

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Kettering

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122050

Headteacher: Mr A C Agnew

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Silcock  
21261

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 224933

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 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Northampton Road Kettering Northants
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Telephone number:	(01536) 512112
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Anne Randell
Date of previous inspection:	26 <sup>th</sup> February 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Pauline Silcock 21261	Registered inspector	English Art History English as an additional language Equal opportunities	Standards in learning Teaching
Elaine Parrish 9577	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and behaviour Care and welfare of pupils Partnership with parents
Marion Wallace 15011	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Music Areas of learning for children under five	Curriculum
Mary Farman 22452	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography Information and communication technology Special educational needs	Leadership and management

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Thomas More is a popular Catholic Primary school set in a leafy suburb on the western edge of Kettering. Because of its denominational status, pupils are drawn from a much wider area than the immediate vicinity. There are 209 pupils registered in the school, from the Reception class to Year 6, with rather more boys than girls on roll. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies for each cohort. For the current cohort, baseline assessment results indicate that its attainment is above the average expected for four-year-olds. Approximately eight per cent of pupils are of ethnic minority origin with around four per cent speaking English as an additional language. The main language other than English is Italian. Approximately 27 per cent of pupils are on the Code of Practice Register of Special Educational Needs, a figure above the national average. The number of pupils with Statements of special need is broadly in line with the national average and represents 1.4 per cent of the school population. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average at 2 per cent. Figures for attendance during the last reporting year are well above the national average, with no incidence of unauthorised absence being recorded and no exclusions for the relevant period prior to the inspection.

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

St Thomas More is highly effective as a school. Pupils reach high standards in many subjects by the time they are eleven, because they are well taught. Teachers make classroom work both fun and exciting. In turn, children of all ages feel happy and secure in the good relationships they have with adults, striving hard to live up to the very high expectations teachers and other adults have of their work and behaviour. The school's Catholic ethos permeates, beneficially, all relationships within it. The headteacher has outstanding qualities of leadership and management. He is well supported by an excellent deputy headteacher and a hardworking and committed team of teaching and non-teaching staff. Because governors work hard and have a very good knowledge of school life, in classrooms and beyond, they act as good 'critical' friends to the headteacher and his staff. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Pupils in the Reception class gain high standards in almost all areas of learning.
- Pupils across Key Stages 1 and 2 frequently produce much better work than expected for their age in literacy and numeracy, at all levels of attainment. They apply their skills well to other subjects.
- The quality of teaching across the school is frequently good or very good, positively affecting pupils' attitudes to their work and standards achieved.
- Pupils gain high standards in singing and performance skills because of the music coordinator's very good expertise and the importance placed on these activities in school.
- The school's sense of community stems from its very strong links with parents, the local parish and other nearby schools.
- Exemplary procedures ensure a high standard of care for pupils. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The headteacher and deputy head contribute in outstanding ways to the school's leadership and management.
- Governors know the school very well and are committed to continuing to raise standards.

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

- Provision for outdoor play for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding of physical education and art.

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

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

The school has made very good strides forward since its last inspection in February 1996. Standards of attainment in end-of-key stage statutory tests for seven and eleven-year-olds have risen year on year at nationally expected levels. They have also risen significantly at the higher levels, at each key stage. The school has persevered at improving teaching, addressing weaknesses identified in design and technology as well as

improving standards in most curricular subjects. The quality of teaching in physical education and art, however, is not as well developed as it is in other subjects. Pupils do not reach standards they might otherwise reach, judging from the high standards they manage in other subjects. In the Reception Year, children's physical development is constrained by a lack of sufficient large-scale items of equipment suitable for exercising important gross motor skills (for example, while climbing and balancing) and because curricular planning does not fully exploit the possibilities of outdoor play as a key adjunct to classroom learning. National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented very effectively, positively influencing teachers' planning and delivery of lessons, and standards achieved. The school has succeeded in its efforts to improve provision for higher attaining pupils, who are now well challenged by work set. Good links with a local secondary school result in the latter providing specialist help, which greatly benefits the teaching of mathematics and science in Year 6. Year 6 pupils also benefit from computer facilities available in the secondary school, when they visit for some lessons. The accommodation issue identified by the previous Report is not yet fully resolved. However, plans are well in hand for an extension to the school building and the school looks forward to the time when all its pupils will be housed under one roof.

## 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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	A	A
Mathematics	B	B	A	C
Science	A	C	A*	A

Key	
Very high	A*
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The table illustrates how eleven year old pupils show well above average attainment in English and mathematics and very high gains in science, when their statutory test-results for 2000 are compared with results for pupils in all schools. These findings are better than those of the previous two years. Pupils' results in English and science are markedly superior to those achieved by peers in similar schools and broadly in line with peers' results in mathematics. Looking back to the 1999 cohort, inspection evidence shows there were more pupils with special educational needs in this cohort than in previous years and, while some of these pupils did very well, their presence affected results, overall. Pupils' latest results, then, are notably better than in past years, in all three subjects, but especially in mathematics and science. In science, all pupils attained the nationally expected Level 4 and most gained the higher Level 5. Pupils also did much better than previously at the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics. This good picture is upheld by inspection findings. Year 6 pupils succeed well in these subjects and sometimes reach very high standards. Pupils also produce high quality work in design and technology, geography, history and music. Standards in information and communication technology, art and physical education are satisfactory, though general improvements in provision for information and communication technology are having a positive impact on raising standards, overall. Pupils are learning secure skills, enhanced through the support of an ancillary worker with specialist knowledge as well as through generally good quality support in lessons. Skills are applied successfully across the curriculum. Pupils' skills in art and, more especially, in physical education are not developed with sufficient consistency throughout the school for them to reach standards as high as in other subjects. The school sets realistic targets in English and mathematics. The latest results in English show that its targets have already been exceeded. The school is on course to achieve its target in mathematics for 2001.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are eager to come to school. They enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, overall, and frequently very good. However, a minority of pupils in the lower Key Stage 2 sometimes find it hard to settle purposefully.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils care for one another and work well together. They have very good relationships with adults.
Attendance	Very good.

Throughout the school, pupils' very good relationships with peers and with adults are characterised by good humour and a willingness to be helpful. Pupils listen well to their teachers during whole-class sessions. They co-operate productively on classroom tasks and are courteous to each other while sharing materials and equipment. At times, a minority of Year 3 and 4 pupils find it difficult to settle to tasks and concentrate on work in hand. Their behaviour can affect the pace of lessons adversely. Very good attendance levels signal pupils' enjoyment of school. Parents report that their children do not like to miss school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching throughout the school is generally very good. Almost all lessons (98 per cent) were of satisfactory or better quality. Twenty-seven per cent were of good quality and a further 43 per cent were judged very good or better. Eleven per cent of all lessons seen were excellent. In only 2 per cent of lessons was teaching unsatisfactory (as in a lower Key Stage 2 lesson, when inappropriate behaviour from a few children was not monitored firmly enough). Teaching in the Foundation Stage is almost all of good or better quality (91 per cent) and is never less than satisfactory. Similarly, in Key Stage 1, teaching is not less than satisfactory and is most frequently good or better (77 per cent). Across the school, strengths in the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills are owed to teachers' secure subject knowledge, which frequently leads to very good quality planning and lesson delivery. Good teaching is most frequently seen in science, especially that at the end of Key Stage 2 where teaching is very good or excellent. Similarly, pupils across the upper key stage reach high standards in geography and history because of teachers' very good skills. Pupils of all ages reach much better standards in singing and performance skills than might be expected through the expertise of the music co-ordinator, who takes lessons across the age-range. Teachers know their pupils well and plan successfully for different levels of need. Pupils with special educational needs progress well and generally do better than might be expected as a result of teachers' planning and the good quality support they receive both in classrooms and beyond. At times, some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties do not make such good progress because, even with adult support, they find it hard to concentrate. Teachers set good levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils so that these pupils strive hard to satisfy demands made of them.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A generally broad and balanced curriculum provides pupils with a stimulating range of learning opportunities in classrooms.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. They make good progress because staff planning and additional support ensures that their needs are met consistently.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Teachers' good planning and suitable deployment of support allow the small number of pupils learning English to be well integrated into all aspects of classroom and school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. A strong Christian ethos permeates the school. A sincerely felt spirituality underlies much that pupils and staff do. Pupils are taught to respect and cherish differences they detect in one another.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Extremely well. The school is a warm and caring community. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are excellent.

The care and welfare of pupils is at the heart of the school's work, being reflected in the school's commitment to building close and effective links with parents. Its curriculum is enriched by very good visits made to places of interest and by visitors to school, whose contributions routinely inform curricular planning. Excellent links with partner institutions (such as a local secondary school) provide high quality learning opportunities for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils extend their learning through a wide range of extra-curricular activities. In addition, some take instrumental lessons from visiting teachers, benefiting their own learning while adding to the music resources of the school. Music features strongly in school life and pupils' achievements are a source of pride for staff and parents as well as for pupils themselves. Curricular provision in the Foundation Stage is good, overall. However, planning for use of the outdoor space is limited in scope. The school rightly identifies this limitation as an area for further development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher has outstanding leadership qualities. His deputy gives excellent support in her management capacity and is an exemplary class teacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very good grasp of their role. They fulfil all responsibilities conscientiously. They work hard on the school's behalf.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school uses a wide range of information to monitor its progress in meeting targets and to set future goals.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school uses all resources efficiently in pursuit of raised standards.

The school has an adequate number of well-qualified teachers, suitably experienced to deliver the National Curriculum and religious education. Accommodation is satisfactory. As noticed during the previous inspection, some classrooms are cramped, but plans to replace these are in hand. School premises are very clean and obvious pride is taken in their maintenance. Attractive school grounds add useful teaching and learning facilities to school life. All areas of the curriculum are well resourced apart from information and communication technology and physical education, where resources are no more than satisfactory. The work of all staff members with posts of responsibility supplements the generally excellent school leadership and management. The head teacher understands and applies 'best value' principles to school services.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High levels of care for children are very evident.</li><li>• Good standards are achieved in many subjects.</li><li>• The quality of teaching is often at least good.</li><li>• Teachers have high expectations of children's work and behaviour.</li><li>• Children's behaviour is good, including when out on study visits.</li><li>• The school is well managed and led.</li><li>• The school welcomes parents' views and their help in classrooms.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Homework.</li><li>• Communication between parents and teachers in some instances.</li></ul>

Inspectors endorse parents' positive views about the school. They found no evidence to support some parents' views on homework-setting or parental criticisms that some teachers are reluctant to meet with parents to hear concerns and discuss children's progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Generally, children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is above average in areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. These areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development; communications, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. Rigorous baseline assessment, following a local authority scheme, finds children above average in speaking and listening and in reading. Writing and mathematics' skills, however, are assessed as below the county averages for children of this age. In personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world, pupils' attainment is generally better than might be expected. Their attainment in creative and in physical development is broadly in line with what four-year-olds usually achieve at the start of their schooling.
2. Children make good progress in adapting to school routines and expectations. At an early point in the school year, inspection evidence finds children well on course to achieving early learning goals by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1, in all areas except those related to outdoor exploratory play, where resources are to a degree deficient and learning goals not well identified. Here, opportunities for climbing and balancing and travelling under, over and through equipment are limited. There is currently no area for children to develop climbing and balancing skills regularly on suitable large apparatus. The school is aware of this deficiency and has identified it as an area needing development. Children progress especially well in creative development, however, particularly in music where the teacher's knowledge and skills are of very high quality.
3. In the 2000 statutory assessment tests, the proportion of seven-year-old pupils attaining at expected levels was well above the average in reading and mathematics when their results are compared with those of pupils in all and similar schools. In writing, pupils' results are very high when both these comparisons are made. This picture continues a rising trend over time. Over a four-year period, pupils' results have risen well above the national average in all three tests. Over the same period, girls have done better than boys, especially in reading and writing, such findings mirroring the national picture. The latest results show that pupils are improving in the higher range of Level 2 and, especially, at the higher Level 3 in all three statutory tests. Teachers assess pupils as attaining above the national average in speaking and listening at the expected Level 2 and as doing much better than this at the higher Level 3. In science, teachers' assessments place pupils above expected levels compared to all schools and well above the average at the higher Level 3. When compared to pupils in similar schools, pupils' attainment in science is broadly in line with the average at expected levels, but well above this average at the higher Level 3.
4. In the 2000 statutory assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2, eleven-year-olds attained well above the national average in English and mathematics at nationally expected levels. Results at these levels in science were very high compared with the average. Compared with others in similar schools, pupils attained well above the average in English and science and broadly in line with the average in mathematics. Over a four-year period, the performance of pupils in English is very high compared with pupils nationally; it is well above the national average in mathematics and above this average in science. The latest results show a continuing rise in levels of attainment with significant improvements at the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. Girls do much better than boys in English across this four year period, echoing national trends. They also do somewhat better than boys in mathematics and science. Results for 2000 show girls continuing to out-perform boys, overall, although boys' results are improving, particularly at the higher level.
5. Inspection findings support the good picture presented by test results at the end of each key stage. In Year 2, pupils build very successfully on earlier learning. They gain very high standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics and good standards in science. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress, overall. At times, their progress is much better than this. At the end of the key stage, pupils reach very high standards in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. No significant differences were found between the performance of boys and girls in

mathematics and science or in oral work in English. Evidence shows that boys do rather less written work than girls at times (for example, when writing extended stories or factual historical accounts), although this finding does not reflect at all on the quality of what is written.

