

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

South Moor, Stanley, Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114247

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Allan

Reporting inspector: Chrissie Pittman  
18275

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 224924

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:	Hustledown South Moor Stanley Durham
Postcode:	DH9 6PH
Telephone number:	(01207) 232189
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr. Dennis Tindall
Date of previous inspection:	24 <sup>th</sup> June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Chrissie Pittman 18275	Registered inspector	English Science Art History Under fives	What can the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
R Ibbitson 13828	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
R Whittington 4350	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Music Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's is a small one form entry, voluntary aided Roman Catholic church school situated in the rural town of Stanley near Durham. The school is much smaller than other primary schools with 73 pupils from 4 to 11 in mixed-year and ability classes. The attainment on entry to reception is well below average, with few children attending a playgroup or nursery prior to joining the school. The catchment is made up of mainly working class households with high unemployment. There are a few professional families and a substantial number of one parent families. The high degree of social deprivation is reflected in the fact that over half the school are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is well above the national average. Forty two per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN) and this, together with the three per cent of pupils who have statements, is a significantly higher percentage than is found nationally. Most children come from a predominately white British background. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

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

St Mary's is an improving school. This is evident in much better standards of teaching, which is good overall, and very good attitudes by most pupils to their work. The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school. Staff work well together and create a caring environment for pupils to learn and develop. Pupils make steady progress and respond well to challenge where work is demanding. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Teaching is a strength of the school. The teaching in 4 out of 5 lessons is good or very good and enables pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), to make good progress overall.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour around school are very good. Their relationships with each other and the teachers are excellent.
- There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which creates a very good school ethos.
- The school procedures for promoting pupils' wellbeing, health and safety are good. This is a warm and vibrant school where the care of pupils is an important focus for all members of staff.
- The school has made excellent use of its surplus accommodation to enable pupils to learn more successfully. Displays of work throughout the school are excellent.
- Levels of attendance are above average.

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

- Standards of attainment and the pace of learning in reading, writing and science at Key Stage 1.
- Standards of attainment at the higher levels at the end of both key stages.
- Monitoring and target-setting of individual pupil performance to raise standards, particularly for higher achieving pupils.
- Monitoring and evaluating teaching, and improving teacher assessment.
- Monitoring by the Governing Body of the school's performance and standards of achievement.
- Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of senior managers and subject co-ordinators.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues raised in the last inspection report. The greatest improvement has been made in the quality of teaching throughout the school and the progress made by all pupils, but particularly those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Standards of attainment have improved overall. This is particularly significant, as far more pupils now need additional support with their learning. Since the last inspection in 1996, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 at age 11 has steadily risen while the number of pupils with SEN has trebled. With the exception of reading, writing and science, which are below average at the end of Key Stage 1, standards in most subjects have been maintained. Standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1 have improved significantly. At age 11 standards in the core subjects, whilst in line with national averages, are not as high as they were previously, although they are well above average when compared to similar schools. In lessons, standards have improved in design and technology and art. There has

also been a decline in the social economic circumstances of children at the school as the percentage of pupils on free school meals has risen from 42 per cent in 1996 to 57 per cent this year. Nonetheless pupils now make better progress in learning in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 and history and art at both key stages. However, there is still insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.

Parents are pleased with the improvements in communication through regular newsletters and open evenings. Commendable improvement has also been made in the quality of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships and in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching too has improved significantly, although key skills are still not being taught effectively across all subjects. Other areas which still require improvement are: management systems, monitoring of teaching and learning by co-ordinators, development of subject schemes of work, strategic planning over a longer term and assessment. The school is well placed to make these improvements and raise standards further.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

There is wide variation in capability between children in different year groups. Because of the small sizes of these groups there is significant variance in the comparison of year on year results against national averages. The school has analysed its results well and produced good evidence to show that overall attainment can fluctuate considerably when factors such as large numbers of pupils with SEN and negative circumstances at home are taken into account. Pupils start at the school with standards well below those expected of children of this age. However, they make good progress and, although they are still below average at age 5, years they leave at age 11 achieving standards in line with national averages and well above average when compared to similar schools. By the end of Key Stage 2, the 1999 statutory tests results showed pupils were achieving in line with national averages in all three core subjects and well above average in comparison to similar schools. Targets were met in 1999. The school's targets for this year were not met and standards achieved in the core subjects have fallen. However, the group of pupils taking the tests this year had a high level of absenteeism and one of the highest percentages, in the last six years, of pupils with SEN.

In lessons seen at Key Stage 1, standards are in line with expectations in most subjects with the exception of English and science, which are below. Pupils are learning at a faster rate overall in mathematics and history, although progress in reading, writing and science is unsatisfactory. In lessons seen, by the end of Year 6, standards are in line with expectations in all subjects except art, where they are above. The pace of learning is good in English, mathematics, history and art and satisfactory in all other subjects. Pupils with SEN make good overall progress. Standards of speaking and listening are below average on entry. Literacy skills are not sufficiently re-enforced through other subjects. Overall there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. There is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn, act responsibly and are very eager to take part in all school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school and in lessons is very good. Pupils have a mature respect for each other and for their teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good overall. Relationships throughout the school are excellent.
Attendance	Attendance is good.

The very good personal development and relationships of almost all pupils is a strength of the school. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. The school prides itself on operating as a caring family. Most pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, well mannered and show respect for property. They behave particularly well in large groups, for example in assemblies. There is no evidence of bullying or disruptive behaviour.

Older pupils have various duties from acting as monitors to supporting younger pupils with their work and at lunchtime. Pupils' attitudes to learning are also very good. They show sustained interest and commitment to their work. However, pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Good levels of attendance and punctuality also have a positive effect on pupils' progress.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall 23	Good	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching at both key stages is good. Four out of five lessons are good or better with most of the very good teaching occurring in Key Stage 2. The remainder of the satisfactory lessons are divided equally between Key Stage 1 and 2. There is no unsatisfactory teaching.

All teachers manage pupils very well. Many lessons, particularly at Key Stage 2, are stimulating and perceptive and challenging demands are made on pupils to extend their learning. The teaching of pupils with SEN is particularly good, although higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and there is insufficient emphasis on the teaching of literacy skills. The pace of learning is sometimes too slow at Key Stage 1. Teachers are not using day to day assessment to inform future lesson planning effectively in this key stage. Teachers have started to set broad literacy targets to improve specific skills. However, general targets are insufficiently analysed or focused to identified areas of weakness. Teacher assessment does not accurately reflect pupils' attainment. The learning environment at the school is good. Pupils show interest in their work and concentrate well. By the end of Key Stage 2, most understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve. This should now be reflected lower down the school to enable pupils to improve their learning in Key Stage 1.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. However, the provision for science at Key Stage 1 is not reflected in pupils' limited understanding of the subject. There is insufficient provision for outdoor play for children under five.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Sound. Pupils have good equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, very good. The provision for spiritual development is very good, that for social and moral development is excellent; cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Support and guidance are good. Children are well known and this is effectively used to support their academic progress and personal development.

The partnership between the parents and school is strong. Most parents are happy that the school works closely with them and feel well informed as to their children's progress. The curriculum for the under-fives is well planned, although there is no separate enclosed area for outdoor play and insufficient opportunities for pupils to use large apparatus and wheeled toys to develop co-ordination of movement. There are no clubs and activities run outside the school day to stimulate pupils.

Provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent. The strong partnership with parents and church is reflected in the school's inspiring social ethos, in which older pupils are proud to care for the younger ones. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. Clear codes of conduct and strong Christian values ensure pupils develop a mature understanding of their spiritual, moral and social responsibilities. There is good provision for pupils' cultural understanding through religious education, English and art. However there is insufficient provision for multi-cultural development.

Procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are good. Formal reports on academic progress are less well developed and lack individual targets, particularly for higher achieving pupils. The school has begun to use assessment data to guide curriculum planning, but day to day assessment is still not being effectively used to inform future lessons and pupils are not monitored or targeted regularly enough to raise standards.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. Educational priorities are supported through appropriate planning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The Governing Body supports the school and meets statutory requirements well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has effectively begun an in-depth analysis of the standards achieved and how they could be improved. However, the school's Improvement Plan is not sufficiently focused or costed over a long enough period to be a useful tool for strategic planning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory, although the school has failed to target its spending adequately in 1999/2000 to improve standards.

There is a good match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum. Excellent use has been made of the surplus accommodation for subjects such as art, music and technology. Resources are adequate in most subject areas, but they are unsatisfactory in physical education and the under-fives where there is no separate enclosed area for outdoor play and insufficient opportunities for pupils to use large apparatus and wheeled toys to develop co-ordination of movement.

The headteacher provides clear educational direction and has created an excellent school ethos. Lessons and planning are monitored to improve quality, but the focus has not been sufficiently targeted on standards, especially in weak areas such as reading and writing skills at Key Stage 1. The roles and responsibilities of key staff are not clearly enough defined to ensure consistency of monitoring and the setting of achievable targets. Most subjects are well planned and taught but their management, in terms of co-ordinators monitoring teaching and learning, and target setting, is unsatisfactory.

