

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GEORGES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Taunton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123851

Headteacher: Peter Hanratty

Reporting inspector: Fred Ward
18605

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 December 2000

Inspection number: 225056

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Mount Taunton Somerset
Postcode:	TA1 3NR
Telephone number:	01823 284130
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Katriona Lovelock
Date of previous inspection:	14 April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Fred Ward Inspection No 18605	Registered inspector	Mathematics, Information technology Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language	Characteristics Standards Teaching
Hilary Smyth Inspection No11566	Lay inspector		Attitudes Personal development Care Links
Wendy Hitchcock Inspection No 28132	Team inspector	Foundation stage Art Science Geography History	Leadership and management
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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils	198	(average)
Pupils with English as an additional language	1	
Pupils entitled to free school meals	12	(6%) (below average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	31	(15.6%)(below average)
Average class size	24.6	(average)

St George's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving Taunton and the surrounding villages. Pupils come from a broad mix of home backgrounds although there is a small but significant number from low income families. All pupils have had some pre-school experience and enter at four-years-old with a wide, but broadly average, range of attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St George is becoming a more effective school as staff and governors, encouraged and supported by the headteacher, begin to identify and tackle areas of underachievement in science and information technology and build on strengths in English and mathematics. Nearly three-quarters of the teaching is good or better. The school gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and art are above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those with learning difficulties as well as the gifted and talented, make good progress.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about school, are generally well behaved and have a high regard for others.
- 71% of the teaching is good or better.
- The curriculum has a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy and provides particularly well for art, pupils' personal development and the youngest children.
- The leadership and management successfully promote a caring Christian ethos where pupils feel valued, secure and are encouraged to do their best.
- Parents are very appreciative and supportive of the school.

What could be improved

- Pupils' use of information technology and scientific enquiry across the school and their handwriting in Key Stage 2.
- Monitoring and developing of teaching and learning.
- Information to parents on pupils' progress.
- Measures by which staff and governors can check the effectiveness of their actions to raise standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Standards in English and mathematics have improved considerably since the previous inspection in April 1997. Nearly all the key issues have been tackled effectively:

- Results from national assessment have been used to identify and tackle shortcomings in the teaching and learning of English and mathematics.
- Pupils' work is marked consistently and gives helpful guidance.
- Teachers are generally more confident in design technology.
- Staff use efficient planning procedures.
- Multicultural provision is good.
- Staff appraisal is part of performance management.

However, the following are still being developed:

- Teachers in Key Stage 2 do not assess pupils' progress consistently.
- Some teachers are insecure in aspects of information technology and music.

The school has the potential and the will to continue to improve.

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	B	B
mathematics	B	B	C	C
science	C	C	D	D

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

There are around 12% of pupils from low income families, more than indicated by the number of parents who acknowledge eligibility for free school meals. Consequently, the school's national assessment results have been compared to schools with free school meals eligibility from 8 – 20%. Children at the Foundation Stage make good progress in the reception class and are on course to exceed the early learning goals. In 2000, assessment results for pupils aged seven were well above the national average in reading and mathematics in comparison with all and similar schools and in the top 5% for writing when compared to similar schools. Teachers' assessment in science indicated results were well below the national average. For 11-year-olds in 2000, national tests results for English were above the national average for all and similar schools, around average for mathematics and below for science. The low results for science at the end of both key stages are mainly due to pupils' undeveloped skills in scientific investigation and experimentation. Inspection findings confirm these above average standards are continuing in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and in English at Key Stage 2 and show that the older pupils' performance in mathematics is now above average. However, while pupils' performance in science is improving, standards are still below average. The inspection also found that standards in art are above average because of the creative and challenging opportunities given to pupils throughout the school. Pupils' attainment in information technology is generally below that expected for their age as they

have not had sufficient opportunities to use new technologies to support their learning. All pupils leaving school aged 11 swim 25 metres and are aware of water safety principles. The school has set realistic targets to continue to improve standards in English and mathematics and is beginning to tackle the deficiencies in science and information technology.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like school and are very interested and involved in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are generally well behaved and the few, who are not, are quickly helped to improve.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils show great concern for each other, their school and the local community, developing an increasing sense of responsibility and personal initiative.
Attendance	Above the national average. No time is wasted and lessons start promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, 71% of the teaching observed was good or better with only a very few instances of unsatisfactory teaching. Three quarters of the teaching in the Foundation Stage was good and the rest very good. In Key Stage 1, three quarters of the teaching was good or better and occasionally exceptional. In Key Stage 2, just under two thirds of the teaching was good or better and nearly all the rest sound.