6. At this early point in the school year, Year 2 pupils already articulate ideas during class discussions. They read task-instructions with comprehension (for example, inputting directions into a programmable toy in information technology) and write for a variety of purposes. Pupils across the range of attainment have a secure hold on the basic skills of story writing. High attaining pupils write at length and, after reading aloud to a group and discussing what might happen, can improve their stories. Pupils develop clear handwriting styles, using a joined script. Spellings are mostly accurate. Pupils deploy their knowledge of sounds to good effect when writing words they are uncertain about or when searching for spellings. They have a very good grasp of number. They use a range of strategies for mental calculations in whole-class lessons which all can explain when challenged. They describe in some detail the life cycle of various animals in science. They use a relevant vocabulary (such as 'pupa') and explore, co-operatively, the life cycle of the butterfly, in pairs on a computer. By age seven, pupils attain standards in line with national expectations in information and communication technology. They can manipulate a mouse to 'click' and 'drag' items across a screen (for example, when they colour in shapes in a paint program). They write directly on to the screen during word-processing and save and print work independently.
7. Year 6 pupils put forward ideas logically and decide about their work after listening to others' viewpoints and conducting tests on their work. For example, when designing and making solid structures in design and technology they can hypothesise about improvements. All pupils make some sense of difficult information and formulate some version in their own words (as when they employ a strict subject vocabulary to write in geography about how mountains are formed). They acquire a fair understanding of grammar during literacy lessons, knowing that they are expected to apply their skills across all subjects. Pupils write in ink with reasonable fluency, usually in a neat and well-formed script. They make good use of dictionaries and thesauri for spellings and for choosing alternative words. All pupils can multiply and divide decimals. They can work out percentages and equivalent fractions. Higher attaining pupils rise to the challenge of calculating value-added tax at 17.5 per cent on sums such as £407. Pupils thoroughly grasp what constitutes a fair test in science and can set up and conduct experiments to test out hypotheses. They record their findings systematically, using graphs and charts to illustrate their work. They reach satisfactory standards in information and communication technology. Their computer keyboard, word-processing skills are transferred successfully to subjects across the curriculum. They can search out information they need from CD-ROMS, display results from their own surveys on graphs and are learning how to use spreadsheets. Pupils are also learning how to access the Internet, researching what they need to formulate questions for pupils in another school. Their knowledge and understanding of information technology are helped by visits to a local secondary school. For example, in a class lesson on mathematical problems, a large number of machines combined with specialist teaching generated high levels of interest in applying new computer skills during the inspection week.
8. The school identifies pupils with learning difficulties at an early stage. Its individual education plans have specific and achievable targets and its good levels of support lead to successful learning in line with these targets, positively affecting standards, overall. Pupils with special educational needs in reading, writing and number make good progress. Frequently these pupils, including those with Statements of special need, do better than might be expected, reaching standards at least in line with their personal targets. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties do not make such good progress. Some of these pupils have severe difficulties settling to work and need consistent adult support. The pace and quality of their work suffer as a consequence.
9. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress, often attaining in line with their monolingual peers. As their knowledge of English is secured - for reading and writing as well as for speaking and listening - such pupils do better than their peers at times.
10. High attaining pupils are challenged appropriately. At times, their excitement generates a real sense of purpose as they concentrate closely on tasks. For example, Year 5 pupils quickly became engrossed in composing a story about monsters after a stimulating whole-class discussion. Throughout the school, pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills well to other subjects.

11. During the inspection, insufficient evidence was collected to form a judgement about standards in geography and history at the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach higher standards than expected and produce work of good quality in both subjects. In design and technology, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 achieve satisfactory standards, overall. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are good. Pupils build on prior learning and have a very good knowledge and understanding of the design and make process. Pupils in both key stages reach good standards in music. Particular strengths are evident in singing, where teaching expertise is strong. In art and physical education, standards reached by seven and eleven year olds are satisfactory, overall. However, pupils could do better in both these subjects, especially recalling the high standards of other curricular areas.
12. Targets set for English for the end of this academic year have been exceeded by the latest statutory test results. The school is well on course to meet its targets in mathematics. It sets its targets realistically, in the light of good quality assessment information. Information is scrutinised, with good attention paid to individuals' performance over time. This scrutiny allows staff to set relevant targets where there is cause for concern. Information is also analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision. Consistent attention to such matters has led to continually rising standards since the previous inspection, as teaching quality has gained from staff tackling identified weaknesses. The school successfully meets its own targets. For example, improving provision for pupils needing learning support has meant that those on the Code of Practice register of special needs gain higher standards by eleven. Similarly, a focus on closing the gap between boys and girls' results is bearing fruit, especially at the higher Level 5 in statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 2.

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

13. Very good attitudes to work and good behaviour are major strengths of the school and positively affect pupils' learning. The good standards found in the last inspection have actually risen. Pupils thrive on the very good relationships within their school and their personal development is carefully nurtured. Parents strongly support the school in setting high expectations and value the many opportunities to help their children become mature and responsible.
14. Very good routines have been established for the under fives, fostering positive attitudes to work and increasing concentration. The children settle down very quickly in their first weeks, soon persisting at tasks, in order to do their best work to a good standard. They readily participate in pleasurable and rewarding activities, benefiting from an ensuing sense of achievement. There was a ripple of eager anticipation when a volunteer came in to show them how to make wooden sailing boats. During a literacy session, a teacher's very noticeable enthusiasm stimulated children's own enthusiastic responses.
15. These very good attitudes stay with pupils as they progress through the school. Pupils enjoy school, showing real interest in everything they do. They listen and concentrate well and many resource their work with objects from home. The best lessons are characterised by imaginative and challenging activities to which pupils respond inquisitively and eagerly. Pupils' hands frequently shoot up in reply to teachers' questioning. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson on how to work out VAT percentages, pupils' motivation fed into the teacher's dynamic delivery and pupils became exceptionally keen to answer. In a Year 2 session on extended writing, some high attaining pupils responded exceptionally well to a demanding task, stimulated by the imaginative way the teacher got the most out of each pupil's writing. They buzzed excitedly to finish their story, saying "isn't this fun!"
16. Standards of behaviour are frequently good and, at times, very good. Pupils show a natural courtesy and respect for each other and for adults. They uphold school rules very well and there have been no exclusions in the relevant period prior to the inspection. Good behaviour is positively reinforced with praise and a smile and this good behaviour rubs off on pupils' progress in other areas. Occasionally, a disruptive minority in Years 3 and 4 (mainly, although not solely, boys) interrupts a lesson, affecting its pace and quality. Playground behaviour is good. There is a strong sense of harmony where pupils of all ages mix well. There were no signs of bullying or oppressive behaviour during the inspection.
17. Very good relationships extend throughout the school; all adults are friendly without feeling that their authority is undermined and pupils do not hesitate to seek help. They get on well together in lessons, supporting one another and listening attentively when others are speaking. Even the youngest Reception pupils cooperate in an assured way, reflecting the very good relationships they have with adults. Pupils

are encouraged to look after each other and to respect each other's views and they do this sensitively. In one lesson, pupils spontaneously clapped other pupils' efforts and one pupil was overheard complimenting his friend on a successful piece of work.

18. Most pupils with special educational needs work happily within their class groups. They, too, relate well to each other and to adults. Their good quality relationships are a basis for their exploring novel areas of learning and joining in with school activities. Most pupils take considerable pride in their work and achievements. A very small minority (mostly boys) in the lower Key Stage 2, presents a potentially disruptive situation. These pupils have less positive attitudes to work and learning. The school applies its behaviour policy effectively so that they do recognise when their actions are unacceptable.
19. Pupils develop independent thought and action from an early age. They are helped to involve themselves in routine school life during their reception year, when they tidy up after lessons and help teachers. By the time they reach the upper school, they increasingly take the initiative, setting up the hall for assembly and sorting out pupils' food gifts for the Balkans. Older pupils take these duties very seriously and are good role models for the rest of the school. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and work without a teacher's direct support. As they get older, they are allowed more and more to plan their own time and to research projects for homework in the library.
20. Attendance is very good and compares very favourably with national averages. Registration is carried out quickly and effectively. Straightforward procedures record and report absences. Parents strongly support the school's drive to maintain regular attendance and punctuality.

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

21. Overall, the quality of teaching throughout the school is good, with a high proportion of very good or excellent teaching. Almost all lessons (98 per cent) were of satisfactory or better quality. Twenty-seven per cent were of good quality and a further 43 per cent were judged very good or better. Eleven per cent of all lessons seen were excellent. In only 2 per cent of lessons was teaching unsatisfactory. This represents a substantial improvement since the previous inspection.
22. Teaching in the Foundation year is never less than satisfactory and is more frequently good or better (92 per cent). In fact, in almost two thirds of lessons teaching was very good or excellent. Teaching strengths are evident in almost all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. For example, teaching was excellent in a music lesson where the teacher's expertise and love of her subject shone through. However, teaching skills, knowledge and understanding in the area of physical development, whilst generally satisfactory, are limited regarding outdoor play activities. The school sees this area as one for further development. Learning Support Assistants add substantially to the quality of teaching and learning in the Reception class. They work closely with the teacher to plan and deliver activities across all areas. They also join effectively in monitoring and assessing pupils' progress and checking that findings are properly recorded to inform future planning. All adults are highly motivated, enthusiastic and sensitive to the needs of young children, skilfully organising a variety of activities suitable for the age-range. They are clear about roles and responsibilities and share aims and objectives. Their team work makes sure that children enjoy learning, feeling safe and secure at all times. Well-established routines teach children what is expected of them. The teacher's expectations of children's work and behaviour are very high.
23. In Key Stage 1, no teaching was less than satisfactory. Just over three-quarters of lessons were of good or better quality with 46 per cent very good or excellent. In Key Stage 2, teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to excellent with most lessons judged satisfactory or better (97 per cent). Of these, 59 per cent were good or better, with just over a third very good or excellent.
24. Very good teaching is found in almost all numeracy lessons, from the Reception year on. Literacy teaching is also very strong throughout the school, being almost always good and in some instances excellent. Teachers' secure subject knowledge in English and mathematics has a strong impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the high standards frequently reached in literacy and numeracy. Where teaching is excellent, all pupils reach standards well above what might be expected. This was evident, for example, in a Year 2 lesson when pupils focused hard on their story writing and found learning fun in the process.

25. In Key Stages 1 and 2, strengths in science mean that teaching was found to be never less than satisfactory and was more consistently good or better. Excellent Year 6 teaching, for example, generated a noticeable 'fizz' in one lesson as pupils consolidated their learning about gravitational forces. Music teaching, too, especially of singing and performance skills, is strong. The co-ordinator's expertise and passion for her subject communicate well to pupils across the school. This fact influences standards gained, most especially in singing and performance skills. Design and technology teaching has improved notably since the previous inspection, where it was identified as a weakness. In both key stages, teachers confidently plan and deliver lessons, enabling pupils to produce work of a high standard, particularly in the upper Key Stage 2. History and geography lessons were seen only in Key Stage 2. Evidence from these reveals teaching as at least satisfactory and sometimes better, again especially in the Upper Key Stage. For example, in a very good Year 5 geography lesson, a brisk pace and wide range of resources and artefacts stimulated pupils to work hard throughout the lesson: all pupils achieved more than might be expected in naming different kinds of terrain on a map of Russia. Art teaching is satisfactory, overall, with a very good lesson observed in Year 1. Here, good planning, based on clear learning objectives, accompanied a teacher's strong subject knowledge to make sure that pupils mastered the business of mixing and applying paint. More generally, teaching is aimed at ensuring that pupils' experience suitably varied media, though individual creativity is often lost, so that all pupils produce very similar pieces of work in some classes. Pupils do not consistently produce high standard work as they do in other subjects. Similarly, in physical education where, although teaching is satisfactory, overall, it insufficiently challenges pupils to move on through evaluating their performance and so improving relevant skills.
26. Where teaching is of good or better quality, teachers have expert questioning techniques. Questions are well targeted at engaging and maintaining the involvement of all pupils. For example, in a Year 3 history lesson, pupils recalled a museum visit in great detail, partly because of the teacher's brisk questioning during class discussion, though pupils also appreciated their being allowed to organise group work independently, for later 'brainstorming'. In such lessons, teachers' planning is consistently good, with attention paid to meeting different levels of need. Teachers' brisk pace signals their high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They also make such expectations explicit. They frequently reveal their personal enthusiasm for what they teach, seeking to imbue learning with a sense of fun. This was seen, for example, in an excellent Year 1 literacy lesson when the teacher led a lively discussion about a familiar story. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed correcting the many 'mistakes' she made in her sequencing of events, revealing their own very good grasp of the story's structure. In the one instance where teaching was found unsatisfactory in the lower Key Stage 2, inappropriate behaviour from a significant minority of the youngest pupils was allowed to go on for too long. The pace of the lesson was impaired and pupils correspondingly made insufficient progress.
27. Teachers know their pupils well and take good account of different learning needs, including those of pupils with English as an additional language. They deploy Learning Support Assistants well in targeting pupils known to have particular needs. They also make effective use of voluntary helpers to support individuals and small groups. Throughout the school, teachers monitor pupils' progress during lessons, giving good quality feedback to individuals who are thus spurred on to greater efforts. They also capitalise on information gained to plan or modify future lessons. In a Year 5 literacy lesson, the teacher used part of a plenary session at the end to sum up strengths and weaknesses she had detected around the classroom. She explained that pupils were not to worry if they had found something hard, since weaknesses would receive further attention during the week. This type of excellent practice markedly affects pupils' listening beneficially. In both key stages, teachers make very good cross-curricular links, as appropriate. For example, a Year 1 art lesson on self-portraits was related to a science theme, with pupils finding out about themselves and their growth since babyhood. Teachers also plan purposefully to ensure that pupils apply skills taught in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, across subjects, whenever feasible. They frequently build homework tasks into lesson planning, well aimed at extending pupils' learning in ways that interest them. For example, some Year 3 pupils had enjoyed researching information about the Celts and Romans at home for their history work and proudly shared what they had discovered with their class.
28. Teachers throughout the school plan well for pupils on the Code of Practice register of special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need. They and members of support staff working with pupils on the register have a good insight into pupils' different learning needs. Planning takes careful