Governors work hard for the school but the Governing Body is still not involved enough in planning, monitoring and evaluating decisions so as to understand more fully its strengths and weaknesses. The governor link with subject areas is not strong and there is insufficient monitoring of financial planning. The strategic use of funding, so as to improve resources and raise standards, is unsatisfactory.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of the teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with any problems.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard.</li> <li>• They are kept well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of after-school activities.</li> <li>• The way the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Parents want the school to work more closely with them.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with most of the positive comments made by parents. However, although the school expects children to work hard, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Inspectors felt that the annual reports gave a good overview of what has been covered, but more information could be given as to what pupils know and understand. The school is well led but there are weaknesses in how it is managed.

Inspectors found that the procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development are sound, although, sometimes, pupils are not actively encouraged by their teachers to take responsibility for their own learning. The fact that there are no extra-curricular activities to promote pupils' personal development is a weakness. Overall the relationship between parents and the school is strong. Parents have very good views of the school and feel confident in approaching it with problems and concerns. Generally homework is used appropriately to develop understanding and raise standards at Key Stage 2. It is underused at Key Stage 1.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. There is wide variation in capability between children in different year groups and, because of the small sizes of these groups, there is wide variability in the comparison of year on year results against national averages. The school has analysed its results well over the last four years and produced good evidence to show that overall attainment can fluctuate considerably when factors such as large numbers of pupils with SEN and negative circumstances at home are taken into account, in some year groups.
2. Pupils' attainment, when they first join the school aged 4, is well below average. However, they make good progress in their learning and, by the time they start formal education by the age of 5, they are achieving results that are below national expectations for children of this age. By the time they leave aged 11, the results in 1999 show pupils are achieving in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science and well above in comparison to similar schools. The school met its targets in 1999. The school's targets for this year were not met and standards achieved, in the core subjects, have fallen. However, this must be put into the school's context, where there are small numbers taking the tests and pupils' capabilities vary significantly from year to year. This particular group had a high level of absenteeism and one of the highest percentages, in the last six years, of pupils with SEN. The trend in the school's overall test results over the last three years is just below the national trend. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls.
3. Pupils' results at the end of the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests for reading are very low in comparison to national averages and well below when compared to similar schools. For writing, standards are below national averages but above in comparison to similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was very low in reading and well below in writing. In mathematics, results were very high in comparison to national averages but below average at the higher Level 3. When compared to similar schools they were very high.
4. At age 11, pupils achieved results in English in 1999 which were in line with national averages at both the higher and average levels. In comparison with schools in similar contexts the results were well above average. This year's results have fallen considerably at both the average and higher levels. Results for the last four years show that the performance of boys was close to the national average in English whilst the girls achieved above the national norm. The trend for the subject for the last three years has been in line with the national trend. In lessons seen at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are in line with expectations and the progress made by most pupils is good, although there are insufficient pupils working at the higher level.
5. In mathematics, pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests at age 11 is in line with the national figures at average levels and below at higher levels. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, the results are well above average. Standards have fallen this year. In lessons pupils are achieving standards in line with national expectations and making good progress. There is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Few pupils are currently working at the higher Level 5.
6. In science, test results at age 11 showed that pupils' attainment was in line with the national average at both the expected and higher levels. Compared to similar schools they were well above. Girls did much better than boys. This year's results have fallen because of the composition of the group. In lessons pupils are attaining average standards and are making good progress by the end of this key stage.
7. Overall attainment at the time of the last inspection was in line with expectations by the time pupils left the school in Year 6. This standard has been improved in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and design and technology and art at both key stages.
8. Standards attained in numeracy have been improved since the last inspection, although there has been better improvement in numeracy than literacy. The school's targets for literacy and numeracy are

appropriate but have not been met this year. Literacy skills, particularly reading and handwriting skills, are very weak at Key Stage 1. There is improvement at Key Stage 2 but teaching is still insufficiently focused on raising the standards of writing and presentation. Pupils have good opportunities for speaking and listening. Discussion is of a good standard in all subjects and teachers actively encourage and develop this skill in lessons. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils are confident in the use of subject-specific vocabulary in their written work, although their use of creative language is weak and sentence construction is simple.

9. By age 7, pupils' numeracy skills are better than their literacy and they are more confident in using and applying mathematics in a variety of situations. By age 11, pupils have a good grasp of numeracy and their mental calculations are good. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in other subjects, although this is not yet securely embedded in whole-school planning. Pupils use co-ordinates to locate places on a map and measuring skills in science and design and technology. In Key Stage 2, pupils follow instructions in textbooks well and know and use correct mathematical vocabulary. There needs to be more time allocated to plenary sessions, in both the literacy and numeracy hour, so that pupils can be assessed more adequately as to their progress. Day to day assessment is insufficiently used to inform what is to be taught in future.
10. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. Most pupils develop the breadth of competencies expected in the National Curriculum with the exception of control at Key Stage 1 and monitoring at Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident in word-processing their stories and poems and can use CD ROMs to access information and the internet. Their ability to interpret findings and to question their probability is very limited. They make little progress in using computers to control devices such as a foamer' and in predicting outcomes of various decisions.
11. In lessons seen, by the end of Year 2, standards are in line with expectations in most subjects with the exception of English and science, which are below. Pupils are learning at a faster rate overall in mathematics and history, although progress in reading, writing and science is unsatisfactory. Overall, the pace of the progress made by most pupils is slow in Key Stage 1 when compared to the progress made by children under five and those in Key Stage 2. Even though standards of speaking and listening are well below average on entry, literacy skills are not sufficiently re-enforced through other subjects. Overall there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. In lessons seen, by the end of Year 6, standards are in line with expectations in all subjects except art where they are above. The pace of learning is good in English, mathematics, history and art and satisfactory in all other subjects. The progress of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good overall. They make particularly good progress in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans in those subjects where they have support in class.

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

12. The attitudes of pupils to their learning and the overall behaviour of children, together with the relationships they have with their teachers, all show an improvement since the last inspection.
13. Pupils in both key stages demonstrate very good attitudes towards school and this has a positive effect on their learning. They enjoy coming to school and take an enthusiastic interest in all subjects. In lessons children show a sustained concentration on their tasks, are keen to produce their best efforts and take a pride in completing work. Pupils listen to their teachers and are eager to answer questions and contribute to discussions.
14. The behaviour of children in both key stages is very good and is a major contribution to learning. The children's behaviour was commented on favourably by parents during the inspection and also in the parents' survey. Children are well aware of the school's rules on behaviour and abide by them. In lessons and around the school, children behave in a sensible manner. At lunchtime, children waited patiently in a queue for their meals while talking to their classmates. Pupils enjoy mealtimes as a social occasion when they can sit and chat with each other. During the inspection, no aggressive behaviour was seen. In the event of bullying or other inappropriate behaviour, all staff follow the school's discipline policy, ensuring that such behaviour is dealt with promptly and firmly. In the past year, there were no exclusions.

15. The relationships that children have with their teachers and support staff and with each other are excellent and provide a friendly environment. Pupils trust their teachers, who are good role models. Pupils respond well to the school's moral and social provision and show a caring attitude to others. This was seen in an assembly when children participated in prayers for sick pupils. Children are very friendly and polite to visitors and, during the inspection, were eager to hold doors open for them and gave them a cheery greeting. Most enjoy talking openly to visitors about life at school.
16. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are good. They work well and are interested in their tasks. Behaviour is very good. Other pupils are very supportive and, generally, relationships are excellent.
17. The attendance rate is above the national average and is good. The majority of pupils arrive in school on time and registration is carried out promptly and smoothly. Following registration, children settle down quickly to lessons.
18. Pupils' personal development is good but more could be done to encourage it. When given opportunities to develop their initiative and exercise responsibility, pupils act sensibly and show maturity. For example, children often work in pairs on computers, out of the classroom but within sight of the class teacher, where they get on with their work in a responsible manner. Pupils are given daily duties that they accept cheerfully. Two Year 5 boys, for example, helped to clear plates in the dining hall and a Year 2 boy collected cups children had finished with. Other daily tasks, such as taking registers back to the office after registration and tidying up after lessons, are done without fuss. Children treat the school with respect and there is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti. Books and other learning material are handled with care and children value the various displays in the school.

