supervisors available to supervise the pupils during the lunchtime session is sufficient. The accommodation is adequate and maintained satisfactorily. Strengths of the accommodation are the spacious outdoor playground and field that are used well for recreation and physical education lessons. The small group teaching areas ensure that good learning opportunities are provided for pupils who are withdrawn for individual support. The school hall is a good size and this enables a variety of activities to take place, such as music, dance and physical education. However, a weakness in the accommodation is the lack of a safe

and secure outdoor-area where Reception children could develop their physical skills. Overall, teaching resources around the school are satisfactory. They are clearly labelled, freely shared by all staff and used effectively by pupils. Suitable library areas have been created in both key stages and all pupils have appropriate access to computers.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to improve the quality of education further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- raise the standards of attainment in English at Key Stage 2 by:
  - providing more opportunities for developing pupils' speaking skills;
  - developing pupils' literacy skills to enable them to write in depth, using rich and varied vocabulary which captures the interest of the readers.

(Paragraphs: 2 and 78)

64. Improve the provision for children in the Reception class by:

- developing specific schemes of work for this age group;
- ensuring that training for the foundation stage is provided;
- providing a safe and secure outdoor area, which promotes all aspects of physical development and enables appropriate activities for under-fives to take place throughout the school day;
- reviewing the induction process.

(Paragraphs: 21, 23, 31, 54, 62, 67 and 72)

65. Ensure that assessment is consistently used to inform day-to-day planning so that pupils are provided with activities that suit their individual needs.

(Paragraphs: 29, 49, 80, 85, 86 and 100)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- withdrawal of special educational needs pupils from some lessons (paragraphs 28, 32, 33);
- weaknesses in problem solving in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 (paragraphs 7, 83, 84);
- minor omissions in Governors Report to Parents and school prospectus (paragraphs 45, 51).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	8	54	33	3	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)	191
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	66

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.39
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.07
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	11	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	18
	Girls	9	8	8
	Total	24	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (94)	83 (94)	90 (97)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	12
	Girls	9	7	6
	Total	25	22	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (90)	76 (87)	62 (93)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	11	10	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	11
	Girls	8	7	9
	Total	16	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (81)	76 (58)	95 (70)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	9	8
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	13	16	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (73)	76 (61)	71 (70)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	148
Any other minority ethnic group	7

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.9
Average class size	27.3

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

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	121

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***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	1	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.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	428,326
Total expenditure	455,595
Expenditure per pupil	2476
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,649
Balance carried forward to next year	18,380

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	212
Number of questionnaires returned	108

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	34	2	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	39	55	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	48	6	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	44	20	5	2
The teaching is good.	48	44	1	3	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	43	16	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	31	4	6	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	42	1	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	38	12	7	6
The school is well led and managed.	49	40	0	8	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	44	6	4	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	31	26	19	7

### Other issues raised by parents

- The induction process for children under five.

- Timing of swimming lessons.
- The poor quality of school trips.

Inspection findings agree that the induction process for young children is unsatisfactory but cannot support the other two criticisms.

## **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**

66. Children start school at the beginning of the school year in which they will be five and are accommodated as one group. At the start of the inspection the 24 Reception children had completed only four full days in school and the teacher responsible for this foundation class was taking responsibility for this age group for the first time in the school. Although photographic evidence and scrutiny of work suggested that in previous years planning had been based around an appropriate early learning curriculum, activities for the children currently in Reception had been based on National Curriculum subjects and this was judged to be inappropriate. The children were also in school on a full-time basis and this caused problems for several children who were not emotionally ready for a normal school day. The children in Reception had not been in school long enough for an evaluation to be made on their attainment on entry. However, analysis over time suggests that, although there is always a very wide range of abilities, overall attainment on entry is judged to be below average.

#### **Personal social and emotional education**

67. Overall, children make appropriate progress in personal and social education and most achieve satisfactory standards by the end of Reception. The overall quality of teaching and learning in this area is sound. Children show interest, are enthusiastic to learn and keen to try new activities. They are encouraged to speak to both each other and the adults within the classroom and have started to form appropriate relationships. The majority of children are able to use the toilet independently and have made a good start to dressing and undressing for physical activities in the hall. The higher attaining children are eager to maintain an interest when activities stimulate them. When the children are given appropriate activities their concentration and interest develop well. For example, during a 'Bear Hunt' the majority of children maintained their concentration as they searched for bears and shouted excitedly to each other as the teddies were spotted. Most of the children were also developing a sensitivity to the needs of each other as they were encouraged to walk in a line during this session. However, weaknesses in the induction policy result in a small number of children experiencing personal, social and emotional difficulties when they start school and this is unsatisfactory. At times a significant minority of children are unable to relate to each other within such a large group and find both selection and use of equipment daunting. The length of the day also contributes to tiredness and lethargy, particularly with the very youngest children and it is clear that the current unsatisfactory induction procedures hinder the personal and social development of a minority of children.