account of these needs, relating them to objectives set by individual education plans. Pupils' learning targets are practical, clear and easy for all involved to understand, including parents and pupils. Pupils are taught both within their classes and individually outside classrooms, according to their specific needs. Class teachers' realistically high expectations of pupils maintain high levels of self-esteem, affecting standards achieved. In most lessons, teachers manage pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties well. At times, teachers in the lower Key Stage 2 have difficulty managing the challenging behaviour of pupils with specific emotional and behavioural needs whose progress is thereby held back. Senior management is well aware of such difficulties and, when practicable, provide additional classroom support.

29. In addition to some pupils with specific learning needs receiving extra teaching, pupils as a whole benefit from specialist teaching. For example, pupils in both key stages extend their information and communication technology skills as part of a planned programme, guided by an ancillary worker whose specialism is well matched to class requirements. Some pupils, similarly, receive instrumental tuition from visiting musicians. Such teaching improves these pupils' musical knowledge as well as enriching music-making in classrooms. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are helped by a support assistant with a good knowledge of library skills in choosing books for personal reading and for applying such skills to themes of work. Whilst such teaching is carefully managed to ensure a minimal disruption of classroom life, classes are at times distracted by the coming and going of individuals or small groups. Such distraction was especially noticeable during a music lesson in Year 4 when very good listening gained by a teacher was lost in a hiatus over whose turn it was to go to the library. Elsewhere, pupils left a literacy lesson at regular intervals for computer tuition.

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

30. Throughout the school, a generally broad and balanced curriculum caters for a wide range of pupil's interests. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils and good for those in the Foundation Stage. Since the last inspection, there has been very marked improvement, overall, in curriculum provision. Provision for design and technology, previously reported as a weak area, is now a strength and information technology at Key Stage 1 is now satisfactory.
31. Whilst there are real strengths in almost all curricular areas (notably in English, mathematics, science, geography, history, design and technology and music), areas of weakness are, still, identified. Thus, curricular planning satisfactorily meets the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000 in art and physical education in the key stages, but it does not extend pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as in other subjects. Similarly, in the Foundation Stage, planning for outdoor play is limited both by the lack of large-scale equipment, catering for aspects of children's physical development, and by the unsatisfactory use of outdoor space to meet key curricular requirements. The school pinpoints a need to improve outside provision for Foundation Stage pupils in its development planning.
32. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is effective. Curricular planning takes very good account of ways of utilising pupils' literacy and numeracy skills purposefully in other subjects. An imaginative range of visits is organised to places of interest and visitors to the school are used similarly as valuable curricular opportunities. For example, Year 1 pupils enjoyed hearing about the life and times of Christopher Columbus from a local museum visitor, dressed for the part. They happily interviewed him about what life was like 500 years ago.
33. Provision for personal, social and health education, including sex education and attention to drug misuse, is good. It is covered appropriately within curriculum subjects such as science and religious education. Key Stage 2 planning is based on a weekly lesson. In the early key stage, planning is carefully integrated into the time-table. There are very good links forged with the community and excellent links with other schools. The school fully meets statutory requirements for daily collective worship.
34. The school meets requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils identified as having special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need. Their progress is reviewed regularly to ensure that appropriate curricular provision is being maintained. All teachers plan a suitably wide range of learning opportunities within the curriculum for these pupils. Additional adult support both within and outside the classroom is of very good quality. It is carefully targeted at making sure that all pupils,



including those with greatest need, have full access to the National Curriculum.

35. Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is good. It is targeted well at ensuring that pupils build purposefully on developing speaking and listening skills in English across the curriculum, as key to their learning the literacy skills they need to access all curricular activities. Pupils benefit from learning alongside monolingual peers. Both teachers and learning assistants give good quality support where particular learning needs are identified.
36. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. All teachers work hard to offer pupils an interesting range of lunchtime or after school activities, catering for a range of interests. Activities include netball, football, poetry, German, choir, drama, world-music and dance. During the inspection, pupils attending these sessions were well motivated and teachers committed. Skills-learning was combined with an appreciation of an activity in its own right. Extension classes in mathematics enrich and enhance curricular provision. The school takes worthwhile measures to ensure that higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged.
37. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. A strong Christian ethos permeates the school. There is a sincerely felt spirituality implicit in much that pupils and staff do. Provision for spiritual development springs from a mission statement where guidelines are set for all subject areas. Headteacher and staff strongly re-enforce the mission statement in their own behaviour, communicating a common message. This message is presented consistently from the time children enter the school in the Reception class. All individuals are respected, as individuals, and encouraged to succeed. Hard work is seen as both enjoyable and challenging. Pupils are given time for quiet reflection during assemblies, in the course of lessons, during prayer time before the end of morning sessions and at the end of the school day. The excitement of learning is frequently apparent. In a Year 6 science lesson, all pupils were entranced as a class rocket flew into the air. In the Reception class, children watched in keen anticipation as their teacher dipped her hand into the magic number box. The school manages to integrate trust with challenge, the promotion of personal talents with intellectual curiosity. Older pupils show quality reflection when choosing a focus for their prayers, revealing very good awareness of the local community and wider world.
38. Moral development begins in the Reception class, where pupils are taught their moral and social responsibilities through explicit codes of conduct. All classrooms have their own rules. These are well known by pupils who know right from wrong. There is a strong sense of purpose, honesty and fairness. A strong sense of family begins in the Reception class and is nurtured throughout the school. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and helping with jobs such as ringing the school bell and supervising younger pupils. A strong sense of community helps older pupils grasp the meaning of citizenship, mutually benefitting home and school. In the informal milieu of the playground pupils' show well developed social skills. Mid-day supervisors, too, have very good relationships with pupils, encouraging the maturing of social skills through co-operative play. For example, they give perceptive feedback to pupils on their football skills during an informal game. Year 6 pupils gain in confidence and responsibility when they lead and start lunchtime prayers, in turn, delivered in the form of a rhythmic rap.
39. Provision for pupils' cultural development reflects the school's policy. School productions - such as Mozart's the 'Magic Flute' - channel pupils' growing singing and performance skills. Pupils' understanding of the wider world is promoted by visitors such as an African musician and members of a German orchestra. A mum demonstrated Chinese cookery as part of Reception children's celebration of the Chinese New Year. All pupils benefit from the visits and residential experiences open to them. For example, older pupils make an extended residential study visit to the Northwest and younger pupils visit a local farm. The school is beginning to extend pupils' horizons beyond the school gates through communicating via the Internet: for example, year 4 pupils send e-mails to Tasmanian pupils as part of geography studies. The school also promotes awareness of developing countries, raising money for a school in Tanzania and writing to pupils there. This link is strengthened through the school's personal contacts with the Order of nuns responsible for the Tanzanian school. Pupils take an active part in choosing which charities to support for collections made each year and in deciding how the money will be raised.

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

40. The school has a warm and caring ethos. It is a unified community, placing children at the heart of everything it does. Pupils' sense of their own security in a nurturing environment helps them concentrate and achieve well. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are excellent. The very good provision for pupils' welfare, support and guidance noted in the last inspection report has improved further.
41. Children and parents are very well prepared by home and school visits for pupils entering the Reception class. The school wishes children to be familiar with the school setting before they attend on a full-time basis and wishes parents to know that such considerations matter. Parents speak highly of the school's caring ethos.
42. Assessment information is collected regularly during the Foundation Stage and carefully collated during the Reception year. Similarly, rigorous monitoring and assessing of pupils' progress occur across Key Stages 1 and 2. In addition to end-of-key-stage tests at seven and eleven years of age, national English and mathematics tests are taken in Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers also monitor and assess pupils' progress in all other National Curriculum subjects, annually. Together with up-to-date records, this information is passed on directly to the relevant class teacher in the Summer term. Teachers are thus well informed of pupils' curricular strengths and weaknesses prior to the start of a new school year. Importantly, pupils' behaviour is frequently monitored during the course of lessons. For example, Learning Support Assistants in all classes routinely make notes on individual pupils during whole-class teaching sessions. Such note-taking provides class teachers with valuable information about individual pupils. The head teacher crucially collects and collates all assessment information, giving a whole-school perspective to trends over time. All such information informs future planning. Because it is comprehensive, it is a very useful tool for identifying strengths and weaknesses and indicating priorities for future development.
43. All members of the school community work together for the good of pupils. Parents and volunteers visiting the school speak appreciatively of being treated like members of an extended family. Pupils know that staff can be relied upon in every situation to give wholehearted support and sympathetic guidance. Teachers know their pupils and their work very well and they respond readily and sensitively to needs. They value pupils' contributions to lessons. During a Year 5 geography lesson on the Russian way of life, a teacher's very positive interactions enabled many pupils to join in discussion. Her praise had a palpable effect on pupils' self-esteem.
44. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language. There is close and effective liaison with appropriate outside agencies. All staff members possess information about pupils' medical problems, ensuring that the pupils receive any attention they need. Learning Support Assistants encourage these pupils patiently and with effect.
45. The school takes great care that child protection procedures are understood by all staff. Its detailed health and safety policy is checked rigorously by the Headteacher, governing body and caretaker. The whole school site is extremely clean and well maintained. There are excellent arrangements for first aid and fire drills are held regularly. Although school meals are no longer provided, thoughtful arrangements for pupils to eat sandwiches in mixed year 'family' groups make a pleasant part of the school day. All pupils are closely supervised in the playground.
46. Very good procedures promote good behaviour and the school functions as a calm, well-ordered community. A good behaviour policy is applied consistently throughout the school. All parents who replied to the questionnaire wrote that behaviour was good. Although there was no evidence of bullying or harassment during the inspection, older pupils told inspectors that it does sometimes occur. Pupils are very clear that they must report any such incidents to an adult and they believe their concerns will be taken seriously. Parents' written comments to inspectors and comments made at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection suggest that pupils' beliefs are justified.
47. Effective measures promote good attendance and parents know that they must inform the school if a child is absent. Although a few parents fail to do so, there are good systems in place, personally supervised by the headteacher, to follow up absences and monitor attendance.
48. Teachers work hard to construct useful profiles of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, behaviour and

personal development. Procedures for the early identification of pupils who will need extra help are very good and the school follows all the recommendations of the national Code of Practice. The school invariably acknowledges pupils' achievements, particularly when they have made efforts and tried hard. There is a good system of greatly prized headteacher certificates, encouraging pupils to work hard and do their best.

49. An important element of provision is the attention given by all members of staff to pastoral care. Members of staff aid pupils with special educational needs in acquiring independent learning and social skills. They take all available steps to promote self-esteem and self-confidence. Effective means of identifying pupils who will need help involves all staff charting and tracking pupils' achievements and progress systematically. Pupils move up and down the Code of Practice register of special educational needs as their needs change. Teachers track progress made by pupils identified as gifted and talented towards set targets. They carefully record and plan for pupils' success.