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

19. The overall quality of teaching at both key stages is good. Four out of five lessons are good or better, with most of the very good teaching occurring in Year 3/4. One in five lessons are satisfactory and these are divided equally between Key Stage 1 and 2. There is no unsatisfactory teaching.
20. Teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is very good in some lessons in English, mathematics, history, physical education and design and technology. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, the difference is mainly due to insufficient pace and challenge. These were features of some lessons in mathematics, science, information and communication technology and music. On balance, the higher proportion of good teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' progress. The reception teacher faces difficulties in managing the challenge of three year groups in one class and the wide range of pupils' capability adds to this challenge. In general, these difficulties are managed well. However, there is a concern about the small amount of time spent by the class teacher with the youngest children under five. The teaching assistant is given too much responsibility for teaching these children and monitoring and evaluating their learning. She is not used effectively to support the class teacher in the teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2.
21. A number of features contribute to the best teaching. Classroom control is very good. Encouragement and humour are used well to motivate pupils. There is often a crisp pace through English and mathematics lessons and skilful use of questioning, which broadens pupils' understanding and promotes thinking and discussion. Teachers' subject knowledge and planning are particularly good in history and mathematics. The teaching assistant who helps with the Under Fives shows a good understanding of young children and challenges them effectively so that they make good progress. In reading, writing and science at Key Stage 1, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are low. Individual pupils are not monitored and targeted sufficiently to identify strengths and weaknesses early. Some pupils wrongly form their letters and they are not corrected. There is little evidence of investigation work in science. Higher achieving pupils are not sufficiently challenged, particularly in Year 2.
22. Most of the literacy programme is taught well and is beginning to make an impact on attainment. However, insufficient attention is given to reading, writing and spelling skills, particularly at Key Stage 1. The plenary session at the end of the literacy hour is not sufficiently used for assessment and to record

learning so that outcomes can be used in future planning. Numeracy is effectively taught in mathematics lessons and is beginning to be linked with other subjects well.

23. Teaching and non-teaching staff share expertise and support each other well. Classroom assistants and parent helpers work well with teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The quality of teaching for Under Fives is good. A variety of stimulating and well structured activities are provided to encourage pupils to respond.
24. Teachers' confidence and understanding of the curriculum are sound and particularly good in English and mathematics, history and physical education. Planning is appropriate in most areas and focuses successfully on coverage of the literacy and numeracy strategies, National Curriculum requirements and religious education. However, some co-ordinators are not monitoring subject plans effectively, for example in science. Lesson plans provide a good structure and focus for lesson activities and have clear objectives in most subjects, although some lessons, regardless of subject, are sometimes too prescriptive and provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn independently. There is good provision for developing ICT across all subject areas.
25. Pupils are particularly well challenged in Year 3/4. For example, in an English lesson, pupils were set challenging tasks through a wide range of activities. All abilities were well stretched in terms of speaking, listening and reading. In a less successful science lesson in Key Stage 1 on the differences between medicines and sweets, teacher expectation was not so high. Pupils did not write up their results adequately; nearly all could do the task set in a very short time and most pupils were insufficiently challenged by the exercise and did not learn as much as they could have in scientific terms.
26. Almost all teachers make very effective use of a wide range of control and managing strategies. The positive relationship staff have with pupils creates a good learning environment. Good behaviour is a feature of almost all lessons. Pupil teacher relationships are very good. The active involvement of pupils helps to sustain interest. In a science lesson in Year 5 and 6, pupils discuss in scientific terms what they have discovered through their experiments on solids, liquids and gases and suggest ways of improving their work. In lessons, where there is too much teacher direction and advice, pupils' personal development and progress are undermined.
27. Most teachers use time and resources well. For example, in history, teachers plan purposeful historical investigations involving a variety of sources. School resources are supplemented by the use of artefacts and outside visits. Time and resources are used particularly effectively in English, mathematics, history and physical education at Key Stage 2.
28. Pupils with SEN are treated as a priority by the school. Teachers are particularly aware of these pupils. They are well known and supported through individual education plans, although the targets set are sometimes insufficiently specific and too short term for progress in meeting them to be easily measurable. The school is also becoming more aware of higher attaining pupils. However, much of the work given to them is often not specifically targeted for their capability. Support assistants are used effectively throughout the school, although the support assistant in Key Stage 1 is ineffectively used to enable the teacher to monitor, evaluate and target higher achieving pupils, particularly in Year 2. In English and mathematics, teachers present different work to pupils of differing ability so that all are challenged. In all other subjects teachers use various methods of providing the work needed by pupils with SEN. Resources are satisfactory and are added when needs are identified.
29. There is an established policy for marking that is aimed at helping pupils to improve their work. Where marking is good, written comments are constructive and help pupils improve the quality of their work. However, there is some cursory marking, which does not inform pupils how to improve their learning. The day to day assessment of pupils' work is good in some classes, but the quality varies. In some, outcomes are not recorded or used to improve further planning. Plenary sessions are not used appropriately to identify what pupils know, understand and can do. Homework is well focused, involves research and is improving standards in Year 6. It is underused at Key Stage 1.
30. The general standard of teaching has improved since the last inspection with a greater emphasis on adding

variety to teaching methods.

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

31. The school meets all statutory requirements, including those for the Foundation Stage, and takes account of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy. Good use is made of resources within the community. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good: opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility, they work well together and they understand the difference between right and wrong.
32. The overall quality and range of opportunities offered to pupils is appropriate. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum is satisfactory. Statutory requirements, such as sex and drugs education, are met. The school has largely adopted new schemes of work and are in the process of reviewing several of these to make them more relevant to the needs of the school.
33. Following the previous inspection, there were a number of key issues associated with the curriculum. These concerned time allocations for subjects, the need to ensure progression in all subjects and to match work for the most able pupils. The first two have largely been addressed, although the third, concerning higher attaining pupils, is still a weakness. The quality of planning is still inconsistent, with too little attention given to related assessment of pupils' learning.
34. Although the literacy strategy is implemented across the school, it is not always effective in raising standards, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1. The teaching of numeracy is generally good. The planning is specific and, as it focuses directly on teaching and learning objectives, lessons are purposeful and pupils' progress is often good. Few extra-curricular activities are offered to enhance the quality of the pupils' education.
35. Pupils have good equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. This runs naturally and unobtrusively through the whole life of the school. These pupils make good progress through work, which is often specifically targeted for them. However, the targets on their individual education plans (IEPs) are insufficiently specific and short term for progress in meeting them to be easily measurable. All elements of the Code of Practice are met.
36. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. There are links with the local library and pupils have visited a nearby supermarket for a mathematics day. Drama groups and artists visit the school. All pupils have the opportunity to visit local places of interest and participate in residential visits. There are good links on a variety of levels with local schools.
37. Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and, although it was good at the time of the last inspection, it has now improved still further. There is no mention of this aspect within the various curriculum policies, but this does not adversely affect practice. Provision for spiritual development is very good and many opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on personal and wider spiritual matters. This is achieved through the context of collective worship, which is particularly effective, as well as other areas of the daily curriculum. The displays around the school give a good insight into other people's lives.
38. Provision for social and moral development is excellent. The school promotes a very positive ethos in which the quality of relationships and the attitudes of pupils are outstanding. There is a very strong family feeling throughout the school. Codes of conduct are displayed, from specific notices exhorting pupils to, 'Please help to keep our cloakroom tidy and safe' and 'How to Enjoy Happy Hour at Lunchtime' to more general, focusing on being a part of the whole school community. Pupils have a very good awareness and understanding of the school's moral code and consider the effects of their actions. Adults within the school are good role models, setting an overriding emphasis of care. In their discussions and actions, pupils can readily distinguish right from wrong. They are encouraged to care for each other and consider the effects of social and moral behaviour on the environment and on others. They value each other's efforts. All this is exemplified through many aspects of school life. There has been a school council and this is to continue with representatives chosen from all year groups.
39. The provision for cultural development is good. As well as promoting a love of the arts through the



stimulating environment created within the building, the school provides a number of opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of a broader range of cultural backgrounds. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils have been learning about haiku and composing music to accompany these. There is an interesting display of artefacts in the main corridor from the developing world. However, multicultural awareness is insufficiently developed.