Notable strengths of the teaching throughout the school are:

- teachers' high expectations of what pupils can do and their attitudes to work and each other;
- the very strong focus on acquisition and use of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy;
- the very effective team work between teachers, learning support assistants and voluntary helpers;
- teachers' comprehensive and detailed knowledge of their pupils that ensures individuals are given the right amount of challenge and support to help them make progress.

As a consequence, pupils aged 11 are confident learners and well prepared for the next stage of their education.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
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The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall with a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy and personal development and a good range of additional opportunities beyond the classroom. Provision for scientific enquiry and information technology is unsatisfactory but being developed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers, assistants and voluntary helpers work effectively in teams to ensure pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and challenged to take a full part in school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Appropriate teaching from within the school complements good support from a visiting specialist teacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The Christian ethos is well represented throughout the school. Pupils' moral and social development is very good and provision for their spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes great care of pupils and provides them with very good guidance and personal support. However, not all information to parents on their children's progress is sufficiently helpful.

The school encourages, supports and appreciates the strong involvement of parents in their children's education at school and at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher is an enthusiastic leader, well supported by senior managers, who attracts the loyalty and commitment of the school community in working together to improve the children's education.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very much involved in shaping the direction of the school but are not fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has identified appropriate priorities for development but has not specified measures by which to evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Governors and the head teacher have firm control of finances and are careful to target funding at agreed priorities.

Generally, staffing accommodation and learning resources are good and well used. However, the condition of some reading books in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory; there are insufficient modern computers in Key Stage 1 and resources for music are inadequate. Funds have been allocated to tackle these deficiencies.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school• Children are helped to be mature and responsible• Teaching is good• The school is easy to approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of homework• Range of activities outside of lessons• Some behaviour• Information on pupils' progress
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The inspection supports all the parents' positive views. In addition, homework reinforces pupils' learning and the range of extra-curricular activities is good. However, inspection findings confirm that there are a few instances of unsatisfactory behaviour and some reports to parents are not sufficiently helpful.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The inspection found that the attainment of the oldest pupils in the school are above average in English and mathematics and below for science and information technology. For pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above average in speaking and listening, writing and mathematics and below average in science and information technology. Standards in art are above average throughout the school. The youngest pupils in the school make good progress in the Foundation Stage and all are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the time they enter Key Stage 1. All pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they are 11 years of old and are aware of the principles of water safety. Insufficient lessons could be observed in other subjects to make a secure judgement about standards, but on the limited evidence available most pupils' attainment is as expected for their age, apart from in music, where composing skills are undeveloped.
2. National assessment results in 2000 show standards at the end of Key Sage 1 are well above average in reading, listening and mathematics when compared to similar schools. Results since 1996 have been above average with a slight dip in 1998. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment in science is well below the national average. This is mainly because of poor performance in experimental and investigative science and, to a lesser extent, in physical processes.
3. Test results in 2000 for 11 year-olds indicate that standards for English are above the national average when compared to all and similar schools, around the national average in mathematics and below in science. English results since 1996 have consistently been above the national average, and are continuing to rise. Results in mathematics have stayed above the national average but have been more variable. Science results have followed the national trend but have now slipped below average. The school has set realistic targets for English and mathematics in 2001 for the oldest pupils in school.
4. Children enter school for the first-time at four years old with a broad range of attainment. Since entry assessment started in 1997, the proportion of high and low attaining pupils has varied considerably. The current Year 3 on entry had few able pupils but a third were lower attainers. The trend was reversed in 1999 for the current Year 1 with few low attaining pupils and more high attainers. The proportion of low and high attaining pupils in the present reception class is around average at just below 20 per cent. A few of these pupils had undeveloped personal, social and emotional skills on entry and this is reflected in their difficulties with communication and language. However, pupils make good progress through the Foundation Stage in response to the consistently good teaching they receive. As a result, nearly all pupils are on course to exceed the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literature, mathematical, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
5. Currently in English, standards of speaking and listening are above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils aged 7 confidently ask and answer questions, listen attentively and speak clearly in front of an audience. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils are confident communicators and give thoughtful and considered responses in discussions.