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

50. The school shows strong commitment to building close and effective links with parents, which positively affect pupils' learning and quality of life within the school. In the inspection questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting, parents' expressions of strong support for the school were almost wholly unqualified. Inspection evidence entirely confirms parents' high levels of satisfaction with the school's partnership policies. This very good partnership with parents, found in the last inspection, has been very well maintained.
51. The school has put considerable thought into communicating with parents and the quality of information provided is very good. When children first start school in the Reception class, parents are handed an informative 'welcome' pack and invited to school during 'Welcome Week.' Clear guidelines direct them in how to help with their child's reading. Letters and newsletters are written in a very accessible style, updating parents on current curricular and school activities. There is a prospectus and a helpful induction programme about school routines, introducing ways for parents to support their children's learning at home. Regular meetings discuss various aspects of the curriculum, such as the introduction of the numeracy hour, and consultation evenings focus on the progress children have made. Parents are given a very comprehensive annual report of their children's progress, side by side with the curriculum covered during the year. Although this report does not always give precise information about standards achieved, this information is readily provided during consultation evenings. The school invites all parents of children with special educational needs to discuss progress and achievements, provoking a very good level of parental involvement. In the questionnaires, all parents felt comfortable about approaching the school with questions and 92 per cent felt well informed about their children's progress.
52. Because school policies encourage parental involvement, several parents make regular commitments to help in classrooms. Many more help occasionally, by, for example, accompanying study visits, renovating the school kitchen to create an attractive resource for food technology and by developing the school grounds. Various activities would be impossible were it not for parents' and volunteer helpers' continued help and support (with activities such as pottery, cookery and weekend football clubs and cycle rides). Parents have already signed home/school partnership agreements and co-operate willingly in listening to their children read at home and reporting absences promptly. Parents demonstrate their interest in the school by attending open evenings, assemblies, supporting school activities and responding to the school's annual questionnaire, inviting suggestions for improvements. At times, meetings on curricular matters are not supported so strongly.
53. There is a flourishing and imaginative Friends' Association which gives generously to school funds, cementing very good relationships between parents and staff at social events. Pupils have benefited from the funds raised on their behalf and by the quality of relationships forged between home and the school. Parents are very appreciative of the support given by the school to the Association.

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

54. The headteacher has an exceptionally clear vision of how the school should develop and has outstanding leadership skills. The deputy headteacher, too, has a very sound conception of her own leadership role and gives the headteacher excellent support. Headteacher, governors and all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff are strongly committed to providing the best possible education for pupils. There are clear and specific priorities for improvement, meeting the identified needs of the school. A consistent approach to improving standards, in all subjects, is well managed across the school and has borne fruit in the significantly improved attainment at the end of Year 6 in the 2000 statutory assessment tests in English, mathematics and science. All teachers with responsibility for managing one or more areas of the curriculum discharge these duties effectively by identifying what is needed to raise standards. Improvement in the leadership and management of the school since the previous inspection is very good.
55. The headteacher has many excellent qualities. These include a resolute determination to raise standards, to ensure that pupils receive a firm grounding in social and academic skills and to run the school efficiently. The school has exceptionally well-structured systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Although the headteacher is the main monitor of classroom practices, all subject co-ordinators also monitor such practice within their areas. An important part of subject leaders' monitoring and planning is their analysis of standards in their subjects against nationally agreed

performance indicators, using this information to promote developments in specified areas. Monitoring is structured to meet known needs and findings are fed back suitably to individual teachers and, where appropriate, referred to in wider staff discussions. The school regularly reviews its aims and values in terms of the future. It is ready for further development and has very good potential within its systems to move forward.

56. The headteacher monitors teaching exceptionally rigorously, employing a very good insight into the strengths and weaknesses of subject areas. This means he can collaborate with relevant staff to encourage improvement in weaker areas. The result of this strategy is seen in the good quality teaching throughout the school. At the time of the inspection, the temporary shared teaching arrangement in Year 3 (put in place at the start of the term in response to an unexpected circumstance) was being carefully monitored and supported.
57. The school's governors are committed and supportive. They meet regularly. They fully share the headteacher's vision. The governing body fulfils all statutory requirements and knows its responsibilities. It has an effective committee structure. These committees meet regularly and play a large part in planning and shaping the direction of the school. The governing body is closely involved in agreeing both the school's budget and its improvement plan. Because of its interest in the school's achievements, it closely monitors the steps taken by the school to improve standards, acting effectively as a critical friend.
58. The headteacher has a very good performance-management strategy, geared to the professional development of all staff. This strategy underwrites the strong team spirit and high staff morale apparent during the inspection. It keeps channels of communication between staff and management open and functioning well. There is an effective induction system in place for new and newly qualified staff.
59. The headteacher, the acting co-ordinator and the governing body, together, manage very well the education of pupils with special educational needs. The school intelligently deploys its specific allocation for special educational needs. It prudently costs its budget. The acting co-ordinator is the deputy headteacher who is also a full time class teacher. She fulfils her quite complex roles within the school remarkably efficiently. The school identifies and gives support to high attaining pupils as well as those with learning and behavioural difficulties. This, too, helps in raising standards. The governor responsible for special educational needs gives a high quality level of support and assistance. The school's agreed policy for special educational needs meets all statutory requirements, closely following the published Code of Practice. The school trains its special needs support assistants very well, ensuring that the school maintains its very good provision.
60. The school improvement plan comprehensively prioritises the main needs of the school. Action plans cover developmental areas, which are prudently costed and linked to expenditures within the budget. Relevant time schedules and responsibilities are stated. The current improvement plan plainly uncovers areas where additional support would assist in raising standards. The school's clear aims have an overarching Catholic ethos, which parents and all members of staff respect. Its strong commitment to good relationships is linked to its concept of citizenship, striving towards equality for all members of the school community. Its social environment stimulates hard work, yet is an orderly community in which pupils feel comfortable and secure. Pupils learn well within classrooms that are most frequently calm, busy and purposeful. Members of staff direct much effort towards school improvement and the raising of standards.
61. The school has very efficient strategies for short and medium term financial planning. The headteacher works well with his deputy head and others with managerial responsibility to plan budgets in line with the school development plan. Governors engage seriously with the priorities of the school before setting a budget. Governors receive good quality financial reports throughout the year, allowing them to monitor expenditure retrospectively and make strategic plans for the longer term.
62. Overall, day-to-day administrative and financial management is excellent. The school secretary avails herself of available training to make good use of new technology and is familiar with finance policy procedures. Because school routines run very smoothly, teachers are able to focus on their work in the classroom. It is two years since the last audit of the school's accounting procedures. The very few minor recommendations arising from it have been successfully implemented. The head teacher understands and applies 'best value' principles to secure economic, efficient and effective school services.

63. The school has an adequate number of well-qualified teachers, suitably experienced to deliver the National Curriculum and religious education. This judgement is consistent with that of the previous inspection report. The school's commitment to the professional development of all staff is having a marked impact on teachers' morale. The headteacher links training targets to the school's priorities and to teachers' professional needs, identified within a staff appraisal programme. His policy has, for example, led directly to improved staff knowledge and expertise in design and information technology, where the previous inspection report referred to a lack of expertise. The school also makes very good use of the expertise that exists amongst its own staff to support colleagues, both with planning and in the classroom. A good example of this is mathematics and literacy subject leaders' monitoring of classroom practice, to give feedback to teachers. Well-trained learning support staff make their own valued contribution to the high quality educational provision.
64. Accommodation is satisfactory. Careful and imaginative planning provides good quality teaching spaces. Displays of pupils' work celebrate achievement. School premises are very clean and obvious pride is taken in their maintenance. A reception area is warm and welcoming and the large hall is well used for assemblies, physical education and lunch. The school benefits from a kitchen, specifically fitted out for food technology purposes. Some accommodation is, however, cramped; classrooms are awkwardly shaped and unsuitable for physically disabled children and adults. There is no covered walkway between the two school buildings, which makes access difficult in bad weather, so that library, music and pottery rooms are not well sited for the rest of the school. In particular, Year 3 does not have regular access to the library. Staff cope very well with these difficulties and, as the school has bid successfully for an extension to the main building, eventually the whole school will be housed under one roof.
65. The outdoor area is attractively kept by the school caretaker, with many flowers and plants that younger pupils help cultivate. The school has good outdoor facilities with large playground areas and a large field for sporting activities. These areas are also well used for environmental and recreational purposes. However, there is no suitable outdoor provision to promote the physical development of children at the Foundation stage.
66. The school has given much thought to its learning resources, which are now generally good and helping to raise standards. The school library is well stocked and attractive, but its position outside the main school building dilutes its role as a central resource. All areas of the curriculum are well resourced, apart from information and communication technology and physical education, where resources are no more than satisfactory.
67. All areas of the school's leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection and are positively affecting all aspects of school life. The school is in a very good position to make further progress. Improvements reported above, the high quality of teaching and standards show that the school gives very good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. The headteacher, staff and governors should ensure that:

- Provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage is improved in line with school development planning so that:
  - Outdoor play space is readily available for children to use as part of a planned curriculum;
  - Pupils can develop physical skills through activities such as climbing and balancing on suitable large apparatus; and
  - Curricular planning attends more to outdoor space as a natural adjunct to classroom teaching.

(Paragraphs 22, 31, 65, 70, 86, 88, 89)

- Teachers' expertise regarding art and physical education curricula receives attention.

(Paragraphs 25, 31, 128, 129, 168, 169, 170, 172, 173)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in an action plan. This is indicated in paragraphs 29, 163.

- The disruption caused at times in lessons when pupils leave classrooms to work with other adults.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11	32	27	29	2		

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	209
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
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
	2000	16	15	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	29	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (97)	94 (97)	94 (97)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	15
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	29	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (97)	93 (97)	97 (97)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	12
	Girls	17	16	15
	Total	26	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (81)	81 (84)	100 (84)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	17
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	25	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (81)	81 (84)	94 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	170
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Average class size	29.9

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	208.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	378122
Total expenditure	373488
Expenditure per pupil	1714
Balance brought forward from previous year	1880
Balance carried forward to next year	6514

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	170
Number of questionnaires returned	54

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	46	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	54	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	52	15	2	2
The teaching is good.	54	41	0	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	56	4	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	19	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	46	44	7	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	30	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	44	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	39	7	2	4

## **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**

69. At the time of the inspection there were thirty children in the Reception class. They had been enrolled in school for varying periods of time, some for only one week, because of the school's policy of admitting children at different stages over the early weeks of the term. Children are normally admitted to school in the September prior to their fifth birthday. Two very able learning-support assistants work alongside the class teacher.
70. An indoor classroom space and school hall (for some physical activities) provide very well for children's learning across all areas of development. Classroom resources are very good and easily accessible. Outdoor learning opportunities are limited. Plans to extend curricular goals through outside play are currently being worked out.

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

71. Personal and social development are very good. Children make very good progress in these aspects, building on the skills they bring into the classroom.
72. Consistent messages are given to children from the time they enter school about the importance of valuing each other and appreciating achievement. They soon feel that their own ideas and contributions are valued. Their teacher establishes a relaxed and happy atmosphere where learning is enjoyed and often found exciting. Children are encouraged to think independently and to behave sensibly. They work confidently alongside each other. All class members are expected to help with daily classroom jobs. Moral and social development are very good. Children are taught to respect each other and distinguish between right and wrong. For example, on seeing two other children tumbling over each other on the carpet area, one child informed an inspector emphatically, 'This is *not* what we should be doing!'
73. Teaching in these areas of development is strong. It is consistently very good or of excellent quality. Children respond very well to firm guidance from their teacher, encouraged by committed adult helpers who are very good role models. Children's happy involvement in activities and experiences was evident throughout the inspection week. They are able to use a prayer corner for quiet reflection, where they are encouraged to consider the welfare of others. Responsibility and independence are promoted by, for example, children marking a 'practice' version of their class-register alongside a teacher. Children sustain concentration for long periods of time. They answer questions with assurance and explain to visiting adults what they are doing. Their social awareness is growing appropriately; they write letters inviting 'Kipper' (a puppet) to a teddy bears' tea party, carefully fitting their letters inside envelopes to post. Their teacher has established a welcoming environment where everyone is made to feel special.

### **Communications, language and literacy**

74. Children reach above average standards in speaking and listening, language and literacy development. All build successfully on skills they bring with them to school and most make very good progress in their learning, especially regarding writing skills, which are often assessed as below average on entry to class.
75. Children enjoy sessions such as 'Show and tell' when they share activities. During these sessions they can tell their friends in detail what is of interest to them. The role-play areas of a baker's shop and home corner are used for purposeful talk. Children speak articulately and in a friendly fashion to visiting adults, describing the rules and procedures for their shop, happily sharing ideas. Their teacher's skill at motivating her class shows in their eagerness to join in activities. When they talk about Kipper the puppet, they reveal a wide vocabulary and, while recounting events unfolding in the story, show a good grasp of the way the events are sequenced.
76. Children enjoy browsing through books and most are already well launched into reading, especially considering they have been in school only for a relatively brief period. They realise that print conveys

meaning wherever it appears. For example, they know that packaging containing bulbs they plant gives information about how to manage the planting. Pupils' positive attitudes show in the careful way they handle books. They can pick out the names of an author and illustrator. They can find a title page and know the information on a back cover is the 'blurb', telling about the book's contents. They can predict what might happen next in a story after hearing a page or two and can identify letters and some words. Children are helped to articulate their observations by their teachers' challenging questions and lively approach. She paces sessions briskly: pupils routinely chant 'Izzy whizzy let's get busy!' before they launch into their activity groups.