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

68. By the end of the Reception year, the vast majority of children have achieved appropriate standards and satisfactory progress is being made. This is mainly as a result of the use of some of the literacy strategies that are being used

further up the school. For example, children share big story books and have made a good start to listening to stories and responding with enjoyment. They sing simple songs and rhymes and a significant number of children are able to link initial sounds to words. For instance, they know that the sound 't' starts the word 'teddy'. In the role-play area they are using language to create imaginary roles and experiences such as "Goldilocks and the Three Bears", but are yet to develop their ability to retell stories in sequence. A small number of children are able to recognise the way to hold a book but others are yet to develop the knowledge that print carries meaning and is read from left to right. Evidence from the last Reception class indicates that, by the end of their first year in school, the vast majority of children have been taught to write their own name, understand that marks on paper have meaning and many are able to write simple sentences. They have also been taught how to hold a pencil and use it confidently to express ideas on paper. The higher achieving children identify the initial sounds of many words in their writing and are supported well by adults as they attempt to spell simple words. However during the inspection, children were often required to sit for long literacy sessions. They became restless after a short time and the opportunity to develop their skills was weakened.

### **Mathematical development**

69. By the end of the Reception year, the vast majority of pupils have achieved appropriate standards in mathematical development and progress is sound. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and both the teacher and support assistant take every opportunity to introduce numbers and counting through practical activities. The children competently count up to five and beyond in a group. They are taught to match numbers to sets of objects such as farm animals and teddy bears and recognise the difference when one object is taken away. Children are introduced to mathematical language through stories, rhymes, discussions and activities. This promotes both their learning and interest and ensures that they understand what they are doing. For example, the rhyme, 'Five little ducks went swimming one day' is used to reinforce the children's counting skills. Children also start to use language such as 'small', 'medium' and 'large' but the use of positional language is limited. They recognise triangles, circles and squares but are not yet able to describe their individual features such as corners and sides. Photographic evidence suggests that by the end of the Reception year, the children are able to both recognise and continue a pattern of beads on a string and have started to make patterns of their own on peg-boards.

### **Knowledge and understanding**

70. By the end of the Reception year, the vast majority of children have achieved appropriate standards in this area of learning. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and progress is sound. Many opportunities are provided for the children to observe and investigate different types of materials and their properties. For example, photographs indicate that the children discuss what materials would make the best raincoat and gain a good understanding of the use of magnets through practical activities. They learn to play with varying degrees of success with 'Lego' and 'stickle bricks' and confidently learn how to both build and construct with different types of materials. The children gain a clear understanding of the properties of substances such as water and sand. They start to learn that plants need both soil and water to grow and, through the touch and feel of a rabbit, learn rapidly that living things need to be cared for. Visits are arranged to promote new knowledge and skills. For example, a visit to a local

farm ensures that they are able to look at and touch creatures that are unfamiliar to them. Well planned activities are organised so that the children gain first-hand experiences of change. For instance, they make pancakes and gain confidence as they combine ingredients, such as flour and fat. They quickly distinguish between the different types of taste and observe enthusiastically as the liquid changes to solid when it is cooked.

71. Evidence from last year indicates that by the end of this year the children have gained some understanding of the past and present. For instance, they are encouraged to look at pictures of Queen Elizabeth and notice the differences in her clothes with those of today. Through first hand observations of babies, they understand that they are changing as they grow and that they are able to do many things independently now such as bathing and feeding. They talk about where they live and many of the children carefully draw pictures of their own house. They develop a good understanding of the methods of travel and have confidently observed public transport outside their school. Opportunities to dress up in clothes from different countries ensure that the children gain an understanding of the different cultures and ways of life. Children develop appropriate computer skills and rapidly become confident users of the mouse. They quickly gain access to games and use art programs to draw and create colourful pictures. They also successfully use control techniques to program moveable toys.

### **Physical development**

72. By the end of the Reception year, standards of achievement are just below agreed expectations. Both teaching and learning are barely satisfactory and this is because there is no outdoor area for physical development. Although children start school able to run and jump with some degree of control, they are yet to show spatial awareness. Evidence from the previous academic year suggests that by the end of the Reception year, they are able to run in a straight line and balance a bat and ball. The hall is used to teach physical development and the quality of teaching during these sessions is satisfactory. Children gradually develop confidence and, by the end of the year, most successfully climb over benches and crawl through tunnels. Teachers also successfully plan to give the children experience of malleable materials such as 'play-doh' in the classroom. For example, they successfully create objects such as 'teddies' and 'cakes'. However, the children's progress in physical development is limited because of the absence of an outdoor area specifically resourced to develop physical challenges through both large and small apparatus.