6. Standards of reading throughout the school are above average. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils read competently a range of texts appropriate for their age. They use phonic skills effectively to break down complex words and use other cues to help them understand more difficult passages. By 11-years-old, most pupils can analyse and interpret prose and poetry and read widely. They choose challenging texts and can locate and retrieve information from reference sources.
7. Standards of writing are also above average at the end of both key stages. Nearly all 7-year-olds are confident writers and most use their knowledge of sounds to help them spell. They put their ideas into short sentences and use simple punctuation correctly. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils write in a range of forms and develop their ideas in an organised way. They are very aware of different audiences and choose words carefully for particular effect. However, a significant number of pupils have not developed a fluent, joined handwriting style.
8. Standards in mathematics are above average at the end of both key stages. Most seven-year-olds have a secure foundation in number and solve simple problems in their head. They can name and describe the properties of regular two and three-dimensional shapes and use units of measurement competently. They collect and present data appropriately showing an understanding of comparisons and quantity.
9. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils calculate quickly and accurately using mental methods and can explain their calculations using appropriate language. They can apply this knowledge and understanding in problem solving activities exploring shape, pattern and relationships. They collect and interpret data, presenting information in appropriate graphical forms.
10. Standards in science are below average at the end of both key stages because pupils' scientific enquiry and investigative skills are undeveloped. Most pupils aged seven have a sound knowledge and understanding of basic life processes and common living things and everyday materials and their properties but are less secure with physical processes. By the time they are 11-years-old, most pupils have attainment in all aspects of science, apart from in scientific enquiry, as expected for their age.
11. Overall, standards in information technology are below average at the end of both key stages. The attainment of the majority of seven and 11 year-olds in word processing and the knowledge and understanding of the uses of new technologies in everyday life is at expected for their age. While all pupils are confident users of information technology, this is mainly because of practice at home. Currently, there are insufficient opportunities in school for pupils to use information technology to support their learning across subjects. This results in most pupils not having secure knowledge and understanding of data handling and controlling and modelling. The school is aware of these shortcomings and staff are about to engage in a nationally funded training programme and additional resources are being purchased.
12. Most pupils' attainment in art is better than expected for the age. This is because the art curriculum is rich and varied and teachers plan activities that are well-matched to the development stage of individuals. Pupils are stimulated to experiment creatively using a wide range of media. As a consequence, there are examples of high quality work from all ages attractively displayed around the school.
13. Overall, pupils achieve well. Their mastery of basic skills in literacy and numeracy considerably helps their learning in other subjects. While they try hard in science, they do not achieve as well because their investigation skills are under developed. On the other hand, pupils' enthusiasm for information technology compensates for the gaps in their knowledge and understanding and they generally make good progress.

14. Both inspection findings and national assessments in 2000 confirm that higher attaining pupils make good progress and generally achieve well in English and mathematics. The proportion attaining higher levels is well above average for seven year-olds and above average for 11 year-olds. This is as a result of teachers organising lessons to insure that these pupils have ample opportunities to work hard at suitably challenging tasks. Their performance in science is around the national average, and higher than others in the class, because high attaining pupils are able to deduce likely outcomes without needing to carry out practical experiments. The few talented mathematicians in both key stages are well supported and given appropriate extension work that helps them make good progress. They also benefit from the school and area mathematical challenge events organised by the head teacher, where they are able to share and compete with similarly gifted pupils.
15. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the very good provision. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures through her work with teachers, support staff and individual pupils that their learning is broken down into appropriate small steps and builds easily on previous experience.
16. Generally, standards in English and mathematics and art are improving and the school has the capacity to raise them higher in science and information technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The pupils have a very good response to school; they are very interested and involved in their learning. Their attitudes to school, personal development and relationships are very good. They show great concern for each other, their school and the local community, and are developing a sense of responsibility and personal initiative. Behaviour is good. However during the previous inspection, pupils' behaviour overall was very good, indicating a slight lowering of standards. Attendance is good; this is an improvement since the last inspection, when attendance was satisfactory.
18. The pupils have very good attitudes to their school experience in response to such strong teaching. Nearly all pupils are very enthusiastic about learning; they come happily and willingly to school. They show a very high level of interest and are fully involved in the extensive and rich range of activities provided. In a reception class language and literacy lesson on initial sounds, the class teacher's lively approach to questioning kept the pupils focused, motivated and involved throughout the lesson. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson, pupils were very well behaved, attentive and responded enthusiastically to the class teacher's questions during the mental arithmetic part of the lesson. On a Year 6 visit to see Romeo and Juliet, there was lively discussion between pupils about Shakespeare's plays, the merits of various performances seen and what aspects they enjoyed most before the production started. One group particularly liked the "old language". Pupils' attitudes are very good because of the generally good teaching and interesting well-prepared lessons.
19. In an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour, most pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and outside. The school functions as an orderly community. With few exceptions, pupils respond well to the school's clear routines when moving around the school. In the playgrounds and during wet playtimes, pupils mix happily and play well together, showing a caring concern for others. During a lunch break, a boy who was upset following a falling out with a friend, was given caring support from a classmate, who stood with her arm around the other's shoulders giving comfort. Overall, the standards of behaviour are good, with very few instances of unkind behaviour and many instances of very good behaviour. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson, pupils were very well behaved because of high expectations and challenging activities. There are sometimes instances of lively and boisterous