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

40. St Mary's school has a caring ethos and the good support and guidance given to pupils is a valuable contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. The encouragement of teachers and ancillary staff enables pupils to feel secure in the school environment and to concentrate on their studies. There is a mutual respect between teachers and children that aids teaching and learning. Pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily supported but individual educational plans are insufficiently focused on the measures necessary to support progress.
41. Procedures for child protection are good. The headteacher is the designated person to deal with child protection issues and has received appropriate training. Staff are aware of the need to watch for signs of abuse in children and do not hesitate to report any suspicions to the headteacher. Records are securely kept of child protection matters.
42. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in relation to their yearly reports are largely satisfactory, although there are still weaknesses in the way the school uses assessment information to guide curriculum planning and the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' individual academic progress. Assessments in mathematics are beginning to be used effectively to guide medium-term curriculum planning and day to day assessment is effective in informing daily planning in some classes. However, this is not the case in most other subjects and for every class. This was a key issue following the previous inspection. Formal procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress through the school are not well developed. Pupils are supported well and targets are often set which cover whole-group objectives for literacy and numeracy, but individual targeting is insufficiently developed, particularly for those pupils with high ability. There is little to indicate what each pupil should do to progress to the next level. Samples of pupils' work from some subjects are saved but this is not consistent across all subjects.
43. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Because of the high priority placed on personal relationships, all adults in the school know each pupil very well. The school's caring ethos and a staff who implement the school's equal opportunities policy provides a sound basis for ensuring that equal opportunities receive due consideration. Pupils benefit from the way the policy is implemented throughout the curriculum as it enables them to develop their potential. There is no evidence of any children being denied access to the curriculum. In all subjects, the provision of opportunities for pupils having special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers and teaching assistants are aware of the particular needs of these pupils and give them valuable support. The school has good procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs and, because of this they make good progress. Boys and girls are given equal opportunities in sport and games.
44. The school has a discipline policy that is effectively implemented by all staff so that children are well aware of the rewards and sanctions that good and bad behaviour incurs. This, together with the school's ethos, promotes good conduct throughout the school. There is a great emphasis on moral behaviour and children develop an early sense of right and wrong that has a beneficial influence on their personal and social development.
45. The school closely follows the LEA recommendations on health and safety and regular checks and inspections are carried out. Fire drills are held each term but these are not recorded and this is unsatisfactory. Risk assessments are done and appropriate records are maintained. The governors are mindful of their responsibilities for the security of staff and pupils and have taken appropriate steps to ensure this. There are qualified first-aiders on the staff to attend to minor injuries and these are recorded. The caretaking of the school is effective and ensures that staff and pupils enjoy a clean and pleasant working environment.

46. Kitchen staff are advised of any children on special diets and care is taken to see that, as far as possible, dietary requirements are met. The supervision of children at lunchtimes is carried out with care for the children's needs. The school has good relationships with the area health service and a nurse visits the school regularly to carry out medical examinations. The nurse, accompanied by a member of staff, also gives a talk on puberty to boys and girls in Year 6. All children throughout the school receive information on sex through the curriculum, appropriate to their year group.
47. Within the small school community, staff know pupils very well and personal development of pupils is satisfactorily supported and monitored. The monitoring of attendance is good. Absence and attendance rates are compiled monthly and these are reviewed at meetings of the governors who take a keen interest in attendance. Rates for each year group over the year are shown in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents but the overall annual rates are not shown. Good relationships are maintained with the Educational Welfare Officer who visits the school regularly and follows up any cases of unauthorised absence. The good support the school gives to its pupils, mentioned in the report of the last inspection, has continued.

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

48. The school's good efforts to work in partnership with parents, commented on at the time of the last inspection, has continued
49. Parents have very good views of the school and, from the parents' survey, the majority feel that their children are making good progress. Overall the school has established a good partnership with parents and makes good efforts to maintain this. For example, a survey of parents was carried out to find out their opinions and suggestions and this provided some useful information. The school has maintained its 'open door' policy towards parents, as mentioned in the last report, and parents feel confident in approaching the school with any concerns regarding their children.
50. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Newsletters keep parents advised of school matters and open evenings allow parents to see what their children have done and to talk to class teachers. Parents also have a brief opportunity to talk to class teachers each day when children come into and leave school. The Governors' Annual Report to Parents meets statutory requirements but, although the information on absences and attendance is very detailed, it not does readily indicate the annual authorised and unauthorised absences. Although annual reports on pupils meet statutory requirements, some describe only what the class has covered over the year and not what individual children know, understand and can do. The section in the reports describing personal progress is generally good and contains suggested targets. The school's prospectus meets statutory requirements except for the omission of absence rates.
51. The involvement of parents in their children's education is satisfactory and several parents come into school to help in various ways, such as hearing children read or generally assisting in classroom activities. Parents appreciate how they can help their children by seeing that they attend school regularly and punctually and by signing and writing comments in the reading diaries. The home/school agreement enables parents to see the respective responsibilities of school, parents and children.

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

52. The headteacher's leadership is sound and ensures clear educational direction for the school. The management roles of key staff and co-ordinators need clarification and development. They are not well structured or clearly identified. There are no current job descriptions and managers and co-ordinators are not effectively monitoring the school's strengths and weaknesses in terms of curriculum provision, teaching and learning. The school has clear aims and values and these are as a result of careful planning, purposeful leadership and effective communication. A committed staff share these aims and are working hard to achieve them. The school has established a good ethos in which to implement its aims and policies in a positive way.

53. The governors are actively involved in promoting the interests of the school and show high levels of commitment to their work. They have appropriate committees, which enable them to be effectively involved in decision-making processes. However, their involvement in effectively monitoring the curriculum, the quality of education being offered or the effectiveness of budgetary decisions is too limited. Governors' monitoring of curriculum provision, as a whole, is insufficiently developed to identify specific areas of weakness in the quality of the education being offered. The school's improvement plan is not sufficiently focused or costed over a long enough period to be effectively used as a tool for strategic planning and the school has failed to target its spending adequately this year and there is a big underspend. Overall, governors work well in a committee structure, give their time willingly and meet their statutory obligations.
54. The headteacher has been effective in monitoring the work of the school and this has had a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching. Staff support each other effectively and policies and schemes of work are developed collaboratively, although subject co-ordinators are not monitoring teaching sufficiently to help teachers assess outcomes and plan future activities which build on previous learning. The school improvement plan contains a lot of material, is costed and sets general targets. It now needs to be more specifically targeted to raising standards in particular areas of weakness, for example, the standard of reading and writing at Key Stage 1. The school did not meet its targets in English and mathematics this year.
55. The school is satisfactorily managed overall, although there are areas of weakness. Staff, accommodation and resources are deployed adequately, although the school has not targeted its spending efficiently in 1999/2000 to effectively improve standards. Initiatives are still being led predominantly by the headteacher and there is too little delegation of responsibilities to the deputy headteacher and co-ordinators. The headteacher monitors teaching through the school. However, there is a lack of monitoring of teaching, learning and target setting by co-ordinators to enable them to identify weaknesses and improve standards in their subjects.
56. School administration is good; it gives clear support to staff and pupils alike and enables the school to operate in quiet good order. Overall management of special educational needs is good. The school has a satisfactory SEN policy and the co-ordinator regularly reviews provision through pupils' individual education plans, which are written by the teachers. All pupils have equal access to the education offered. Resources are satisfactory overall and are managed efficiently, but they are unsatisfactory in music, science and physical education. All the statutory requirements of the Code of Practice are met.
57. Effective procedures ensure good financial control. All spending is carefully monitored and regular financial statements are available for Governors. All plans are carefully costed and relate well to the overall budget. The school is very cost-conscious and makes significant savings in relation to the purchase of its equipment. There has not been a recent audit. The recommendations of the last audit, three years ago, have been implemented. Specific grant is used effectively for its designated purpose. Expenditure is managed effectively so that the best value is achieved for the money spent. However, the school has not used its significant financial reserves to best advantage to improve standards.
58. There is a good match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum and a good mix of experienced senior staff and teachers new to the profession. Staff have had appropriate training in literacy and numeracy. There is a satisfactory number of support staff who have been well trained. There are no specific arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers. Staff are supported by courses designed to reflect the priorities in the school improvement plan. Appraisal procedures have been postponed in readiness for the introduction of performance management.
59. Excellent accommodation, well maintained and clean, presents a pleasant learning environment and is well suited to meet the demands of the curriculum. Because the school is capable of holding 300 children and the present roll is only 73, there is a surplus of accommodation. The school has, however, made excellent use of the additional space by creating specific learning areas for subjects such as art, music and technology. Displays are stimulating. There is a carefully contrived 'jungle area' which children, who have earned time through good behaviour or extra effort, may enjoy. Next to the school there is a good-sized playing field which, although sloping, is sufficient for games. There are two playgrounds that are adequate for the number of pupils. Access within the school is largely unsuitable to meet the needs of the disabled.

Children under five have no safe external play area where they can use large play toys to develop their physical strength and muscular dexterity. There are adequate resources for learning in the school overall, although there are shortages in science, music, physical education and for books on multi-cultural issues. The school's plans for the development of ICT ensures that this is an area targeted for development. The school makes effective use of new technology.

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

**Raise standards of attainment and the pace of learning in reading, writing and science at Key Stage 1 by:**

- using targeting to raise the achievement of individual pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils;
- ensuring that sufficient time is given to teaching the science curriculum;
- developing strategies to improve the quality of reading;
- providing more time to improve the quality of handwriting.

*(Paragraphs: 3, 8, 9, 11, 23, 30, 43, 56, 94)*

**Improve the standard of teachers' assessment by:**

- developing teachers' accuracy with appropriate training (INSET);
- using assessment more effectively to inform future lesson planning and to monitor progress;
- improving the quality of marking so that it informs pupils how to improve.