77. Writing is well established as an activity. Most children can now write their names on their work, independently. High attaining children write simple sentences without adult support. Those of average attainment trace letter sounds and understand what they are doing; when necessary, they can change a sheet of tracing paper for themselves. Children have good opportunities to write for different purposes, to compose letters, for example, and shopping lists. A scrutiny of past work shows that by the end of the Foundation year, high attaining children have begun composing simple stories with beginnings, middles and ends. Average and lower attaining pupils write simple sentences with a fair grasp of the nature of the task.
78. Teaching is consistently very good. Language and literacy sessions are well planned and taught. This success noticeably affects pupils' overall progress. The teacher constantly extends children's vocabulary through discussion and the use of rhymes and songs. She makes learning fun and her pupils respond with enjoyment to her skill and enthusiasm.

### **Mathematical development**

79. Children achieve above average standards in numeracy and general mathematics. This attainment represents very good progress in a relatively short period of time, since most children were assessed as underachieving in Baseline assessment tests.
80. Children have a good knowledge of number. Their singing rhymes incorporate numbers and children learn well from this method. Songs such as 'Five little peas' and 'Two little eyes' are opportunities for fun as well as for fostering key early number skills. Knowledge of numbers up to five is well established during this early part of the year. Children can count five digits on a hand. They know the word 'numerals' and are familiar with counting ordinal numbers when working out dates for the class calendar. For example, they count "first, second, third" and so on until they reach the right number. High attaining and average children know and identify time hourly and realise what activities they are doing at that time (for example, they know when it is ten o'clock that they are busy in the classroom). The teacher skilfully introduces numbers via a 'Magic Number Box', stimulating her pupils to manipulate them in various ways. High attaining children add and subtract numbers below five: they know that 'two and two makes four' and 'three and two make five'. Those of average attainment can order numbers 0 to 5 correctly. They see which one is taken away when they are not looking. Children write numbers up to five accurately. High attaining children count up to thirty and sequence number cards well beyond this. They recognise basic shapes such as squares and circles and grasp simple money problems. For example, they can state that three two-penny coins equals six pennies. They swap sets of one-penny coins with sets of two-penny coins and have started simple addition and subtraction tasks, with adult support. In their baker's shop, children write shopping lists with a realistic idea of the value of money (they price cakes at twenty pence and small rolls at five pence).
81. Teaching is never less than good and is very good at times. Young children relate readily to their teacher's enthusiastic style. In consequence, they work industriously at mathematical tasks.

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

82. Children achieve above average standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
83. Their teacher organises interesting activities which, for example, teach them about the nature of resistant materials. So they willingly handle a house brick, chipboard, wire, plastic tiling, tubing and different types of wood, although they are hesitant about smelling any of these! They know that houses are built with

bricks and that mortar fixes the bricks together, although they use the more familiar word 'cement' to describe this. They understand that mortar needs water before it can be used. Children describe how tubing is bent to go round corners or is used to "go up and down". To cope with this activity, they are introduced to simple referencing skills, naming buildings in a picture book and discussing these with the teacher. They have a good knowledge of different buildings such as a church and lighthouse. High attaining children pick out igloos in a picture, reporting that polar bears belong to the same very cold climate. Children know about living things, days of the week, months, years and seasons. They talk eagerly about the changing weather. For example, after register, children work out 'sentences' for the class calendar and read these together, giving the day, date, month and year. They decide it must be windy because a girl notices trees are "wobbling" outside in the playground. A boy points out that the sun must be behind a cloud because it looks "a bit sunny" though there are clouds. Children know that the bulbs they plant will not flower for some time. Their awareness of their wider environment is enhanced when they visit a local farm.

84. Children regularly use construction kits to help with their designs. Whenever possible, they apply themselves to real life problems. For example, scrutiny of work shows how, last year, with adult support, children designed and built a cat-proof bird table. Their designs reveal a good realisation of what is involved in fending off cats. Children work confidently with computers and can manipulate a 'mouse'.
85. Teaching in this area of learning is very good. The teacher's and support assistants' expertise is augmented by visitors' wide range of skills and interests. For example, a school governor helps pupils investigate different types of materials and the school caretaker shares her enthusiasm for growing plants when working on hanging baskets and tubs with groups. Adults' expert questioning extends pupils' knowledge, understanding and vocabulary, as an integral part of what they do.

## **Physical development**

86. By the time they are five, children make satisfactory progress in physical development, gaining standards appropriate for their age. Considering their above average achievement in other areas, standards of physical development could be better where gross motor skills are involved. For example, when children are controlling their bodies during climbing, or when balancing on large-scale equipment. By contrast, attainment in fine motor skills is good.
87. Children are helped to refine manipulative and fine motor skills with a range of appropriate activities. They use pencils, crayons, scissors and paint brushes effectively. They roll playdough, shaping and forming features in the dough with simple tools. Children know how to mix ingredients either with their hands or with a fork when making teddy-bear biscuits. They shape their biscuits with cutters. Hand-eye co-ordination is improved by their matching and positioning shaped pieces of jigsaws and by their decorating work, where different materials are cut and stuck on to paper.
88. Children change quickly for physical education with minimum assistance. They develop suitable gross motor skills by skipping, jumping and running around the room. Spatial awareness increases in response to a teacher's clear instructions so they find their own space and move sensibly alongside their peers. They listen hard to a teacher, but do not respond to instructions in the large space of the school hall as well as they do in their classroom. Outside, children toss balls and ride bicycles adeptly. Adults support and encourage, but have limited strategies to improve performance and extend children's understanding of different ways of moving, for example, through the use of movement vocabulary and experiences to stretch children's learning. Children control their movements on wheeled vehicles well, steering to the right and left, guided by road markings on the playground. Adult helpers advise children on observing traffic signals and stopping at a zebra crossing, though insufficient use is made of direct teaching of this sort.
89. Teaching for physical development is satisfactory but does not match the high standards seen in other curriculum areas. The school is aware of the need to improve the outside area so that pupils have more opportunities to acquire basic physical skills. It is also aware that teachers' related skills, knowledge and understanding need extending. Relevant improvements are being planned.

## **Creative development**

90. Many children are already achieving early learning goals for the creative aspects. All should achieve them before they transfer to Year 1.
91. Music teaching is excellent. Musical enjoyment and appreciation are communicated to the children who respond with high levels of interest. High attaining children know that Beethoven wrote the Moonlight Sonata. Their teacher tells them Beethoven's full name, and the children enjoy the challenge of saying 'Ludwig Van Beethoven' and 'Johann Sebastian Bach'. They ask the teacher to play 'G-String' on the piano when asked for a favourite tune. The quality of singing is very good and children know many songs by heart. They sing 'I love my teddy bear', 'Loobi Loo' and 'With my hands on my head.' Their rhythmic response to music is very well developed and they show good control of pitch and pulse. They enjoy singing and do it very well. Real joy was evident as the children marched around the room playing their own instruments. They can follow guidance from a conductor. They listen attentively to a piano's rhythmic accompaniment and stop when the piano stops. Children show a very good instrumental knowledge. They realise that the Indian bell sound vibrates and can demonstrate how to hold and play instruments to achieve an optimum sound. They know that cymbals should not be banged and keep correct playing actions impressively. Children create music inspired by the stimulus of fireworks with percussion. Their compositions are of a very good standard, as they effectively simulate the vibrant sounds of fireworks. These high standards reflect their teacher's knowledge and genuine enthusiasm for music.
92. Teaching in other creative areas is very good. Pupils have opportunities to paint, draw and create a simple collage picture. They mix primary colours and explore colour, texture, shape and form to produce a 'Goldilocks and three bears' collage and paint individual portraits of themselves. These paintings show a well-developed sense of physical differences amongst themselves.

## **ENGLISH**

93. In the 2000 statutory assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attained well above average standards in reading and much higher than average standards in writing both at the expected Level 2 and at the higher Level 3 when compared with pupils in all schools. When compared with pupils in similar schools, pupils' attainment in reading was also well above average and much higher than the average in writing at expected levels. Teachers assessed pupils as above the national average at expected levels, overall, in speaking and listening while standards at the higher Level 3 were judged very high compared to this average. Over four years, pupils' results have stayed well above national averages in reading. They have fluctuated between being above the national average to being very high judged against national averages in writing. This good picture is sustained by the latest results, especially with regard to pupils' results at the higher Level 3, which have risen considerably, most particularly in writing. It is reinforced by inspection findings.
94. Results in the 2000 statutory assessment tests for eleven-year-olds show that pupils attained well above average compared with pupils in all schools at the expected Level 4 and at the higher Level 5. Pupils reached above the average gained by pupils in similar schools at expected levels and well above this average at the higher Level 5. With the exception of 1999, results have improved significantly at the higher level over a four-year period. The 1999 cohort comprised more pupils with special educational needs, including some with Statements of special need, than was previously the case. This fact had a consequent impact on standards achieved. As in previous years, girls did markedly better than boys in 2000, although boys' results are improving. Inspection findings uphold the generally positive picture. The school's identification of weaknesses in boys' results (and targets set to address them) is addressing a problem found, also, at national level. The standards that pupils reach represent an improvement on the previous inspection findings.
95. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain at least in line with their prior attainment. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress and frequently attain at least in line with their peers, especially in the upper Key Stage 2 when speaking and listening and literacy skills in English are well embedded.

96. The National Literacy Strategy is securely in place and is positively lifting standards, lessening the gap between the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils across the school achieve high standards in literacy lessons. They also transfer important skills to other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils confidently deploy research skills when exploring differences between vertebrate and invertebrates in science and formulate their own questions for future investigation. Pupils articulate what they do, readily expressing their own ideas and opinions. They read a range of texts with good grasp of content. For example, pupils in Year 1 quickly correct a teacher's mistakes when retelling a story in a literacy lesson and distinguish significant differences between this story and several others about bears. "It's not the *three* bears story we're doing" one pupil points out patiently. In Year 5, responding to a teacher's skilled questioning, pupils explain in a very sophisticated way what a poet is implying in a demanding poem about Beowulf.
97. Throughout the school, pupils at all levels of attainment express their ideas clearly in written form. Higher attaining pupils write extensively for a range of purposes by the time they reach the upper Key Stage 2, but lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, also work at levels better than might be expected. For example, in Year 6, pupils write correct accounts of the earth's movements, in geography, showing good knowledge and understanding of related concepts. In Year 5, a group of higher attaining pupils makes a good start on an imaginative story, their images well stimulated by large-scale posters of monsters and the earlier Beowulf discussion. Pupils in Year 1 create effective word pictures for a group poem, written out by the teacher, referring to sounds they hear around them. They distinguish between writing in this form and making sentences for a story. In Year 2, pupils across the class vie to propose interesting words or sentences for a teacher to scribe on a whiteboard, when re-writing a well-loved story about a lighthouse keeper. One pupil suggests a character "rushed to get the lunch" and another asks if "concocted the lunch" might not be better. These pupils' secure grasp of the story form is well reflected in their own writing at all levels of attainment.
98. From Year 1 onwards, pupils learn to form letters appropriately and to write in joined script. By the time they are in the upper Key Stage 2, they use ink pens, with fair fluency. They have good spelling skills and can refer to a range of dictionaries and thesauri usefully by the time they are in Years 5 and 6. Pupils also learn the importance of drafting work and of critically appraising each other's efforts during the re-drafting process. This learning showed itself, for example, in a Year 2 story-writing lesson when higher attaining pupils were spurred on to re-think their stories after reading their work aloud to one another under their teacher's guidance. In all, pupils frequently present work in a pleasing manner, taking obvious pride in a finished product whatever its subject content. They deploy word-processing skills for the full range of literacy tasks. For example, some Year 3 pupils complete an exercise on a computer to reinforce the class discussion on verbs, while others completed the task on worksheets. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs made good progress in their writing, using a computer, with the aid of carefully targeted, adult support.
99. Pupils enjoy lessons, being most frequently well-behaved and attentive. They appreciate the strategies by which teachers engage and maintain interest. For example, pupils in Year 1 were highly amused at a teacher's forgetfulness when retelling a story: they concentrated hard to catch her out. Year 3 pupils thoroughly enjoyed demonstrating their understanding of verbs: almost all wanted to circle these on a display sheet with a marker pen and fill in a 'gap' in a sentence with their own choice of verb.
100. The quality of teaching is a strength. It is never less than satisfactory, with 75 per cent of lessons judged to be of good or better quality and 50 per cent very good or excellent. Teachers know and understand well the National Literacy Strategy. They prepare lessons thoroughly and most deploy an imaginative range of resources and strategies to stimulate interest. Particular teaching strengths lie in teachers' skilled questioning both at the start and end of lessons during whole-class sessions. For example, in Year 1 a stimulating lesson ended with pupils illustrating the progress they had made in using the sounds 'oa' and 'ow' in a variety of contexts. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 found it easy to become absorbed in story-writing tasks, because their teacher skilfully made them aware of a wide range of various possibilities. Teachers are explicit about why skills are taught and why pupils should remember to apply them to other subjects. For example, in Year 6, pupils were given a timely reminder that science work would, in future, be checked for the way commas are used when listing substances in an experiment. In this way, the teacher explained, he would know how the lesson on commas had been understood beyond completion of worksheets for the lesson task. Across the school, teachers set homework effectively. Tasks are carefully planned to reinforce or extend classroom learning and are matched to pupils' different learning needs.