### **Creative development**

73. By the end of the Reception year, the vast majority of children have achieved appropriate standards in creative development. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and progress is sound. Evidence from the previous group of children indicates that, by the end of the Reception year, the children are able to confidently paint, using a variety of colours, and create on paper recognisable objects such as cars and lorries. They know that trees are often green and that fire engines are red. Teachers ensure that they are given a wide variety of textures to explore and have capably worked, using both wax and paint to create different shapes and patterns. They have observed specific

features of artists and are able to observe patterns and colours that they have created. For example, the children recognise the “Sunflower” painting of Van Gogh and have created their own paintings in his style.

74. During the inspection, the children were in the early stages of imaginative play in the role-play area and had just started to engage in play associated with the story of Goldilocks, which they had heard. Evidence from the last Reception class indicates that by the end of the year, they are able to create “weddings” and other family events within the role play area and play co-operatively as part of a group.

## **ENGLISH**

75. Inspection findings indicate an improvement in standards, borne out by recent test results and they are now in line at age both age seven and 11. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on attainment and the additional support provided by the senior management team last year had a positive impact on test results at age 11. Pupils with special educational needs attain satisfactory standards in relation to their targets on their individual education plans and make good progress in their learning.
76. By the age of 11, inspection evidence suggests that pupils achieve satisfactorily in listening skills but their speaking skills are less well developed. They listen carefully and satisfactorily respond to questioning. For example, pupils in Year 6 discuss the language used by William Shakespeare in his play ‘Macbeth’ but they have a limited range of language to use and lack confidence in speaking to a range of audiences. Younger pupils in Year 3 satisfactorily discuss a poem called “Listen” and can find out what the poet has heard. At age seven, achievement in speaking and listening is in line with the national average. Most are able to extend their ideas logically, using a growing vocabulary and most pupils’ speech is lively and expressive. They listen well both to adults and each other in a range of situations, particularly during the shared text of the literacy hour.
77. Current standards of achievement in reading at age 11 are just below expected levels. Although many achieve standards that are expected, few reach higher standards. Pupils show a satisfactory understanding of the plot, characters and favourite parts of the stories, but are unable to recall in detail the range of books they enjoy or give reasons why they like a particular author. Many pupils read individually with little expression. However, in a shared text session pupils in Year 6 read extracts from ‘Macbeth’ well. Pupils in Year 5 describe the main characters in a story using the text. In Year 4 most pupils identify powerful verbs in the text and one group use the text well to answer questions about the story orally with their teacher. The majority of pupils are sufficiently skilful in locating information from books and other sources and they are confident in using the school library. Pupils with special educational needs and gifted pupils are making appropriate progress in developing their individual reading skills but often miss opportunities to share a wide range of literature with their peers by being withdrawn from the class during these sessions. At age seven, achievement in reading is satisfactory and all pupils are making appropriate progress in their learning. Most read simple text accurately with expression and

confidently use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. They talk about the pictures and the outline of the story and, during a whole class shared text session, give their opinions about a poem. Pupils in Year 1 enthusiastically joined in reading "Not Now Bernard" together and make sound attempts at reading keywords in the text. In Year 2, they used clues such as rhyming words to unscramble jumbled sentences from a poem. Most pupils know how to use the Key Stage 1 library and understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books.

78. At age 11, the pupils' achievement in writing is just below expected levels. However, there is evidence that standards are improving, through the impact of the literacy hour and timetabled opportunities for extended writing activities. By the end of Year 6, most pupils can adapt their writing for different purposes, but few are able to write in depth. Many do not show confidence in using vocabulary that is rich or arranged in a way that captures the interest of the reader. For example, in Year 6, pupils answered questions about their feelings when reading 'Macbeth'. Sentence structure was simple, spellings of simple words correct, but few were able to use a variety of interesting vocabulary in their writing. In Year 3, some pupils write interesting sentences using rhyming words and others satisfactorily begin to plan and write stories. In Year 4, the average attaining pupils use a range of powerful verbs to complete sentences. A below average group of pupils know the structure of sentences and use this information appropriately to make sentences with a series of jumbled words, with very good support from the learning support assistant. Some pupils in Year 5 can write interesting similes to describe 'Toothie the Cat' and, during an extended writing lesson, pupils began to plan a story based on a saying or moral. Presentation of work is good and most pupils confidently use a neat style of joined handwriting. This has improved since the previous inspection.
79. Current standards of achievement at age seven in writing are satisfactory. Pupils are able to write for a good range of different purposes, including instructions, creative stories, answering questions about stories and writing postcards. They sequence events logically and develop sound strategies for spelling both keywords and unfamiliar words. Most pupils use a neat style of handwriting and, by age 11, many have acquired a legible, joined style of writing.
80. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection, seven lessons were observed, 57 per cent were good or better and 43 per cent satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Lesson plans clearly indicate the learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson. Questioning is often good and targeted well to meet the needs of individual pupils, which enables all pupils to make good progress in their learning. During the inspection, activities planned satisfactorily met the needs of the different ability groups, although evidence from analysis of pupils' work indicates that this is not common practice. Where teaching is good it impacts well on the progress the pupils are making. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and are being used effectively to set individual targets and to monitor individual pupils' progress. Management of pupils and classroom organisation is generally satisfactory with