*(Paragraphs: 80, 87, 95, 96, 104)*

**Raise the performance of higher attaining pupils at the end of both key stages by:**

- monitoring and targeting higher attaining pupils to achieve higher levels at Year 2 and 6;
- ensuring that teachers challenge higher attaining pupils to learn at a faster pace and at a higher level;
- encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and share in the setting of their own targets;
- matching work more effectively to pupils' ability.

*(Paragraphs: 3, 4, 5, 11, 22, 56, 81, 83, 94, 95, 97, 113, 121)*

**Develop the roles of key staff and co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and learning to reinforce skills and improve standards across all subjects by:**

- compiling appropriate job descriptions which are used as performance reviews;
- consistently monitoring teaching and pupils' achievement and setting of achievable targets;
- encouraging the teaching of basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT in all subjects and training teachers to identify the specific skills necessary for individual subjects.

*(Paragraphs: 11, 25, 50, 56, 81, 89, 97, 98, 105, 122)*

**Governors should become more active in holding the school to account for the standards and quality of education it achieves by:**

- promoting more involvement in long term strategic planning;
- more focused involvement by the governing body to fully evaluate the efficiency of budget allocations and cost effectiveness of subsequent spending;
- developing the school improvement plan over a longer period (3 years) so that the governing body can oversee the development of the school's priorities and targets more effectively.

*(Paragraphs: 54, 55, 56, 58)*

**Other issues for consideration:**

- Provide a designated secure area to enable children under five to use fixed play equipment and large wheeled toys;
- Improve the provision for multicultural education;
- Improve overall quality of reporting to indicate what pupils can do and set future targets.

*(Paragraphs 40, 50, 66)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16hrs

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	26	52	22			

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	1999-2000
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	73
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	1999-2000
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	27

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	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
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(98)	5 (11)	4 (5)	9 (16)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	4	5
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	7	8	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (81)	89 (81)	100 (94)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	5	5
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	7	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (87)	100 (100)	100 (87)
	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(98)	6 (8)	6 (5)	12 (13)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	4	5
	Girls	5	4	5
	Total	8	8	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (46)	67 (46)	83 (69)
	National	70 (64)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	4	3
	Girls	5	4	4
	Total	8	8	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (54)	67 (69)	58 (77)
	National	68 (63)	69 (63)	75 (69)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	66
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: 1999 – 2000**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	25.3

#### **Education support staff: 1999 – 2000**

Total number of education support staff	3.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	39

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	176 636
Total expenditure	175 962
Expenditure per pupil	2 378
Balance brought forward from previous year	25 255
Balance carried forward to next year	25 929



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	73
Number of questionnaires returned	33

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	30	9	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	39	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	46	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	49	6	9	0
The teaching is good.	70	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	52	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	24	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	24	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	40	15	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	52	48	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	36	0	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	34	21	6	12

## **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**

60. The education provided for the under-fives is broad and balanced and in line with the nationally recommended areas of learning. Most children when they start at the school aged 4 have well below average levels of attainment. By the age of five, attainment of the majority is still below what is expected of children of this age. Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and the creative areas of learning. Progress is less satisfactory in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. There is good provision for children with special educational needs.

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

61. Pupils start at the school with poor personal, social and emotional development. By the time they are five they make good progress but are still below average for pupils of this age. They work in groups and follow instructions but without much initiative. They become more confident in making choices and, although they still need a lot of direction, they are eager to explore new learning. Their ability to think up activities, which are imaginative, remains weak. They understand what is right and wrong but cannot say why. Most can take turns but, when left without supervision, find it difficult to share fairly.

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

62. Teachers in the reception class place suitable emphasis on developing communication, language and literacy. Communication and listening skills are encouraged in every activity, including role-play. Many children when they first come to the school are not confident with adults, find it difficult to take any initiative and need a great deal of direction. Most are achieving well below what is expected of children of this age. A few talk confidently about what they like doing. Most children make a slow start to early reading and writing skills but some show rapid progress. All children are encouraged to take books home regularly. They enjoy books and handle them carefully. Some can tell stories using the illustrations within the book and answer simple questions. A few are able to recognise initial sounds associated with the letters of the alphabet but very few can recognise key words from their first reader. Children are beginning to hold their pencils correctly, although very few can shape letters accurately. Most can trace over the teacher's writing and are keen to produce their own mark making.

#### **Mathematical development**

63. Children make good progress in mathematical development. Most know some number rhymes, songs and counting games. They can match, sort and count using everyday objects. Most recite numbers to ten but few can recognise the symbols associated with those numbers. A few children can recognise basic geometric shapes and identify them in everyday objects in the classroom. Most can sort and match objects by shape, colour and size. Their basic knowledge of capacity and weight from practical experiences, for example from sand and water activities, is limited as there are few facilities within the classroom for these activities. However, most have developed a correct understanding of terms such as 'full' and 'empty.'

#### **Creative development**

64. Pupils show satisfactory progress in all areas of creative learning; some show good progress. Overall their ability to represent ideas in various ways and use a wide range of materials is below average when compared to children of a similar age. They are beginning to use poster and powder paints with confidence. They successfully use sponges and various other materials to print and produce effective paintings, although they find handling tools difficult and few can cut and stick a variety of materials. When they first come to the school, they cannot use imagination in play with others. However, they are increasingly able to depict their ideas and feelings through role-play, telling stories, drawing, painting and

collage. They know some songs and nursery rhymes by heart and always sing enthusiastically.

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

65. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is below expectations. They are able to tell the difference between living and non-living forms, knowing that living things need food and water to survive. They are very compliant and do not often question differences, finding it difficult to select materials for themselves. By the time they are aged 5, children are able to explore and select from a range of constructional toys to make imaginative models, although their use of skills, such as cutting, joining and building, are limited. They use simple computer programs well.

## **Physical development**

66. Children's progress in physical development is slow. Their ability to move with confidence and imagination showing awareness of space, of themselves and others is below average. A few demonstrate a good range of co-ordinated movements when playing outside. A minority show satisfactory hand and eye co-ordination. Most can use small equipment. There is no secure space with climbing materials and large wheeled toys for pupils to develop physical dexterity.
67. The quality of teaching in the reception class is good. Lessons are well planned, taking account of the requirements of the curriculum for under-fives. A wide variety of stimulating and well structured activities are provided within each session. Children's responses are supported and extended sensitively. Appropriate interventions are made to give direction and enable learning to be consolidated. Children are assessed by careful on-going observations. A simple baseline assessment has been successfully carried out. Regular formal and informal consultations, before and after admission, are well received by parents and effectively establish common objectives between home and school. Teaching staff and assistants work very well together and have a clear understanding of young children. This significantly enhances the way the children learn and the progress they make. In a literacy lesson, pupils under five were taught sound recognition by matching sounds to graphic representation. They had a lot of fun and practised forming the letters and saying the sounds. By the end of the lesson, half could associate the sound with the letters, although few could form the letters. Similarly, in a science lesson on the differences between medicines and sweets, pupils clearly understood the visual differences between the two, but found it difficult to express their knowledge in words.
68. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They like to come to school. All are well behaved. This is particularly significant as there are a number of pupils with SEN in the class. Relationships, with their teacher and each other, are good.
69. The Key Stage 1 classroom is spacious and logically organised, with clearly defined learning areas for the reception pupils under five. The environment is visually pleasing and stimulating. Overall, indoor resources are satisfactory. There are sufficient books for pupils to use and borrow. However, there is no secure area outside, with wheeled toys and large apparatus, for pupils to play on. Children's development of early computer skills is good, but there is a need for more software to support the work being done. The co-ordinator provides good, support and guidance. The teaching assistant understands young children well. Pupils under five are making good progress and are prepared well for more formalised work in Key Stage 1. The last inspection did not report on pupils under five.

## **ENGLISH**

70. In the National Curriculum Tests (SAT's) for 1999, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 achieved results in reading that were very low when compared nationally and low in comparison to similar schools. At the higher Level 3, pupils' attainment is very low. In writing, pupils are achieving below average results, against national norms, but above average when compared to similar schools. Attainment is well below average at the higher Level 3. Standards in reading declined between 1998 and 1999. At Key Stage 2, standards at the expected level were close to national averages and well above for schools of a similar type. At the higher Level 5, pupils achieved below the national average. Standards have stayed in line with the national trend for the last two years. Girls consistently achieve better than boys, which follows the national trend. Fluctuations in results at both key stages are attributable to the small size and make up of year groups. Results this year have fallen because of the small numbers taking the test, high levels of absenteeism and

the large proportion of pupils with SEN in the group. Standards have declined since the last inspection at Key Stage 1. They have been maintained at Key Stage 2.