101. The co-ordinator has excellent knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and is enthusiastic about the benefits it has brought to the school in terms of raising standards. She monitors classroom practice regularly and produces detailed commentaries on the strengths and weaknesses found. These are a sound basis for feedback to individuals, but also helpfully provide the school with pointers for future developments. Resources are of good quality and sufficient to meet curricular demands. The governor for literacy is knowledgeable and well-informed about school practice through her regular visits and discussions with the co-ordinator. As a volunteer helper in the school she is well placed to observe practice at first hand and to talk to teachers about their work in this area.

## **MATHEMATICS**

102. In the 2000 statutory assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was broadly in line with the average at the expected Level 2 when compared with pupils in all schools. However, pupils achieved well above the national average in the higher range of Level 2 and did much better than this at the higher Level 3. Their results were also well above those of peers in similar schools at expected levels and, again, much higher than peers' results at the higher Level 3. Apart from a slight fluctuation in one year, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have gained standards well above average over the last four years. The latest results show that 55 per cent of pupils gained the higher Level 3 - a very considerable improvement on the previous year's results.
103. By eleven, pupils' attainment in the 2000 statutory tests is above the average compared to schools nationally at the expected Level 4 and well above this average at the higher Level 5. Pupils attain broadly in line with the average at expected levels, when compared to similar schools, and above this average at the higher Level 5. Results for 2000 show that the pattern of steadily rising standards continues, with an increasing number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Girls still do better than boys, overall, but the gap between the genders is narrowing over time and boys' latest results at the higher Level 5 are markedly superior to those of girls.
104. Since the last inspection, both standards achieved and quality of teaching have improved significantly. The school is constantly looking for ways to improve performance and evidence of its success is seen in the higher numbers of pupils achieving the higher grades, at both key stages, in statutory tests.
105. The school has set realistic targets for improvement and standards in the work seen suggest that the school will achieve set targets. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are well above average at both key stages and that pupils are achieving very well. Throughout the school, progress in learning is very good. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Overall, there is no significant difference between results gained by girls and boys over a four-year period, at the expected Level 4, although variations between each year's cohorts are evident. Similarly, results at the higher Level 5 also vary across the same period of time. Results for 2000 show a very significant improvement over the previous year for boys at this higher level.
106. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' standards are well above average. Very good teaching contributes significantly to this picture. A strength in pupil's mathematical ability is their quick response to rapid-fire oral questions. Pupils in Year 2 know and explain multiples of ten and five because the teacher repeatedly challenges them to explain their strategies. Higher attaining pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs add and subtract numbers orally under ten. Pupils know and can write numbers over a hundred. Learning succeeds, because the teacher constantly checks pupils' knowledge and understanding and swiftly paced lessons ensure that pupils' mental agility is well exercised. Pupils know and explain, in detail, the features of shapes such as cuboids and triangular prisms, perceiving how the latter differs from a cone. Pupils describe and recognise shapes in the school and community. They know that a roof is a triangular prism. A gradual extension of challenge in lessons leads pupils towards recognising angles and right angles. They separate a triangular shaped pyramid from a square shaped pyramid. Teacher's focused questions and high expectations help pupils acquire a good mathematical vocabulary. Pupils soon learn what a right angle is and where it can be found. Higher attaining pupils turn their own bodies to show ninety degrees and are starting to know the difference between a one hundred and eighty-degree turn and a three hundred and sixty-degree turn. When completing a turning shape pattern, they identify half and quarter turns of shapes. Higher attaining pupils are well challenged. Average pupils draw two-dimensional shapes and identify right angles correctly, in shapes provided for them and in the

environment. Pupils with special educational needs are set appropriate tasks, explaining and drawing, with support, shapes such as hexagons and pentagons. Year 1 pupils count up and down to twenty. They grasp and apply positional language well, as when they count on to 20 from the number *before* seven. Investigative work is well established. Pupils use cubes to measure accurately in straight lines and understand they need to use string to measure curves.

107. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is well above average, particularly in numeracy and investigative work across the mathematics curriculum. Pupils have continued to make very good progress in their learning, a fact that directly reflects teaching quality. An excellent pace and level of challenge underlies pupils' competence in mental calculations. For example, pupils in Year 5 have very sound knowledge of the seven and eight times table. High attaining pupils have a good familiarity with fractions and common percentages, being able to describe correctly both a percentage and a fraction. In Year 6, all pupils can recite the rule for multiplying and dividing decimal numbers by ten and can mentally multiply and divide a decimal by ten and a hundred. They practise multiplying whole numbers by ten, one hundred and a thousand confidently. Quick-fire questions train all pupils to respond swiftly and give lessons maximum attention and concentration. Pupils know the word 'cent' means one hundred and high attaining and average pupils know that 'percentage' means part of a hundred. With very clear explanations and demonstrations, using a hundred square, pupils gain a good grounding in percentages and equivalent fractions. They convert fractions into percentages and percentages into fractions. Their high motivation reflects their teachers' dynamic delivery, leading to very good behaviour. Resources are well chosen to structure real-life problem-solving situations. Pupils can explain that 25 per cent off a compact disc that costs ten pounds will save them £2.50. Higher attaining pupils calculate VAT at 17.5 per cent on certain goods.
108. Excellent liaison with the local secondary school significantly affects pupils' enjoyment of computers and mathematics. In a visit to the school during the inspection, Year 6 pupils developed speed and competence with a computer and mental agility with simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and problem solving activities. Pupils appreciate a fast pace and the very good feedback, preparing them in an excellent manner for secondary education via an experience worthwhile in its own right. All pupils are highly motivated by difficult tasks. Even lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs rise to difficulties very well and work hard to improve their individual scores. In Year 6, pupils race to their seats to calculate the VAT on goods worth £407.
109. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. It is most frequently very good. Teaching is consistently very good at Key Stage 1 and in the upper Key Stage 2. At times, teaching is also very good in the lower Key Stage 2. For example, in a Year 3 lesson a teacher's planning and deployment of classroom assistants were well matched to different levels of learning need, so that most pupils made good progress in understanding how to 'read' digital and analogue clocks and complete set tasks. Where teaching is very good, teachers employ skilled questioning, well aimed at testing pupils' achievement and helping them to advance. Work is marked regularly and homework effectively supports lessons.
110. The National Numeracy Strategy is fully in place. Pupils are given good opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to other subjects. For example, they use graphs and charts in science and in geography and design and technology, to display information.
111. Teachers and pupils enjoy mathematics. Pupils' enthusiasm shows itself in the assured way they tackle the hardest work and respond swiftly to mental arithmetic questions. Pupils' eagerness to learn reflects their teachers' commitment and frequently expert delivery of mathematics.
112. The co-ordinator is highly motivated and committed to improving standards. His drive makes a significant mark on mathematics' teaching in the school. He sets aside time to monitor classroom practice regularly and checks in teachers' planning whether curricular requirements are fulfilled. Resources are good and sufficient to meet curricular demands.

## **SCIENCE**

113. Teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that pupils reached above the average for pupils in all schools at the expected Level 2 and well above this average at the higher Level 3. Compared with

results for pupils in similar schools, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that of their peers at expected levels and well above this at the higher Level 3.

114. In the 2000 statutory assessment tests for eleven-year olds, pupils' attainment was very high against that of pupils in all and similar schools at the expected Level 4. Pupils also did well at the higher Level 5, with 72 per cent achieving at this level. This outcome represents a considerable improvement on the previous year. Over a period of four years, pupils' attainment has varied with a distinct downward trend evident in 1999. In that year, there were more pupils with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, than in previous years. Over this same four year period, girls did rather better than boys in the school generally, although there are variations between cohorts. Whilst boys' results have continued to rise at both levels of attainment, girls did better than boys at the higher level in the latest tests.
115. Current inspection findings support assessment and test results, revealing a very noticeable gain in standards since the previous inspection, when seven and eleven-year-olds attained broadly in line with their peers.
116. Current inspection findings show, too, that standards are above national expectations for seven-year-olds and well above for pupils of eleven years of age. The evident challenge of planned work and frequently good or very good teaching contribute markedly to the high standards pupils achieve. The school analyses all assessment results carefully and closely studies trends in attainment. This in itself is leading to raised standards at both key stages. The school correctly emphasises the investigative element of science at both key stages. Such a policy contributes further to improved attainment, progress and raised standards.
117. In Year 1, pupils have a good insight into how animals and people change as they grow. They study photographs closely in order to decide how babies change to become adults. In their responses to the teacher's skilled questioning, pupils reveal a good capacity to describe simple life cycles. In Year 2, pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of the life cycles of frogs, butterflies, chickens and humans and an above average grasp of appropriate vocabulary. For example, one pupil explains succinctly how a caterpillar evolves into a pupa. All pupils know that the roots of the bulbs they plant will grow before the shoots begin to push through the soil, informing the teacher with correct terminology. They apply literacy skills well in their science writing, using correct scientific vocabulary. Across the key stage, pupils learn to make relevant links with other subjects. For example, they record findings on block graphs, while meals planned in food technology are informed by their knowledge of healthy foods.
118. In Year 3, pupils can identify different teeth accurately from diagrams in books. More than two-thirds of the class can label their own chart without adult help. They can identify relevant information to read out to the class and do this confidently. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils distinguish between vertebrates and invertebrates. They know the purpose of a skeleton and realise that muscles are needed to make bones move. They recognise how invertebrates move and are adapted to their environments. For example pupils are able to explain how a worm's skin helps it move through soil. Year 5 pupils know the different mechanisms for seed dispersal and the importance of the right conditions to ensure successful propagation. They are amazed at what has happened in one week to the pea seeds they soaked in a previous lesson. When recapping on this, they use relevant vocabulary to describe how different seeds behave. For example, they know which kinds will be borne by the wind and which rely on birds for dispersal. Year 6 pupils have a well above average grasp of magnetism and magnetic fields of force. They recognise the meaning of a magnetic force and know that the earth is a large magnetic force. They understand gravitational force and enthusiastically recall previous experiments, using a scientific vocabulary. All pupils know that weight is measured in Newtons and mass in kilograms. They aptly define friction as: "when two bodies rub together".
119. Work samples show how pupils take increasing responsibility for planning, organising and setting up their own experiments as they move through the school. So, pupils devise and carry out fair tests, list processes and findings, and record observations accurately, using diagrams and graphs by the time they are in the upper Key Stage 2. They link effectively to work in geography when studying processes of evaporation and condensation, for example. Pupils' ability to record written findings is well above what might be expected for this age by the end of the key stage.

120. The quality of learning and progress is good throughout the school. It is very good in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain at least in line with their prior attainment. Those learning English as an additional language also make good progress and attain in line with their peers. At times, they do better than this. Higher attaining pupils make very good progress through the challenges they are given. All pupils acquire a sound repertoire of scientific skills and concepts.
121. Because pupils in all classes thoroughly enjoy their work, it is usually of high quality. Work-attitudes are, correspondingly, almost always consistently good. Year 6 pupils, especially, have very good attitudes to their work. All pupils have a high level of motivation. They concentrate very well, work hard and take considerable pride in what they achieve. Year 6 pupils collaborate very well together, learning to share ideas and reason logically. Pupils are frequently excited by the investigative work they undertake. For example, there is great excitement amongst these older pupils when they make and launch a water rocket as the culmination of a series of lessons. This excitement does not detract from lessons because pupils still listen attentively, follow instructions and behave in a responsible and sensible manner. Pupils pay due attention to safety issues and take turns fairly.
122. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to satisfactory, but is most frequently good or better (86 per cent of lessons seen). Teachers provide good role models for the subject. In all lessons, teachers set relevant learning objectives and plan extension activities for higher attaining pupils. The hallmarks of good or better teaching are the quality of teachers' intervention, questioning, discussion and challenge. Pupils across the range of attainments are given ample opportunities to discuss their findings. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and can make good links to other subjects; for example, producing computer-generated graphs and charts.
123. The school policy is based on a national science scheme of work. It is an excellent resource for teachers, helping them sequence work so that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are built on successively. Planning and organisation of the subject comply with guidelines in the new National Curriculum. The co-ordinator monitors all planning, regularly checks pupils' work and follows the school's policy on monitoring teaching to good effect. Pupils and teachers exploit good resources effectively. Accommodation is adequate for school needs. Staff are able to maximise learning opportunities by visiting the school grounds and local area. The school makes very good provision for the teaching of higher attaining pupils by using expertise from a neighbouring secondary school.