some good features in Key Stage 2, for example use of praise to raise self-esteem. Homework is used effectively to consolidate pupils' learning. Resources are well organised, which enables pupils to settle quickly to their tasks. Where teaching is excellent, the pace of lesson is brisk, relationships are excellent and an excellent range of strategies is used to enable pupils to make excellent progress in their learning. For example, in an outstanding lesson in Year 4, the teacher ensured that learning was great fun and an excellent use of praise resulted in the raising of pupils self esteem and confidence. Classroom assistants and learning support staff are usually well deployed in the classroom to support pupils with special educational needs. However, on occasions when pupils are withdrawn for support, particularly in Key Stage 2, they do not have equal access to a wide range of text or the opportunity to share their work in the plenary sessions with their peers.

81. The newly appointed co-ordinator is working very hard to support teachers in their planning and implementing the literacy strategy. He has a clear view of areas for development in order to raise standards. For example, shortly after being appointed, he completed a review of all reading books in Key Stage 1 and resources have been significantly improved to support pupils' learning. This has included the purchase of a new reading scheme. An audit of resources in Key Stage 2 has already started. The appropriately stocked library is used well by each class to enable pupils to develop library skills. Good use is also made of theatre visits, book weeks and the school's involvement in film reviews to support pupils' learning. This also has a good impact on the standards of achievement in other subjects within the curriculum such as history and geography.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. Standards of achievement at both seven and 11 are currently satisfactory and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make appropriate progress. The present standards at age 11 are similar to those achieved in the National Curriculum tests in recent years. However, the current standards at age seven show an improvement over the results achieved in 1999. The school's careful analysis of weaknesses in the pupils' performance, together with the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, has enabled standards to be raised at this key stage. This is particularly evident in the most recent standardised tests of May 2000.
83. By the age of 11, most pupils are able to undertake work in all four rules of number. Pupils have a clear knowledge of place value to seven figures and many can explain negative numbers. However, a significant minority of pupils lack confidence in saying the times-tables, and in quickly recalling individual multiplication and division facts. Pupils have been introduced to decimals to two places and many are able to use them confidently in the context of measurement and money. Many pupils have a clear understanding of fractions, including percentages. Pupils successfully tell the time, both in analogue and digital display. Most pupils name a range of angles, including right angles, acute, obtuse and reflex angles. They are beginning to use protractors successfully to measure angles. Pupils are able to identify and calculate

perimeters and areas of regular shapes. They collect data on various topics and successfully produce a range of graphs to display their findings. Most pupils understand the concept of probability and generally use the appropriate terminology successfully to describe their observations. Pupils undertake a range of practical work, but, as at Key Stage 1, many have difficulties in tackling problem-solving activities.

84. By the age of seven, most pupils count to 100 and they confidently identify odd and even numbers. The majority of pupils have an appropriate understanding of addition and subtraction but, although standards are improving, a significant minority are still uncertain of their number bonds, as well as their multiplication facts relating to two, five and ten. Most pupils can correctly identify a range of two and three-dimensional shapes as well as reflective symmetry and they show a clear understanding of halves and quarters, money and time on the hour and quarter hour. In measuring activities, most pupils are able to explain and use various standard and non-standard units of measure. Throughout the key stage, pupils successfully undertake a range of practical work. However, in problem-solving activities many pupils have difficulties in understanding mathematical terminology and, therefore, in correctly identifying the appropriate operation needed to find an answer.
85. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, with examples of good teaching taking place in Years 1, 5 and 6. This is similar to the standard of teaching found at the last inspection. Lessons are carefully planned and based on the pattern of the National Numeracy Strategy. However, teachers do not always make appropriate allowance in their planning for the provision of work to suit pupils of differing abilities, especially lower attainers. As a result, these pupils are occasionally presented with work that is too difficult for them. All teachers make good use of mental activities at the beginning of lessons and a weakness in pupils' performance, which was identified in the previous report, is being successfully targeted. Teachers are also aware of the need to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary and they carefully address this issue during lessons. Subject knowledge is sound, clear instructions are given and support is well directed. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is good, and, for example, particularly suitable work is provided, pupils make good progress in their overall mathematical ability. In a good mathematics lesson in Year 5, the teacher appropriately started the session with a suitable mental warm-up that immediately gained the full attention and interest of all the pupils. Most pupils enjoy the work, particularly the mental activities. They settle to their written and practical tasks with interest and concentration. They know what they are expected to do and most pupils make appropriate efforts to accomplish their tasks. Pupils are nearly always well behaved, with just a small minority inclined to restlessness at times. For instance, this happens when introductions to lessons are too long. Teachers hold very appropriate plenary sessions to check pupils' understanding and celebrate some of the work done. They generally take great care with the appearance of their work and teachers usually mark the work with the addition of helpful comments.