behaviour, as seen at the start of a Year 6 science lesson and again when the pupils started a new activity within a lesson. All class teachers have high expectations and such incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour are handled skilfully and have little effect on others. Some parents were concerned about the behaviour of a few pupils and, to this extent, the inspection findings support this view.

20. All pupils are very friendly and courteous to visitors, adults and to each other. They introduce themselves confidently and demonstrate an awareness of the needs of others. Two pupils observing a visitor approaching a door promptly opened it and politely greeted the visitor. During lunch, a Year 2 pupil confidently and courteously questioned a visitor "Do you think all things melt when heated?" Even the youngest pupils talk confidently to visitors and asked such questions as "Why are you here?"
21. Pupils generally show respect for property and they handle resources with care as in a Year 4 art lesson when pupils were using scissors to cut out shapes to make a Roman building. Even the youngest, put learning resources away tidily.
22. The personal development of pupils is very good. They are very eager to volunteer and accept responsibility. They are fully involved in the daily routines of the school community and fulfil their duties with great enthusiasm and pride. Year 3 pupils do litter picking on the Key Stage 1 playground, a duty they carry out with great diligence. There are opportunities to be lunch box monitors, register monitors, hall monitors, whose duties include setting out chairs and resources for school assembly and to organise and operate the overhead projector. Year 2 pupils independently organised resources for the start of a lesson following a wet playtime. Year 6 pupils talk confidently to prospective parents when they visit the school. Year 6 pupils enjoy the responsibility of organising and coaching the teams of mixed aged pupils and ensuring that each pupil takes part in the two-day school sports event. Throughout the school, pupils show initiative by spontaneously helping each other, or by extending their own learning without waiting to be told what to do. In a Year 1 art lesson, a more dextrous pupil helped another with her weaving. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils helped others when encountering unfamiliar words. In a Year 3 English lesson, pupils who had completed their writing task, fetched and used dictionaries to check spellings.
23. Through assemblies and circle times pupils have opportunities to reflect on their own experiences, express their feelings and respect, understand and empathise with the feelings of others. In a Year 3 English lesson, groups of pupils listened respectfully while other groups read from a shared text, then responded carefully and thoughtfully to others during questioning by the class teacher. Pupils readily help and support each other's learning, collaboratively in groups or in pairs. In a Year 4 art lesson, pupils in friendship groups showed great co-operation when discussing how to turn two-dimensional plans into three-dimensional models and also during the making of the models. During this activity, pupils of differing abilities supported and encouraged each other. A Year 1 circle time explored "What makes me happy". There were many thoughtful ideas, one from a pupil who finds school work challenging and he said "When I get my work right". There was spontaneous applause from other pupils at this response.
24. Attendance is good and above the national average. There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection. Lessons begin promptly and no time is wasted.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