71. Progress is slow in Key Stage 1, improves in Year 3 and is good overall in Key Stage 2. Pupils start their work in the reception group with well below average attainment levels but they make good progress and, by Key Stage 1, attainment in lessons is below average. At the end of Key Stage 1, it is still below average but, by the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in lessons is in line with expectations.
72. Most children have little or no letter recognition when they start in the reception class and their ability to read simple words is limited at the start of their formal education in Year 1. However, they make good progress and, by the end of the key stage, many use their phonic knowledge to decode simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words. More skilful readers are able to make comments about the story. Reading standards are below average for most pupils and well below for many. Very few are reading at the expected Level 2. By the end of the key stage, a minority acquire a suitable bank of decoding skills and read accurately with expression and understanding. As reading starts from a well below average position when pupils first come to the school, it continues to be weaker than writing throughout Key Stage 1. Higher achieving pupils are not being challenged enough to achieve the higher level 3 in reading.
73. Children start from a low level of speaking and listening in the reception class. Their ability to listen carefully and speak clearly is poor. However, they make very good progress in this area and by the time they are seven years old, many show increasing confidence in answering questions and predicting, for example about what happens next in the story. Most speak clearly and listen attentively to the teacher's instructions. A few talk animatedly about their work, using intonation to highlight a point.
74. In Years 1 and 2 pupils work with words to reinforce letter formation. They are beginning to make good progress in joining up letters. Their story writing is improving by constant practice, although many use limited vocabulary and frequently omit simple punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. Previous work is poorly presented and handwriting is ill formed and irregular in many instances and does not sit on the line. By the end of the key stage, higher achieving pupils hold the pencil correctly and their letters are smaller and of a more consistent size, although their sentence construction is poor. Ideas are not developed into a sequence of sentences and the vocabulary is very simple and not particularly interesting.
75. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in writing are in line with expectations. Pupils' writing is often structured, imaginative and clear. Main features of various writing forms are appropriately used and starting to be adapted to different readers. Sequences of sentences extend ideas logically, and basic grammatical sentence structure is usually correct, although sentence construction is still simple. Spellings are also usually correct; punctuation delineating sentences is accurately used. Handwriting is legibly formed and joined in many instances. However, there are few pupils who are clearly working at the higher Level 5. Throughout the key stage, although spelling rules and handwriting techniques are known, pupils do not readily apply these to their written work. They rely heavily on redrafting work to correct mistakes and handwriting.
76. Pupils' standard of reading has improved significantly. By Year 6, there is little difference in the standard of reading between higher attaining pupils and those of average ability. They read reasonably confidently with accuracy and expression. They know many more words and recognise their own mistakes. They are able to discuss the book and author and predict what might happen next. They use libraries efficiently. Most are achieving standards in line with national expectations for children of this age.
77. Standards in speaking and listening also improve significantly by the end of Key Stage 2. Most pupils in the Years 3 and 4 class talk and listen in a range of situations. Most can use independent spelling strategies to build up words and show an understanding of the topic "Under the Sea" by decoding smaller words within larger ones. Some are beginning to be aware of a more formal vocabulary and tone of voice. At Years 5 and 6, pupils are beginning to adapt their speech to the purpose, thoughtfully developing their ideas and describing events. For example in a lesson on how to plan a play, pupils demonstrated the difference between reported and narrative speech with changes in intonation to convey meaning. This area of the English curriculum is less well developed than others as most of the lessons are tightly planned, with insufficient time for much free expression. Nonetheless, speaking and listening standards are in line

with expectations overall.

78. When pupils are presented with challenging and interesting tasks, they are motivated to concentrate, share ideas and produce high quality work. Inspection evidence shows that pupils throughout the school found it difficult to concentrate on their work when the task did not match their ability. Older pupils co-operate well in small group discussion. Behaviour in lessons is usually good. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported by work well matched to their ability to reach the targets on their Individual Education Plans and they make good progress.
79. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is always satisfactory and often good or very good. Where teaching is good, positive encouragement and constructive praise motivate pupils and the level of learning increases. In a very good lesson in Year 3/4, pupils are taught basic skills for accessing words very well. As a result, there was clear improvement evident in how they spoke and read the text. The teacher used good questioning skills at the end of the lesson to assess what had been learnt. She used her time and resources very well, with a highly organised sequence of planned activities and a variety of organisational arrangements. This ensured that the lesson moved along with a good pace to sustain pupils' interest and concentration. All abilities were well stretched in terms of both reading and writing, and particularly in speaking and listening. Where teaching is satisfactory overall, the quality varies within the lesson. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 5/6, although the work was well structured and planned, the resources used were unimaginative and pupils' interest was not captured by the task.
80. Although use of a wide vocabulary is encouraged in literacy, teachers do not foster the use of correct terminology in other subjects across the curriculum. Similarly, good reading and writing habits are not sufficiently encouraged in other areas apart from literacy lessons. Work is often insufficiently matched to ability to challenge higher attaining pupils particularly in Key Stage 1. Information and communication technology is effectively used throughout the school. Pupils' progress in learning is not well monitored. Assessment Test results are analysed and general targets are set. However, there is insufficient individual targeting for pupils to effectively raise standards. There is no portfolio of moderated work samples to inform future planning. Throughout the school, learning is usually assessed well by questioning at the end of the lesson, but this is not recorded or used to inform future planning or target pupils' individual achievement.
81. All staff have completed the National Literacy Training, although the co-ordinator does not have a current job description or the time to monitor teaching and evaluate its impact on pupils' learning. Resources are suitable in quality and content.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with levels of attainment which are below that expected of five year olds nationally. By the age of seven, their attainment is generally in line with national expectations, particularly in number and algebra. By the age of eleven, it remains in line with that expected nationally. This is similar to that found during the last inspection at both key stages. The national test results for 1999 show pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 to be well above the national average for pupils reaching Level 2B and higher, but well below for those pupils with the potential for high attainment to reach Level 3. In comparison to similar schools, attainment was very high at the expected Level 2. At Key Stage 2, the standards reached in the 1999 tests were in line with the national average at all levels. In comparison with similar schools, they were well above average. Results from the 2000 tests show that overall standards have fallen, although at Key Stage 2, this is partly because of a higher than average number of pupils, in this small group, who had special educational needs. An analysis of pupils' work from last year confirms this, very little being available from Key Stage 1. There are no national figures available for comparison as yet for this year's results. However, lesson observations, discussions with pupils and an analysis of current work indicates that standards within the school are rising. There was no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls in this year. The national numeracy strategy is having a very positive effect on pupils' understanding, confidence and enthusiasm for the subject, although higher achieving pupils are not sufficiently challenged to attain higher levels.
83. Pupils are confident in using and applying mathematics in a variety of situations. They enjoy learning

games and whole-class sessions are particularly effective. Attainment in number and algebra at the end of both key stages is in line with the national average. This is due mainly to the enthusiasm and confidence generated during the oral and mental part of each lesson. The difficulties many pupils find with reading have a direct bearing on attainment in some areas of mathematics. At Key Stage 1, pupils add and subtract money and work with simple fractions. They understand place value and have worked with a variety of number problems and puzzles. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils calculate equivalent fractions and percentages using decimals. They multiply and divide using a variety of different strategies. A good lesson was observed with Years 3 and 4 where the whole class session fairly 'buzzed' with excitement as pupils became fluent with their times tables.

84. Shape, space and measures are covered in all classes, although less well. Very little work from last year's Key Stage 1 was available for analysis. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use positional words such as 'under', 'over' and 'through' with confidence. They measure in centimetres and work with litres and grams, and practical work has been done on comparisons of body size and weight. They tell the time, some in quarters, others in minutes and are beginning to understand what is meant by the unit of time called a 'minute'. By the end of Key Stage 2, they work successfully with length, weight, capacity and time. They have some understanding of co-ordinates and this is linked well with geography. They know the properties of two-dimensional shapes, they measure perimeters and calculate area. Pupils collect data using tally charts and convert this into graphs. In a link with physical education, pupils have produced line graphs showing the effect of exercise on their pulse. Pupils with SEN make particularly good progress.
85. Pupils work well together, supporting and sharing tasks when appropriate. Behaviour and relationships (both with adults and other pupils) are excellent. Pupils are positive, concentrating well and showing enjoyment in their work. Most are keen to learn. These factors have a direct influence on the present quality of learning throughout the school.
86. There are attractive displays within the school, which reinforce learning. Some link with other subjects such as art, where mathematics was used in the design of repeating patterns in the style of William Morris. The main corridor has an interesting display covering some of Escher's designs. Classes show a numeracy vocabulary which reminds pupils of mathematical words they need to learn. Use of ICT is good. Homework is set, but this is not always regularly done.
87. The quality of teaching is good. Objectives for the lesson are shared with the pupils and, in some lessons, they are able to state whether or not they have been met. The pace in most lessons is brisk and good questioning encourages participation, making the pupils think. Sometimes specific difficulties that pupils may have are used supportively with the whole class to reinforce learning. Relationships are very good and the contributions of all pupils are valued. A strength lies in the priority some teachers give for pupils to explain how they have reached a particular answer. This encourages pupils to think mathematically and some are very confident. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to mathematics are invariably good and most enjoy the subject. Real enthusiasm was engendered in many of the lessons observed. Although the overall quality of daily marking is encouraging, supportive and often diagnostic, it does not set individual targets for improvement.
88. The co-ordination of mathematics is good, the co-ordinator being enthusiastic and determined to see a rise in standards. She has begun to analyse test results to identify those areas of weakness through the school and this helps with overall group targeting. There is a supportive governor for numeracy who is involved in lessons. However, the co-ordinator has no relevant job description and no time has been allowed for her to monitor the quality of teaching and learning by direct observation. She has collected a number of useful parents' booklets, covering the different areas of mathematics, but these have not yet been sent out. The school has built up its resources, which are good, readily accessible and used effectively.