86. The school utilises the National Numeracy document as its scheme of work. A shortcoming identified in the previous report was of a lack of one specific scheme and this has been effectively remedied by using the National Numeracy Strategy. This has been implemented effectively and standards are rising, especially at Key Stage 1. The coordinator supports her colleagues well and this has a good impact on learning. Assessment is being used effectively to identify pupils' current attainment and this helps to set targets for the future. Good use is made of this information to place pupils in sets for one lesson a week. However, the information gained is sometimes being used less effectively to help provide appropriate work for pupils of differing abilities during other lessons. Information and communications technology is used successfully through the provision of computer programs to help develop pupils' mathematical understanding and skills.

## **SCIENCE**

87. Standards achieved by the age of seven are above the national average and by age 11 they are well above average. These standards are reflected in the most recent testing and at Key Stage 1 are an improvement from results in 1999. Detailed analysis of the weaknesses in pupils' tests in 1999, careful targeting of these areas for improvement and an increased emphasis on practical work, have helped to raise standards at Key Stage 1. At the time of the school's previous inspection, standards were reported to be in line with the national average. Current inspection findings show that, since that time, significant improvements have been made at Key Stage 1 and very significant improvements have been made at Key Stage 2.
88. By age 11, pupils recognise that there is a great variety of living things and successfully explain that different organisms are found in different habitats. Pupils confidently identify many of the internal organs of animals. For instance, they fully explain the role of the heart in the circulation system. Pupils confidently discuss the harmful effects of alcohol, drugs and tobacco on humans. They describe the main functions of the various parts of a plant and they explain, for example, the importance of roots and leaves. Pupils are able to explain clearly what constitutes a food chain and successfully describe the properties of a variety of materials. They confidently describe the differences between solids, liquids and gases. Pupils explain that some materials are magnetic and others are not. They know that materials can be made into mixtures and explain how they can be separated through processes such as filtration and evaporation. Pupils know that a complete circuit is needed to make electrical devices work and understand that switches are able to control them. Pupils explain clearly that objects have weight because of gravity and that friction and air resistance are forces that slow moving objects. They know that light travels in straight lines and that objects blocking the sun cause shadows. Pupils successfully explain that the apparent movement of the sun causes the position and length of a shadow across the sky. Investigational science was considered weak in the previous inspection. However, pupils are now confident in undertaking a wide range of experiments and they show a clear understanding of the concept of a fair test. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection.

89. By age seven, pupils successfully name the main external features of both the human body and a flowering plant and they are able to identify the items needed to sustain life. Pupils know that food is needed for activity and they explain clearly what constitutes a healthy diet. Pupils are able to recognise and name common materials, such as metal, plastic and wood and successfully describe their various uses. Pupils confidently consider the effects of heating on materials and they know that some of the changes caused are reversible and others are not. They understand that 'pushes' and 'pulls' are examples of forces and they explain confidently the role of batteries, wires and bulbs in making an electric circuit. Pupils clearly know that a circuit will not work if it has a break in it. Pupils are confident in explaining that light comes from a variety of sources. They know that there are many sources of sound and they describe that some sounds are soft and others are loud. Pupils successfully undertake experiments on many aspects of their work, for example, when undertaking work on electricity in Year 1. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
90. The quality of teaching is good, overall, with examples of very good teaching observed in Years 5 and 6. Lessons are well planned, with teachers throughout the school making especially good use of practical activities. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection when teaching was considered satisfactory, overall. Teachers are particularly careful to use and emphasise the correct scientific terminology, which has a beneficial effect on pupils' overall learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide clear instructions and helpful demonstrations of the work that is to be undertaken. They have high expectations of their pupils' work. Pupils show great interest in the subject, showing good and often very good attitudes. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Teachers are enthusiastic and through the provision of a range of practical activities in particular, pupils are enthusiastic also. As a result, they work hard, concentrate well and are keen to find answers to the problems set. Teachers provide much help and well directed support throughout. Where teaching is very good, learning opportunities and instruction are of a high quality and pupils are helped to make very good progress. For example, in a Year 6 lesson that focused on the use of yeast in bread-making, the teacher provided very clear explanations which encouraged the pupils to undertake their respective work and gain a very good scientific understanding of the processes involved with bread-making. Pupils' behaviour is often very good and they work well with other pupils in carrying out activities. They are very aware of safety procedures and they produce their work neatly and carefully. Teachers mark pupils' work helpfully and sympathetically and they often add useful comments of support and advice to help pupils develop their work further.
91. The scheme of work has been introduced since the time of the last inspection and, through careful planning, all aspects of work are well covered. The coordinator is knowledgeable and well qualified, and, through carefully analysing areas for improvement, she has helped raise standards significantly. She keeps records of the work being undertaken in the school and monitors

work carefully by studying samples of work and observing classroom practice. Sound arrangements are made for assessing pupils' work and extensive records are kept, both of pupils' current attainment, as well as the progress they have made. The written work undertaken by pupils, especially that relating to reporting on practical activities, provides support to the school's initiative in literacy. Counting and measuring activities, in various aspects of the subject, support the school's work in numeracy. Information and communications technology is also used effectively to enhance the work in science, such as in the use of CD ROMs, to undertake research work on the human body in Year 2.