## **ART**

124. At the end of each key stage, pupils of seven and eleven years of age reach satisfactory standards, in line with national expectations. This finding is similar to that of the previous Report. In some classes, pupils respond particularly well to a teacher's subject confidence and enthusiasm and their work is better than satisfactory. Only two lessons in Key Stage 1 and one in Key Stage 2 were observed because of time-tabling arrangements during the half-term of the inspection, when emphasis was placed more on design and technology than on art. Judgements are, correspondingly, based on these observations, on pupils' work sampled from across the school and on work displayed in classrooms and around the building.
125. Year 1 pupils build successfully on skills acquired in the Reception year. They handle a range of brushes with dexterity, mixing their own colours for self-portraits. Pupils see the need to experiment at mixing a skin colour to match their own and do this carefully. They study photographs of themselves, dressed up in chosen costumes, to check details of dress, concentrating assiduously to reproduce a desired effect. Across all levels of attainment, pupils' work is frequently of a good standard: they are quickly engrossed in art activity. This is owed to the teacher's thorough introductions to tasks, matched to pupils' experiences and aptly targeted at fostering suitable skills. Year 2 pupils enjoy handling flower bulbs and discussing their shape and colour as part of a drawing task for close observational work. Through the teacher's skilled questioning and probing, pupils modify their work as the lesson proceeds. They experiment to achieve different qualities of line and a greater fidelity in recording what they see, as they are encouraged to look at objects more closely, although their efforts are somewhat constrained by a limited choice of different densities of drawing pencils. In Year 6, pupils work with varying success to copy black and white reproductions of portraits by Renoir, van Gogh or Picasso. Almost all know how to set out the proportions of whatever they are copying to make best use of their paper. They use charcoal well and some are starting to build up 'form' by contrasting light and dark shapes as well as through the

use of line. Most, recognisably, copy prints they study by the end of a lesson. Some are potentially of good quality.

126. Pupils enjoy their art lessons. They listen very attentively to teachers' explanations of the work to be done and are confident both in answering questions and posing their own. For example, in Year 6, pupils are intrigued by the wide range of reproductions of famous paintings the teacher uses to illustrate points about the use of light and shade. They can understand what sources of light have been used (as in candlelight) and some can suggest where it is placed in relation to the sitter. At the end of the lesson, pupils show a good ability to critically appraise each other's studies of famous portraits and the degree of success individuals have achieved in handling light and shade.
127. Pupils use a wide range of media for two-dimensional work as they move through the school. In addition, older pupils develop good skills in clay work under the expert tuition of a volunteer helper. They make realistic 'gargoyles' and build large-scale 'planters', attractively incised with tools or decorated with clay motifs.
128. In the three lessons observed, teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. Where teaching is good or better, teachers convey their enthusiasm for the subject and engage pupils productively in discussion, positively affecting pupils' understanding of the skills they practise. This was evident in Year 1, when the difference between painted portraits and photographs was explored. Frequently, teaching links effectively to other subjects, especially history. Thus, a display of Year 4 pupils' work shows very creditable efforts at handling watercolour paints, with fine brushes, to reproduce portraits of famous people in Tudor times. It is very evident that pupils handled the challenging watercolour medium sensitively, paying careful attention to facial features and details of dress. At times, though, it is equally evident that pupils' personal involvement and experiments with media are restricted by teachers' expectations that all members of a class will work in very similar ways, so that individuality is lost.
129. Curriculum 2000 is being fully implemented with appropriate account taken of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. Good use is made of sketch-books for practising new skills and keeping a record of work over time. Pupils are encouraged to use these seriously and to care about the finished product. However, pupils work mostly on quite a small scale for two-dimensional work (often apparently matched to the size of sketch-book pages). In addition, in some classes there is little sense of individuals developing their own 'voice' in visual terms and making choices about what they do. So, pupils tend to use the same sized paper and the same range of media, with the result that work, whilst carefully executed and often creditable, loses its impact as a form of creative expression. Pupils do not, on the whole, reach the high standards frequently to be seen in other subjects, although the potential for improvement is evident.
130. Currently, the subject is without a co-ordinator and the headteacher is acting in a 'care-taking' capacity. Nevertheless, classroom practice continues to be monitored in line with school policy. Teachers' planning is also checked regularly to make sure that curricular requirements are fulfilled. Resources are generally of good quality and sufficient to meet these requirements, although pupils are restricted, at times, in the range of tools they can use.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

131. There is a very significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection. At seven years of age, pupils reach satisfactory standards, overall. By age eleven, pupils attain above national expectations and make good progress in developing skills and knowledge. This is a direct result of improvements to the planned provision throughout the school and to the quality of teaching.
132. By age seven, pupils make carefully labelled plans for products. They discuss their plans with understanding and evaluate the finished products, showing a reasonable grasp of the task set. For example, pupils experiment with different methods of joining materials when they make stick puppets. Building productively on previous learning, they apply their knowledge of the properties of materials to their work. This links well to work in science.
133. Year 4 pupils make detailed plans for designing a Tudor style chair for a rich or poor person. Again, exploiting previous knowledge and skills, they evaluate their plans to good effect to consider whether they

might meet the requirements of the person concerned. Discussion around tables shows that pupils have a very secure understanding of such evaluation. Pupils select suitable materials, explore their properties with regard to use and cut and shape carefully. Pupils in Year 5 demonstrate a good understanding of how to set about marketing a product (in this instance, a biscuit) and are stimulated by a class discussion in to realising their ideas in a poster advertising campaign. Year 6 pupils understand how to make prototypes and apply this knowledge successfully to their work. For example, they base their ideas for a large-scale shelter on earlier, smaller prototypes. They test and amend their designs while they work, referring regularly to their original designs. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least good progress in learning how to use and apply their knowledge of structures, so connecting effectively with prior science work.

134. The quality of learning is good at both key stages. Pupils show an increasing depth of insight into the design and making processes as they move through the school. Their written evaluations show a very marked gain in their realising the importance of accurate design and careful planning. Through such means, pupils use their literacy skills to good effect. Pupils with special educational needs receive good and effective support from staff. They learn well and make good progress.
135. All pupils take a great deal of pride in their work. Throughout the school, they show much interest in the subject. They are eager to apply new skills to problems. The quality of work on display is good. Pupils co-operate well together in lessons, collaborating as necessary. They attend well to their teachers and to each other's ideas and suggestions.
136. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was mainly good. This is a substantial improvement on findings of the previous inspection. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are confident in their teaching. This helps them to explain work comprehensively and to have high expectations of pupils' response. Teachers explore lesson materials and develop new learning of skills and concepts through expert questioning.
137. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. A very helpful policy covers all elements of the new National Curriculum for design and technology. The school uses national guidelines as the basis for its scheme of work. This marks a considerable improvement since the previous inspection and is having a real impact on standards.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

138. During the course of the inspection, it was possible to see only one lesson in geography at Key Stage 2. Evidence for judgements is, therefore, taken from the one lesson seen, from discussion with the subject co-ordinator, from scrutiny of teachers' planning and work on display and from samples of pupils' previous written work. This evidence indicates, overall, that, by the age of eleven, pupils' attainment exceeds national expectations. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
139. Pupils in Year 2 show a growing understanding of the relationships between places on a map. They know where Kettering is in relationship to Northampton and London and have a growing awareness of industrial change. Samples of work provide good illustrations of pupils' ability to compare their local area to places further afield. They realise how weather fluctuations affect the way people live. Evidence indicates that pupils attain at least in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1.
140. Year 5 pupils have above average skills in locating different areas on a map of Russia. They quickly see that the United States of America is Russia's nearest neighbour across the Bering Strait. Most pupils show above average grasp of the way climate and position influence people's occupations. They compare and contrast major industries in Russia with those of France and England. Samples of work further illustrate above average attainment in Year 6. This is evident in pupils' awareness of how mountains are formed, the movements of the earth's plates and how this movement is described, and in pupils' knowledge that this movement is continuing. In their map work, pupils recognise the position of continents, major cities and towns and how geographical location affects everyday lives. They have above average skills in note-taking and the use of secondary information sources, such as reference books. This work links effectively with English. Throughout the key stage, pupils acquire a suitably wide range of geographical skills. They correctly identify cities and countries and deploy a suitable technical vocabulary in their writing. Higher attaining pupils show a good grasp of the way humans alter

environments to maintain economic change and prosperity.

141. The quality of learning is good at both key stages. Pupils make good progress in geographical skills and knowledge and in correct usage of a geographical vocabulary and mapping skills. Pupils with special educational needs, similarly, make good progress at both key stages.
142. In the one lesson seen in Year 5, pupils enjoyed talking about their work. They responded with assurance to questions and collaborated well in their work. They discussed issues vigorously and argued their cases logically. Pupils concentrated and worked hard, eager to complete their work correctly. Adult-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships were very good, such good relationships impacting beneficially on the quality of pupils' learning and their rate of progress.
143. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching throughout the school. The quality of teachers' planning, as scrutinised, and the quality of the one lesson seen, suggest that teaching is at least good. Teachers evidently understand the geography curriculum well and give pupils interesting, challenging and relevant work. At both key stages, teachers are planning to promote pupils' skills in carrying out independent research. This marks another improvement on the previous inspection.
144. Curriculum planning is good. Provision is suitably augmented through a range of carefully planned visits and field study work. It has improved notably since the previous inspection. There are good links between geography and other curricular areas. For example, pupils deploy literacy skills very effectively. Samples of pupils' work reveal factual accounts with charts and maps labelled accurately. Pupils use their scientific knowledge to explain processes of evaporation and condensation. Year 4 pupils are developing their skills in 'e-mail' to correspond with a Tasmanian school. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject through monitoring classroom practice and teachers' planning and sampling pupils' work. Resources are of good quality and sufficient to meet curricular needs.

## **HISTORY**

145. Because of the way the curriculum is organised, no lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. However, it is evident from teachers' planning and the way the curriculum is 'mapped out' over time that the requirements of the subject are fully met. In addition, observation of lessons in the lower Key Stage 2 demonstrated that pupils' previous learning is built on so that relevant skills, knowledge and understanding are well developed. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils reach good standards and, by the end of the key stage, attainment is better than might be expected, especially at this early point in the school year. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain at least in line with their prior learning. Those with English as an additional language attain in line with their peers.
146. In Year 3, pupils explain significant differences between the Celts and Romans when recalling a visit to a local museum in connection with the theme 'Invaders and settlers'. They can compare differences in how boys and girls were educated in each society and know that Roman boys were taught formally in schools whilst girls' stayed at home to help around the house. Many pupils (especially girls!) state a preference for the Celtish way of life, because Celts did not distinguish between the genders as the Romans did. They know that important skills and knowledge were thus passed on to girls as well as to boys and that women went into battle alongside men to fight an enemy. Pupils in Year 4 understand the hierarchy of Tudor society and know that rich and poor people lived very different lives. They realise why portraits of the time show only rich people and know that dress was a means of telling the world about a person's wealth and status. Older pupils in Year 5 have a good sense of how society changed in Tudor times, with many people losing their jobs on the land because of the increase in sheep farming, which required far fewer workers. They can link these events to the rise in exploration overseas, where fortunes might be won from the spoils of war or from bringing back goods such as spices or new fruit and vegetables. At the end of the key stage, pupils discuss many aspects of life in Ancient Greece in some detail. They know that the Ancient Greeks left important legacies to the modern world, for example in relation to language, education and medicine. Throughout the key stage, pupils sensibly identify similarities and differences between life in the periods they are studying and modern life.
147. Pupils enjoy their history lessons. They can articulate what they are doing and why. In no small part,

their understanding is owed to the way the past is brought alive in the planning and delivery of the subject; visits to places of interest and visitors in to school feature regularly to enrich pupils' learning in both key stages. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, frequently conveying their own enthusiasm for what is being taught. For example, through class discussion and by 'brainstorming' ideas in small groups, pupils in Year 3 were prompted to recall a remarkable amount from their museum visit. Under the timely guidance of the teacher, lower attaining pupils applied their literacy skills to the use of single words encapsulating ideas for the 'brainstorming' activity. The experience of interacting with a 'Roman legionary' and a 'Celtic queen' at the museum, together with a teacher's careful lesson organisation, reinforced and extended classroom learning purposefully. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 showed their good awareness of the role of primary and secondary source material in historical research, this awareness being a result, in part, of their learning about their teacher's involvement in archeological digs.

148. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good, overall. In a very good lesson in Year 5 pupils improved their understanding of life on board a sailing ship in Elizabethan England through a teacher's skilled questioning of incidents in the passage being studied. Pupils enjoyed imagining themselves in times long past and recalling gruesome details of medical practice used, following an accident at sea. Across Key Stage 2, teachers generally exploit pupils' literacy skills to good effect, although there is sometimes an over-reliance on completing worksheets, in some classes, particularly in the lower key stage. Where pupils write their own versions of events, these frequently reveal a good grasp of content covered. This was evident in Year 5, when pupils wrote in their own words about the rise of the Tudor dynasty.
149. The implementation of the Curriculum 2000 and use of Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines are well in hand. In its initial stages, this implementation entails some overlap of themes (for example, the Tudors in both Years 4 and 5), but this is carefully managed so that pupils do not, in fact, repeat work previously covered. Resources are good and the school has its own 'history gallery' with examples of artefacts on display to show how pupils cover a theme of work. The co-ordinator monitors classroom practice regularly and teachers receive useful feedback on strengths and weaknesses observed. The monitoring of teachers' planning ensures that curricular coverage fully meets National Curriculum requirements. Teachers assess pupils' work against expected levels of attainment and resulting information forms a sound basis for future planning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

150. Standards of attainment at the ages of seven and eleven meet national expectations for pupils at the end of each key stage. This is broadly in line with findings in the previous inspection. However, the school is now in a position to move forward more securely owing to significant improvements made in provision for the subject since the last Report.
151. During the inspection week, two lessons involving direct teaching were observed. In addition, pupils were observed more generally in classrooms working with adults (both class teachers and learning support assistants) or independently, as well as with the specialist ancillary support assistant outside the classroom and a volunteer helper with expertise in information technology. Inspection judgements are, therefore, based on observations of the way pupils use information technology, on a scrutiny of teachers' planning and on the assessment of pupils working with adults in a variety of contexts.
152. In Key Stage 1, pupils build successfully on skills learned in the Reception class. Across the key stage, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, routinely carry out basic control operations with confidence. For example, they click and drag icons over a computer screen with a mouse. In Year 2, pupils successfully draw pictures with art software. They can choose the colours they want to use in the shapes they have created and know how to change these if the desired effect is not achieved. Pupils use a cursor correctly to delete and insert words. They save and print their work independently. By age seven, most can satisfactorily control programmable devices. For example, they know how to key in orders as they follow a given set of instructions.
153. The level of support received by younger pupils in Key Stage 2 helps them add to their developing skills. For example, although a pupil in Year 3 found the work challenging, he maintained concentration on a word-processing task in a literacy lesson longer than might have been expected because of the good quality support given by a learning support assistant. In Year 4, a group of pupils benefited from working



with a voluntary helper, improving their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts whilst concentrating on developing their computer skills. Thus, they followed instructions to use a paint program and composed pictures of triangles having two lines of symmetry. Another group worked with the ancillary assistant for information technology on improving their word processing skills. Amongst other skills, they practised changing fonts, underlining words and using print preview to complete the task set. In Years 5 and 6, pupils use computers for direct word processing; they know how to 'cut' and 'paste'. They save and print their work successfully, without assistance from a teacher. Pupils know how to log-on, open and name a file. They have an accurate technical vocabulary (including 'click', 'drag', 'font' and 'highlight'). Simulation and adventure programs are linked productively to work in other areas of the curriculum. A CD-ROM print-out allows pupils to find and print information. They are developing their use of monitoring, data logging and spreadsheets well. Older pupils are regularly given a chance to work in pairs with the ancillary support assistant as they learn to access the Internet and send e-mails. For example, two Year 6 pupils selected information and questions they wanted to include in an e-mail to a local secondary school. They understood which menus to use and how to select and click on the functions they needed.

154. The quality of learning and progress is good at both key stages. Word processing and information-finding skills develop well across the school. All pupils gradually consolidate their skills in accessing information. They also learn new skills quickly and soon apply these to most areas of the curriculum. Information and communication technology contributes positively to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational needs, too, progress well in their use of information technology. In Year 6, all pupils benefit from visits to a local secondary school at intervals across the year. Here, they have access to a computer suite and specialist teaching to further their learning.
155. Pupils are enthusiastic, interested and have positive attitudes towards their work. They enjoy working with the adults who support them. They co-operate and work very well together, talking eagerly about what they are doing. They enjoy challenges and persevere to succeed.
156. It is not possible to generalise about the quality of teaching across the school since only two lessons of direct teaching were observed. However, the quality of interactions between adults and pupils both in and out of classrooms is generally good and serves well to move pupils forward in their learning. The ancillary worker with specific skills in information technology provides good quality support for the teaching of pertinent skills, in addition to class teachers' work in this area. At times, though, non-teaching support, whilst secure in its expertise, lacks sufficient insight into what might reasonably be expected of pupils in the age-range taught, especially younger pupils. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils' learning opportunities are aimed at extending existing skills, knowledge and understanding and are tied to cross-curricular learning goals in so far as this is practicable. Such planning covers all aspects of the information and communication technology curriculum.
157. The school has usefully incorporated national guidelines for the delivery of the Curriculum 2000 into its planned programme of work. Teachers keep up-to-date records of when pupils use computers and the skills they have practised. Some class teachers are involved in an extensive programme of In-service training and this is having a positive impact on raising standards. School management is aware of the need to ensure that all staff members who work with pupils feel confident about this area of the curriculum. The ancillary worker suitably emphasises the need for further staff-training in the subject. The co-ordinator has a good overview of strengths and weaknesses across the school through a range of monitoring activities, including observing teaching and learning practices in classrooms. Resources are satisfactory, overall, and the school works at continuing to improve them.

## **MUSIC**

158. Generally, standards of attainment in music, at both key stages, exceed national expectations for pupils of seven and eleven years of age. All pupils make good progress. Standards of singing and performance are very high throughout the school.
159. During the inspection, singing was observed at both key stages. A video recording of pupils' performance and a recorded tape of pupils' compositions were studied. A scrutiny of planning, and discussions with pupils and teachers, informed final judgements. The co-ordinator teaches music to all classes, though some lessons are given in their classrooms by teachers. Since the last inspection, high standards have

been maintained.

160. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good knowledge of music and reach good standards in their singing. They sing with a good sense of pulse, pitch and rhythmic accuracy. They sing tunefully, with good dynamics, because their teacher is such a good role model. Pupils acquire good body posture when singing and are beginning to breathe properly because their teacher stresses this during lessons. All pupils accurately identify high, medium and low notes. They like singing individually, largely because their teacher lets them sing simple responses to questions during lessons. Pupils enjoy 'Here we go Luby Loo' and accompany their singing with appropriate movements and actions. They have memorised a wide range of songs, including 'When Goldilocks goes to the house of the bears', which is sung with good duration and expression.
161. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach above average standards in music composition, while standards of singing are well above what is typical for pupils of this age. The co-ordinator is an excellent role model, high standards being owed to her subject knowledge and professionalism, coupled with her ability to convey to pupils her own dynamic enthusiasm. She gives good attention to warming up the voice and body and to breathing appropriately. This attention improves pupils' good posture as they sing, improving, in turn, the quality of sound produced. Pupils warm up by chanting 'Ooh aah Cantona.' As they sing, they increasingly control their breathing and achieve very good clarity. Their musical knowledge is very good. They recognise a Mozart composition and explain the term 'crescendo'. They put a crescendo in their singing of 'Do you chew blue gum?' Pupils remember that the pentatonic scale has five notes. They sing two-part songs well, and thoroughly enjoy the jazz song 'Ba-ba-ba-bananas.' Pupils can explain 'legato' and 'staccato' and make sure that these feature in their singing. They have learned to 'watch a conductor'. Their response to teaching is excellent. Pupils sing the hymn 'Follow me' with very good expression. Their teacher challenges pupils with hymns such as 'Let there be peace on earth'. These are performed with good dynamic expression, pitch, rhythmic control and duration.
162. In a classroom-based lesson on composition and performance in Year 4, pupils listen attentively to extracts from 'Carnival of the Animals'. They make the link between an animal's movements and the quality of musical sound representing this. Pupils work in pairs quickly to agree on a sound to accompany an animal's movements on an instrument of their choice. In spite of the cacophony as everyone practises, each pair demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding both of how to handle their instrument and how to produce a pleasing sound. Many of these match the chosen animal well and one pair explained they had changed their lion's action from roaring to running because the shaker they used was unsuitable for roaring. Year 6 pupils' percussion pieces on audio tape are based on Holst's Planet Suite, managing to capture the main features of different planets (for example using a strong rhythmic drum beat for 'Mars').
163. Pupils enjoy their music lessons, both within the larger setting of key stage lessons and within their classrooms. Their high levels of performance in singing, especially, are the product of their teacher's own modelling (she sings herself) and teaching skill. They are eager to take part in performances themselves. They take care of equipment and resources.
164. The quality of teaching is very good and, occasionally, excellent where teaching is focused on work with pupils across each key stage. The organisation of classes combining for music is managed less effectively for compositional work than for the performance purposes in the use of instruments. In a class composing and performing lesson in the lower Key Stage 2, teaching was satisfactory with some strengths evident. These included the teacher's secure subject knowledge and personal enjoyment, which was conveyed effectively to pupils. Through this, the teacher gained a very high quality of listening at some points in the lesson. Unfortunately, concentration was broken at times as groups of pupils went in turn to choose their library books and this had a detrimental impact on the pace of learning.
165. Pupils can extend their musical skills by attending choir. A significant number receive music tuition in brass, woodwind, violin and guitar from visiting teachers. They achieve good standards through this means and use their musical knowledge well in the course of other music lessons in the school. A very good range and quality of instruments available to all classes enhances music provision. Video evidence showed very high performance standards in the latest school production of Mozart's 'The Magic Flute.' The performance skills and clarity of expression in songs such as 'Love is what makes the world go round' were judged exceptional.

166. Whilst the organisation of whole-school and class-based work is clearly successful in its impact on the standards reached, overall, it does lead to some practical difficulties. For example, the programme of work on composing and performing observed in Key Stage 2 has to extend over a longer period, so that impetus from one lesson to the next is somewhat lost.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

167. Overall, standards of attainment in physical education at the end of each key stage are typical for pupils of seven and eleven years of age and are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Considering the very good progress and good (at times high) standards achieved in other subjects, attainment in physical education is judged below what pupils might achieve. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained.
168. During the inspection, games lessons were watched at both key stages and gymnastics was observed at Key Stage 1. No lessons were observed in dance or swimming. Scrutiny of planning reveals that these activities do take place and discussion with pupils and teachers allowed judgements to be made.
169. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing sharp hand-eye co-ordination. They throw and catch small balls and beanbags. High attaining pupils throw and catch with accuracy and control. Average and lower attaining pupils inconsistently manage to aim, throw and catch. Pupils work co-operatively during small team-relay games. Teachers are well organised, guiding pupils towards improved performance. However, guidance is not sufficient for pupils who are over-challenged by a task. For example, Year 1 pupils are asked to compete in games of 'one versus two' before they have developed co-operative throwing and catching skills. The same thing happens when Year 2 pupils are asked to sequence movements, using different body parts. High attaining pupils transfer body weight to hands and feet and are beginning to do cartwheels and bunny jumps. Their teacher gives regular effective feedback to pupils, which produces good levels of engagement with activities. However, guidelines are insufficient to improve the quality and content of performance for average and lower attaining pupils. Extension and movement vocabularies are not well developed. Pupils understand and explain very well the value of exercise and the effect that exercise has on the body.
170. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have acquired satisfactory basketball skills. They warm up in large groups of eight pupils with one ball. This large group does not ensure sufficient activity or handball contact before pupils engage in a competitive game. They dribble a ball, using both hands, and show well developed hand-eye co-ordination. Their teacher demonstrates shielding from the opposition, but when pupils engage in a game of 'four versus four', insufficient time is given to practise the shielding skill and it is not used effectively in the game. Pupils work co-operatively during game situations, but are not well versed in attack and defence tactics. 'Over-challenge' is similarly seen in Year 3. Pupils are introduced to the skills of throwing, catching and hitting, yet insufficient small, progressive steps allow pupils to gain confidence and competence. For example, pupils warm up and go straight into a game involving five players. A few high attaining pupils throw and catch and hit a small ball, but most cannot catch a small ball or strike a flying ball. Although no swimming was observed, pupils can swim in the summer term. All swim twenty-five metres by the time they leave the school. Outdoor adventure activities are organised during residential trips and visits. Pupils are often placed into a 'small game' situation to apply the skills they learn.
171. Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in physical education, however, is not as good as it could be. In other subject areas, teaching is frequently good and very good or excellent. Class control and discipline are good, overall, but there is insufficient guidance so that teachers can improve the quality and extend the range of movements produced. Pupils are often over-challenged and small steps needed to guarantee secure learning are often omitted. Pupils unable to take part in the practical part of lessons are not always included in the learning part of lessons.
172. Extra-curricular clubs and activities extend curricular provision. Football and netball clubs are well attended. These football and netball sessions teach a balanced range of skills needed for games' practice. Pupils have opportunities to play in teams, and they successfully compete against other schools. Pupils work together enthusiastically during these sessions.

173. Resources are satisfactory, overall, although some weaknesses are evident. For example, there are insufficient large balls for whole-class use. The hall provides a good space for indoor lessons and provision is further enhanced by the grassed areas around the building, which give scope for a range of activities across the year. In his capacity as subject co-ordinator and as a senior manager, the headteacher identifies physical education as an area for further development. The school recognises that teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding are under-developed, since energies have been placed on other priorities in recent times.