## SCIENCE

89. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, pupils' attainment, as assessed by teachers, showed that the percentage of pupils attaining the nationally expected level was very high at the expected Level 2 or above

and well below average at the higher Level 3. However, inspection evidence shows that attainment seen during the inspection was below average by the end of the key stage and there was little evidence of work at the higher Level 3. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at Level 4 and the higher Level 5 was in line with national averages. Girls achieve better than boys. Over the last four years, boys have been attaining above average while girls have attained well above. The results are well above average in comparison with similar schools. This year's results show a fall in standards due in part to the high levels of pupils with SEN taking the test and the small size of the group. There has been little improvement in science since the last inspection. Standards are still below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with national averages at Key Stage 2.

90. There is little evidence in books or folders of the work covered by pupils by the end of Key Stage 1. From a scrutiny of the work available, lessons seen and by talking to pupils, it is possible to say that standards are below what could be expected for pupils of this age and the progress they make in their learning is unsatisfactory. Pupils can identify a range of common materials and describe similarities and differences between them. They have grown bean sprouts, cress and seeds of various types. However, standards in lessons are below average overall. There is little understanding of physical processes and their knowledge of experimental and investigative science is weak.
91. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are in line with the national average, although some higher achieving pupils are insufficiently challenged. At Years 3 and 4, pupils have looked at teeth and dental care. They know how many teeth an average adult has. They have looked at how the heart works and the circulation system. Pupils in Year 6 have studied solids, liquids, separation, dealt with evaporation and dissolving and understand which changes are reversible and which are not. They know that light travels from a source and that when light cannot pass through some materials, it causes shadows, and the closer the obstacle is to the source of light, the greater the shadow. Most pupils can carry out scientific experiments to increase their knowledge and understanding and are beginning to understand a fair test. They know that if there are variables which change, it could affect the fairness of the test. They make use of their results to draw conclusions. Some are working at Level 5 in terms of their understanding of how materials change. They understand the constituents of a solution and why some solids are soluble and others are not. Pupils are able to express themselves in writing using appropriate scientific vocabulary. However, their use of tables, bar charts and line graphs to record their results is limited.
92. Progress in learning is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2 overall. Where they are able to carry out investigations that let them explore their own ideas, pupils of all levels of attainment often make good progress. This was seen in a Year 5/6 lesson where pupils investigated ways to describe the differences between solids, liquids and gases. Most could express their own ideas about finding solutions, make appropriate observations and use various and simple equipment to measure quantities such as mass and length. Some higher achieving pupils can suggest ways of improving their work.
93. At Key Stage 1, a scrutiny of the work completed and lessons shows that pupils are making insufficient use of data to draw conclusions and record them adequately. Pupils undertake simple experiments but are not provided with sufficient opportunity to set up their own experiments and ask questions about what might happen. They do not write sufficiently about what happened during their experiments. This is made worse by their poor literacy skills and the fact that the work is not always well matched to their individual ability, particularly at Year 2. Higher achievers are not being adequately challenged. There is little or no use of ICT to record results. Teaching support is good and pupils with SEN make good progress, both during lessons and in the work they have completed over time. Work is often well matched to their needs.
94. Pupils' attitudes to science are good and sometimes very good. They enjoy the practical work and carry it out carefully and safely. They increasingly show good levels of independence when they are allowed to work in groups, where they work well together, sharing equipment and helping each other. This was very evident in a Year 3/4 group investigating their own teeth. Pupils show good levels of concentration and are developing good habits in listening. Behaviour is never less than satisfactory and is usually good.
95. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. At Key Stage 2, teachers have a good command of the subject and each brings an individual approach to the task. Combined with good commitment and enthusiasm, this enlivens lessons and raises pupils' motivation and interest. In a good lesson, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, teachers'



planning is highly organised and high standards are expected of pupils in terms of behaviour, application to work, effort, co-operation and recall of previous work. Lessons move along briskly with good practical content. These strategies are effective in sustaining the interest of pupils, as in the lesson on solids in Year 5/6. In satisfactory lessons, all the above qualities are present to a lesser degree but, whilst learning objectives and activities are clearly stated, not enough thought is given to the assessment of pupils' work and the outcomes of the lesson in terms of what pupils understand at the end. These lessons often lack challenge for the higher attainers. All teachers and assistants are appropriately vigilant about safety.

96. Overall, at both key stages, teachers' assessments are not providing an accurate picture of what pupils know, understand and can do. There is too little monitoring of what pupils achieve and what they need to do to improve. At the end of Key Stage 1, teacher assessment in science showed that the percentage of pupils attaining the nationally expected level is very high. However, inspection evidence shows that attainment seen during the inspection was below average by the end of the key stage and there was little evidence of work at the higher Level 3. Similarly at Key Stage 2, there is insufficient focused target-setting and consistent assessment to challenge higher achieving pupils more appropriately to work at Level 5. Test results show that the percentage of pupils achieving Levels 4 and 5 last year was similar to the national average. This year it was well below. This was not reflected by the teacher assessments, which predicted that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 was well below and those achieving Level 5 would be above the national average. Teachers' assessment, monitoring and target setting of pupils' work is unsatisfactory and results in low expectations and work that is not best suited to pupils' ability. Standards of attainment have deteriorated at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection.
97. The science curriculum meets statutory requirements in terms of planning, although there is insufficient time being dedicated to the teaching of the subject. The co-ordinator has no relevant job description and does not have time to monitor teaching and level pupils' work to set meaningful targets. There is a need for more training in the subject among the staff. Science resources are adequate and the school makes good use of the local environment.

## **ART**

98. Overall attainment in art is in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress in the subject at both key stages. Standards in art have improved since the last inspection.
99. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, especially in drawing, and meets the national expectation overall. This competence in using dry media, pencils, collage etc stands pupils in good stead at Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment in other aspects such as painting shows an average range of skill and understanding. Three-dimensional work is beginning to be well developed at this key stage. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are achieving standards above expectations. They are competent at colour mixing and matching using pastels and have created a mural in the style of Monet. Pupils at both key stages experiment with compositions in photography.
100. From the time pupils start school, they are encouraged to experiment with paint and colour, to explore pattern, to work from observation and imagination and to respond to examples of art in the world around them. Children in reception have enjoyed using a digital camera to demonstrate man made and natural patterns. They experiment with different types of paint to produce a collage of letters in hot and cold colours. In Years 1 and 2, there is an increasing sophistication in the use of line, tone and shape. The work of artists like Rembrandt, Monet and Van Gogh is used imaginatively. Cropped images are extended with drawings and paint. They know how to colour match, blend and mix colours using a spray can on computer software. There is sound development of practical skills in some classes, although this depends largely on the subject expertise of the teacher. The oldest pupils in Year 2 have learnt to use a larger range of materials and show increasing control of tools.
101. At Key Stage 2 there are various examples of work using a range of materials. By Year 4, pupils draw from observation and are able to explain where the light is coming from in their drawing. Painting is pupils' weakest skill overall, but standards achieved are within the average range. Some higher attaining pupils in

Year 6 show a high degree of competent drawing, including minute detail of pattern and line. They work in charcoal, chalk and pastels. Some have produced good tile patterns in 3D in the style of William Morris.