## **ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN TECHNOLOGY**

92. Standards in art and design are better than expected at age seven and 11 and this is similar to the previous inspection. Standards in design and technology at both age seven and 11 are as expected and this is also similar to those found in the previous inspection. Evidence for this was taken from samples of pupils' work and lesson observations in art. No lessons were observed in design technology during the inspection week.
93. In art and design all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning and record both ideas and feelings confidently. They show a developing ability to represent what they feel and touch. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed their skills and pupils in Year 5 explore a range of effects and tones well, using pencils to create the missing part of a newspaper image. Pupils in Year 6 design a plate based on the works of Clarice Cliff. They research information about the artist in a variety of ways, including doing research during the holidays. Across the key stage, pupils respond well to the works of a variety of artists such as Monet and Picasso. Pupils are also involved in a project with the local teacher-training college and have produced good designs for the new cross for the college chapel.
94. In Year 2, pupils experiment with mark making effectively and use their pencil skills well to draw plants and flowers. They also develop their skills well to make close observations. Younger pupils in the school have worked closely with pupils from the secondary school to produce a colourful mural of Noah's Ark in their cloakroom area. They also paint pictures in the style of Van Gogh and use a range of media effectively in their work, for example when making stained-glass windows.
95. In design and technology, evidence from pupils' work indicates that, by the time they leave the school, pupils have had satisfactory experience of using a range of materials and tools. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 satisfactorily design and make toys, which incorporate a cam mechanism. These are evaluated well. During the holidays, pupils in the present Year 5 designed and made a rocket launcher, using a wide range of materials and skills, well. These models were tested and satisfactorily evaluated at the beginning of term. Other projects undertaken by pupils in Key Stage 2 include designing and making board games for children in the Reception class and bookmarks. In Year 1, pupils use boxes and other junk materials to make robots.

96. No judgement can be made on the quality of teaching of design technology. Evidence from planning indicates that the curriculum is satisfactorily covered during blocks of lessons during the year. The school has adopted the national scheme of work for design technology and the co-ordinator works effectively in both key stages to support teachers. Her expertise is used well to provide specialist teaching for older pupils and to support them in their involvement in projects in the community. She has provided good support to improve teachers' competency in the range of techniques, an area identified in the previous report. However, opportunities for both monitoring and assessing work are limited. Resources are adequate to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning and pupils make good use of facilities at the local secondary school, particularly for food technology work.
97. The quality of teaching and learning in art and design is good and this ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning as they move through the school. Lessons are well planned and teachers have good subject knowledge. They question well to ensure that pupils understand tasks and to develop the use of specific language, for example tone and hatching. Praise is used effectively to give individuals confidence to experiment with a range of techniques. Pupils' work is marked positively and indicates further areas for development. Teachers use pupils' work effectively to demonstrate expectations. The co-ordinator gives good support to colleagues and uses links with the community effectively to involve pupils in a range of projects and experiences. For example, pupils are able to work with ceramics at the local college. There are also good opportunities for pupils to visit local art galleries.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

98. Standards of achievement are as expected for pupils aged seven and 11 and these are similar to those found in the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 2 and, by the time that they are 11, they have learned about rainforests and know that in these climates rain falls every day. They learn to accurately label a map of the British Isles and understand geographical terminology such as latitude and longitude. Pupils learn about the importance of crops; for example, they know that tea is a very important crop for Sri Lanka. Pupils readily extract information required from the CD Rom and consistently use information technology to promote their geographical skills.
99. By age seven, pupils have developed a sound understanding of both local and wider areas. They develop an understanding of the different types of shops in their environment and take part in transport surveys around the school. This has a good impact on their numeracy skills as they are required to count vehicles and use simple graphs to display their findings. They competently draw plans of their own houses and record key features on maps of areas such as Cannon Hill Park. They understand the differences between Britain, the Sahara and Antarctica and know about the importance of the food chain.

100. Scrutiny of work and teachers' planning indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Only one geography lesson was observed during the inspection and this was of very good quality. In this Year 4 lesson the teacher demonstrated good geographical knowledge and understanding of the subject. This was made accessible to the pupils through good explanations and questions that probed their minds. The pupils' learning was also promoted through a humorous approach and rigorous time-management that encouraged their interest and enthusiasm. The lesson was based on clear learning objectives that encouraged the pupils to apply themselves well to practical activities. Praise and encouragement are also used to good effect in both the lesson observed and in the work scrutinised. However, evidence from this scrutiny indicates that tasks are not always set according to the needs of the individual pupils in lessons. As a result, pupils with special educational needs occasionally fail to complete these tasks and their progress becomes limited.
101. The teaching of geography makes sound contributions to both literacy and numeracy skills. Effective questioning and encouragement to use appropriate terminology extends their vocabulary and the use of graphs to interpret findings from surveys had a positive impact on their mathematical skills.

## **HISTORY**

102. Standards of achievement for the majority of pupils are as expected at the age of seven and 11. All pupils make appropriate progress throughout the school, including those with special educational needs. Standards are broadly similar to those reported in the last inspection.
103. By age 11, pupils have a good knowledge of different times in history. They study life in the 40's, 50's and 60's and eagerly concentrate and learn about the major events and famous people of the time. For example, they confidently discuss what caused the depression in the 1930's and understand the vast differences between the rich and poor at this time. Topics studied in history provide good support for pupils' cultural and literacy development. Pupils learn about fashion, architecture and entertainment in the past. They are able to describe the 'flea-pits' where the poor went and compare them with the 'Picture Palaces'.
104. By age seven, younger pupils enthusiastically talk about change, such as when describing the differences between Anglo-Saxon homes and their own. For example, they know that houses during this period were made of wattle and daub and had thatched roofs. They understand that this compared with the use of bricks and tiles today. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to approach the subject with interest and this encourages pupils learning. For example, pupils enthusiastically learn about famous people from the past, such as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. They are encouraged to be interested in recognising similarities and differences between clothes worn in the past and in the present day and confidently discuss what babies wore long ago. This has a positive impact on their historical understanding. Teachers make good use of pictures and photographs to illustrate time lines that promote the concept of the passing of time. Pupils are also encouraged to gain

information from different sources of evidence through the use of skilful questioning by the teacher.

105. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are planned well and make effective use of a good supply of learning resources, including books, artefacts and original items such as Roman coins. The curriculum is enriched by visits to the local museum. Work is marked regularly and constructive criticism is used to help pupils to improve. Homework is closely linked to their work in the school. For example, after a lesson on the Ancient Egyptians, pupils in a Year 4 class were asked to write their name, using hieroglyphics for a homework task. Pupils are encouraged to discuss historical facts and teachers skilfully encourage them to express opinions about events and interpret secondary sources. For example, they understand that archaeologists help us learn about the past. Some make good use of the computer and work independently with different types of software. They settle quickly to their work and show a good interest in the subject. Pupils showed interest in history when discussing their work with inspectors.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

106. Standards at both ages seven and 11 are as expected and satisfactory progress is made. At the time of the school's previous inspection, standards were reported to be above expectations. Current inspection findings do not show a lowering of standards, however, but reflect the different requirements now made by the National Curriculum.
107. By age 11, pupils show sound skills in word processing, being confident in changing the font, colour and the size of their work. Pupils move portions of text from one place to another and they successfully use a spell-checker in their work. They use the mouse accurately to produce various forms of art and pupils successfully merge artwork into their writing. Pupils successfully develop their control skills, using a floor turtle as well as a screen turtle, to produce a range of straight line and turning movements, following a set course or producing their own patterns. At present, the school does not have the equipment to allow pupils to control items, such as lights, through the computer. Many pupils confidently access the Internet, as well as a range of CD ROMs, to provide a variety of information for subjects such as history and science. The school has its own E-mail address and pupils readily correspond with pupils in other schools. Pupils store their work and confidently retrieve information they require. They recognise patterns and relationships in, for example, adventure games and they confidently predict the outcome of different decisions. At present, pupils have little opportunity to develop their skills in monitoring external events.
108. By age seven, pupils confidently name items of computer equipment, such as mouse, keyboard and monitor and successfully use a keyboard to type text. They are able to place gaps between words using the space bar and most pupils are able to introduce capital letters and full stops into their writing. For instance, pupils in Year 2 successfully type animal sounds into a poem about a farmyard. Most pupils confidently use the backspace key and the cursor keys

to correct mistakes in both their spelling and their text. Using an appropriate paint package, pupils produce an interesting range of pictures, such as houses and animals. Pupils confidently and independently access the menu to print their finished work. Pupils give instructions to a floor turtle to produce straight-line movements over varying distances. Pupils successfully undertake simple modelling activities, exploring aspects of real and imaginary situations presented on the screen.