102. Examples of good learning and progress include a clear development in pupils' observational skills and in their understanding of artistic elements as seen in displays of work by Year 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall and use the skills they acquire in other subjects. The use of information and communication technology for graphic work is beginning to be developed well.
103. No lessons were seen so it is not possible to comment on the quality of teaching of the subject. Other evidence was gained from a scrutiny of work displayed around the school and by talking to teachers and pupils. Teachers' planning gives details of learning objectives and careful attention to the development of skills and techniques. Teachers are not all adequately assessing and recording pupils' individual progress in art. Although satisfactory learning is taking place at both key stages, there is insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching, assessment and the standards being achieved.
104. The subject co-ordinator is committed to reviewing the scheme of work and plans the art curriculum well. However, she does not have the time to monitor the teaching of the subject adequately or the delivery of the curriculum in terms of assessment. Teachers are responsible for their own assessment. There is no whole-school overview to monitor pupils' progress. Consequently the co-ordinator cannot monitor progress effectively and assessment does not inform curriculum planning adequately. Pupils' level of skill in art and the progress they make at both key stages has been significantly improved since the last inspection when standards were below average.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. Standards in design and technology at the end of both key stages are in line with those normally expected of pupils of these ages. They generally make satisfactory progress throughout the school, although there are insufficient opportunities provided in Key Stage 1 for pupils to make their designs. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection, where design and technology was found to be below national expectations and where progress ranged from satisfactory to unsatisfactory.
106. There is evidence throughout the school which shows that all aspects of the curriculum are covered. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work in a good range of contexts with a variety of materials, although this is more evident at Key Stage 2 where pupils plan, construct and refine their thinking. In Key Stage 1, they study and design bridges and greetings cards. In Key Stage 2, they have made masks and designed ties, the latter linking with a history topic. Pupils understand some of the priorities in designing a cereal packet and find, to some surprise, that the least healthy breakfast cereals are those for children.
107. The school holds occasional 'technology days' when all pupils work in family groups on a variety of projects. This is illustrated by an interesting display in the entrance based on last year's theme of 'stories'.
108. Insufficient lessons were observed during the inspection to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and the attitudes of pupils. Generally technology is a developing subject, where the county scheme of work has been superseded by the latest government initiative (QCA) and is still to be personalised to meet the specific needs of the school. The school benefits from having a technology room and the quality and range of resources is good; they are accessible and used effectively.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. Pupils at both key stages make generally satisfactory progress in developing geographical skills. They are attaining standards in line with expectations by the end of each key stage. Good links are made with other subjects where possible, particularly literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress through work which is targeted specifically to their needs.
110. At Key Stage 1, pupils have some knowledge of the water cycle. An attractive display in this classroom

shows the findings from a 'house hunt' from around the locality. At Key Stage 2, pupils compare and contrast holiday destinations with England, continue their local studies, carry out map work using co-ordinates (linking well with mathematics). At the upper end of Key Stage 2, a study of rivers links well with the spiritual and cultural as the pupils learn a song in Hindi. However, by the end of the key stage, there is a lack of knowledge about other countries. Pupils' general geographical knowledge is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

111. As only one lesson in geography was observed during the inspection, there is insufficient evidence available to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Geography is part of a rolling programme and is covered effectively by all classes through the year. There is a satisfactory range of resources to support the subject and the school borrows widely, wherever possible, to supplement these. The school uses the local environment very well and pupils have the opportunity to extend their learning through regular visits out of school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

## **HISTORY**

112. Pupils' standards are well below average when they start in Key Stage 1 but they make good progress through the key stage and are attaining standards in line with national expectations at its end at the age of seven. They are becoming aware of the differences that time brings about. They know that the members of their families are of different ages and that is part of what makes them who and what they are. They understand that there is a sequence to growing old and are developing an emerging sense of chronology. Similarly, they understand how life was different in times past. They attempt to empathise and describe how it would feel to be a child in Victorian times from pictures of the period. Although most are able to speak about their understanding, many have weak writing skills and find it difficult to record what they know. Higher achieving pupils are not challenged enough in this key stage.
113. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory. They have a wider range of historical skills and have a knowledge and understanding of events that puts them in line with standards expected nationally of pupils aged eleven. Most pupils know the value of using evidence to draw conclusions. A Year 5/6 class enjoyed re-enacting the conditions present in a Victorian school and comparing it to their own. They describe characteristics of past periods and recognise changes today. A few are working at a higher level and are starting to select and link various information from a variety of sources to show how certain things happen. Pupils with SEN make good progress, particularly when they use the computer to collect information.
114. The vast majority of the pupils are interested in the study of history, using evidence and finding out for themselves. They pay close attention to the class teacher in plenary sessions and work well on their own, in pairs or in groups as required. Their concentration levels are high. Most are keen to discuss to clarify points of fact or interpretation. In general, pupils produce neat, well-presented pieces of work. Behaviour is rarely a problem that holds back learning.
115. Teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. The good quality of teaching contributes to pupils' progress.
116. Where teaching is very good, teachers' subject knowledge is secure and good questioning contributes to the knowledge and understanding of pupils of different capabilities, as in an inspirational Year 5 and 6 lesson where the teacher used role play to help pupils understand the implications of a Victorian education. In good lessons, teachers plan purposeful historical investigations, involving a variety of sources. The range of resources used makes a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' work. School resources are supplemented by use of the Internet, as in the Year 6 class when pupils used a search engine to find out about a Ragged School Museum. As a result, pupils have a positive attitude to history. They respond well to the stimuli provided and many are enthusiastic and hardworking. They are keen to put forward their ideas and listen to the views of others. They concentrate well and work conscientiously on their own. Planning is well thought out to construct interesting and challenging lessons, particularly in Year 6. There is also good use of pupils' own work and previous learning. Pupils are given work that they can do but that also challenges them to achieve higher standards.
117. In satisfactory lessons, teachers' knowledge and understanding is sound, although expectations of the pupils could be higher. Assessment is not used as effectively to match the work precisely to the ability of each pupil. This is a challenge in a class with three year groups and a wide range of abilities. The use of information and communication technology in history is increasing at both key stages, especially in the use of CD-ROM for gathering information and illustrations. Its use has deepened pupils' research skills and improved descriptive writing. Standards of work seen have been maintained since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

118. Standards of attainment in information and communications technology are generally in line with the national average at the end of both key stages. It is a developing subject and, whereas certain areas of the curriculum are covered very well, other areas are insufficiently covered. Information and communications technology was found to be unsatisfactory during the last inspection, with the pupils gaining insufficient experience. This is no longer the case and there has been good improvement.



119. Work is planned at each key stage to cover the various strands, with the exception of control at Key Stage 1 and monitoring at Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have used a program to 'dress Teddy', can operate the mouse effectively and know how to load and save their work. A programmable toy (the Roamer) is used in Years 3 and 4 to teach pupils how to give clear instructions and to introduce an understanding of direction. In Key Stage 2, pupils access information from CD ROMs and the Internet to find the answer to simple enquiries, they design wallpaper in the style of William Morris and 'paint' landscapes using suitable programs.
120. Pupils' learning is good in the areas of communicating and handling information at both key stages and modelling at Key Stage 1; resources for these strands are used well. Pupils are keen and interested in the subject and this has a positive effect on their learning. They generally co-operate well when working unsupervised in pairs and they take turns, concentrating and persevering on the tasks set. Pupils with SEN make particularly good progress. Higher achieving pupils work at their own pace and are not being specifically challenged to improve their standards.
121. The quality of teaching is good. Clear careful instructions are given, often to whole-class groups. Learning objectives are defined well and are generally shared with the class. Carefully phrased questions ensure understanding. The subject is very well integrated into the topics covered during lessons and is used very well across the curriculum. The co-ordinator has no time for monitoring lessons and has no overall knowledge of curriculum coverage, so is unaware of what is being achieved at, for example, the upper end of Key Stage 2. Resources are generally good, although those intended for controlling and monitoring are underused. The digital camera is used particularly effectively to record work covered in all areas of the curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

122. Standards attained at the end of both key stages are in line with those expected of pupils of these ages, although some areas of the curriculum are covered more fully than others.
123. At Key Stage 1, pupils sing and listen to music; during the inspection 'this week's composer' was Strauss. At Key Stage 2, they compose, using notation, and then perform what they have written. A small group of pupils performed an excellent piece of music, which linked with their topic on haiku. Pupils sing three-part rounds with concentration and enthusiasm. Throughout the school, their knowledge of composers and musical terms is limited. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
124. As only one lesson was observed during the inspection, no judgement on the overall quality of teaching is possible. The school benefits from a specialist room set aside for music teaching, but the quality and quantity of resources is poor, particularly those from other cultures. However, music features on the School Improvement Plan and the co-ordinator is developing a suitable scheme of work. There is specialist teaching available for the violin.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

125. Standards of attainment in physical education at the end of both key stages are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils' learning is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress.
126. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have experienced all areas of the National Curriculum and are aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies. They move confidently and thoughtfully around the hall. A very good lesson was observed where a video clip from 'The Wizard of Oz' was used to introduce the different movements used. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop patterns of movement, working together well. In a useful link with mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have produced line graphs showing the effect of exercise on their pulse. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
127. Pupils are keen and interested; they try hard and appreciate the efforts made by others. There are regular swimming sessions and by the time pupils leave at age eleven years, all can swim 25m. Professional

coaches visit the school to instruct in cricket, football and rugby. However, there are no extra-curricular sporting activities to extend the pupils' interests and expertise.

128. The quality of teaching ranges from sound to very good. It is good overall at both Key Stage 1 and 2. In the best lessons, work is planned which is challenging for all the pupils and good progress is evident. These lessons are enjoyable and adults play an active role. The indoor and outside accommodation for physical education is good. However, the quantity and quality of resources are poor and this limits progress across some areas of the curriculum. The school recognises this is as a priority.