109. During the inspection, only one lesson was seen and this was of good quality. Pupils were also observed using computers in their classrooms and the evidence of the work produced suggests that, overall, both teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. Teachers are keen and enthusiastic, providing pupils with many opportunities to use the computers. Planning is satisfactory and shows sound subject knowledge. An appropriate range of activities is provided that enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make satisfactory gains in various computer skills and techniques. Pupils respond by showing good attitudes. They are enthusiastic and confident, they settle well to their work and they show high levels of concentration. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject, they share computers amicably and are careful in their use of all forms of equipment. Teachers provide help and advice where necessary and this enables the pupils to make the required progress.
110. The school has an appropriate scheme of work and most aspects of work are adequately covered. Where there are shortcomings in provision, such as in control technology at Key Stage 2, the school has already identified the need to provide extra resources. Teachers plan carefully for information and communications technology to be used also in a variety of other subjects, including English, mathematics, history and geography, and this helps to improve pupils' skills. The coordinator supports her colleagues when required. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place and pupils help to keep records of the work they have done. Many pupils find the use of computers exciting and the excitement generated, such as when printing out completed work, helps enhance pupils' spiritual development.

## **MUSIC**

111. Standards of achievement are satisfactory at age seven and 11, with appropriate progress being made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, throughout the school. Pupils sing melodies and songs well and they are developing confidence. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards in singing were considered weak. The oldest pupils have developed a sound knowledge of how to sing a steady rhythm and beat and are respectful of different styles of music. Younger pupils are able to sing a song with a developing sense of pitch and rhythm. They follow a simple rhythmic pattern and use percussion instruments, such as tambourines, to produce different sounds. For example, pupils in Year 2 are able to make the sound of both rain and thunder using a tambourine.
112. Teaching is good, overall, and this is a direct result of hard work by the subject co-ordinator to ensure that non-specialists are confident when they teach. Overall, the quality of learning is satisfactory and pupils are appropriately acquiring new musical skills. This is because the teachers have good subject knowledge and they ensure that the pupils gain a good understanding of technical terms such as dynamics, rhythm and pitch. Good use is made of

resources to ensure that the pupils are attentive and interested in the lessons. For instance, in a Year 3 class pupils listened enthusiastically to the 'Carnival of Animals' and confidently identified the musical interpretations of a variety of different animals. Good cross-curricular links are also planned and Year 6 pupils learnt some songs that workers had sung during the depression of the 1930's, a topic currently being studied in history. Relationships during this lesson were positive and pupils respectfully listened to their teacher demonstrate various skills. At the end of this session, pupils were able to explain what they had learnt during the lesson. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was observed and the subject was judged to be insufficiently developed throughout the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

113. Standards at both age seven and 11 are as expected. Standards in swimming, however, are higher than those expected. The standards reported at the time of the school's previous inspection have been maintained.
114. At age 11, pupils successfully develop their skills of throwing, kicking and catching a ball and confidently take part in small-sided team activities to further improve their work. Pupils successfully perform a range of gymnastic movements, such as jumps, turns and rolls, carrying out their movements both on the floor and on apparatus. Pupils take part in adventure activities and they successfully work in teams in following a trail around a planned course. Pupils throughout Key Stage 2 attend swimming lessons for part of the year. All become suitably confident in the water and by 11, are able to swim 25 metres unaided. Many pupils swim considerably further. At age seven, pupils move confidently around the hall, showing suitable awareness of space and other pupils. Pupils successfully take part in a range of games activities and confidently throw and catch both balls and beanbags. Most are confident in skipping with a rope. Pupils understand the importance of being active and they explain some of the effects of exercise on their bodies.
115. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers undertake sound planning and provide a good range of resources. Clear instruction is generally provided, now including the coaching of particular skills, and this allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve appropriately. Members of staff change appropriately for lessons and they all join in and demonstrate for pupils. They have sound subject knowledge and make suitable demands of the pupils' performance. Pupils join in appropriately, enjoying themselves and making a satisfactory physical effort. Lessons are generally conducted at a brisk pace, although in one lesson seen, the pace slowed for individual pupils, while they waited to take their turn at an adventure activity. Teachers usually show good control and management skills, especially where a wide range of activities is being undertaken. Occasionally, a small minority of pupils do not give their full attention to their teacher, preferring instead to carry on with other activities. Teachers often take the opportunity to use pupils to demonstrate good practice, but opportunities are sometimes missed to discuss the quality of the work seen and how they might improve.

Teachers provide help and support to pupils in all aspects of their work and, in particular, they emphasise the need for safety. In turn, pupils show good attitudes, behave well overall, work well alone and with a partner or group and carry equipment carefully and safely.

116. The school now has a scheme of work in place, with all aspects of work being suitably covered. Appropriate and relevant assessment procedures are used to record pupils' work and progress in swimming, but no records are maintained for other aspects of the subject. The school has two temporary coordinators. The person responsible for swimming is well qualified and this is having a significant influence on helping to maintain the current good standards in that area. Activities involving counting and measuring, especially in games activities, give support to the school's initiative in numeracy. The school makes satisfactory arrangements for the provision of extra-curricular activities, for Key Stage 2 pupils.