25. Overall, teaching is good throughout the school with only a very few instances of unsatisfactory teaching. 71% of the teaching is good or better and 22% very good or better. This is an improvement since the previous inspection as the amount of higher quality teaching has tripled. Three-quarters of the teaching in the Foundation Stage was good and the rest very good. In Key Stage 1, three-quarters of the teaching was good or better and occasionally exceptional. In Key Stage 2, just under two-thirds of the teaching was good or better and practically all the rest sound. Nearly all the teaching of English and mathematics is good and a small amount is very good.
26. The consistently good or better teaching in the Foundation Stage is as a result of the very experienced co-ordinator's thorough knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and the rich and varied curriculum she plans to promote them. She places a very strong emphasis on teaching the basics skills and sets very high expectations in all aspects of learning. Consequently, pupils have quickly settled to schooling and have established positive attitudes to learning. They work hard because they find learning activities interesting and stimulating. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator teaches part-time for four days a week. On the other day, another experienced early years' teacher, who is also the school's special educational needs co-ordinator, takes the reception class. The two teachers work effectively as a team and ensure pupils' learning benefits from the different skills each has to offer. The classroom assistant ably supports them.
27. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is generally better overall than at Key Stage 2, although there were examples of very good teaching throughout the school. The best teaching is characterised by high expectations of behaviour and all aspects of learning. Lessons are lively and interesting and pupils respond enthusiastically and sustain their concentration throughout. Teachers know their pupils very well and are very secure in teaching literacy and numeracy. This ensures that learning activities are well matched to pupils' age and capabilities, particularly the low and high attaining pupils. As a consequence, in these lessons, pupils make good progress in acquiring appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding.
28. As a result of effective training and preparation, teachers apply the literacy and numeracy strategies very effectively and attainment has continued to be above average in English and mathematics. A further strength of the teaching is the way that every opportunity is taken to reinforce the basic skills across subjects. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of scientific investigation is not secure but a training programme is being set up to support the introduction of the recently purchased, published scheme.
29. The use of information and communication technology in teaching is at an early stage. Teachers are becoming more confident but new technologies do not sufficiently support teaching and learning. This causes some difficulties for pupils trying to master essential information technology and communication skills.
30. Teachers' planning is effective in providing appropriate learning opportunities for the range of pupils in each class. Some parents were concerned that pupils in the middle ability band are not being catered for. The inspection did not support this view.
31. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and the few occasions, when individuals or groups are inattentive, are firmly dealt with. Teachers working closely with support staff handle the instances when individuals have specific emotional problems sensitively. Some parents were concerned that these incidents disrupted the learning of the rest of the class. The inspection found that while there was a brief disturbance in these circumstances, there were no long-term effects.
32. Teachers use a range of methods and are particularly supportive of those introduced through the literacy and numeracy strategies. They report, and the inspection

confirms, that lessons have more structure and a wider variety of approaches are used. Pupils are more aware of learning intentions, are clear about what they have to do in individual and group work and have the opportunity to review and discuss their work during plenary sessions. This helps them be prepared to take risks and learn from their mistakes.

33. Effective use is made of learning support assistants and voluntary helpers. Teachers brief them well and they understand their roles and responsibilities. Pupils benefit generally from this additional help particularly in group and individual activities to develop basic skills and also in practical work. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with learning difficulties and those who are gifted and talented and those who have English as an additional language, also make good progress in response to this effective teamwork.
34. Teachers know the individual strengths and weaknesses of their pupils well and use this information effectively to check their progress. This ensures pupils are productive and do not become frustrated in their learning. This is especially apparent in class sessions when teachers pose questions for individuals at just the right level to challenge them to think hard, knowing the answer is in their grasp.
35. Homework has been used appropriately for many years to develop reading and is now being extended to reinforce spelling and the retention and use of number facts. Some parents were concerned that homework was not marked or responded to by teachers. The inspection could find no evidence to support this view.
36. As a result of the considerable amount of good or better teaching, particularly in English and mathematics, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education when they leave at 11 years old.

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

37. The curriculum provided for the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. That provided for Key Stages 1 and 2 is generally broad and balanced but does not yet provide sufficiently for scientific investigation, modelling and design in information technology or composition in music. However, the school has plans for tackling the shortcomings in science and information technology but these have not yet had time to be implemented fully. Since the previous inspection, there have been major improvements in the way the school plans the curriculum and in the provision for design technology and music.
38. Both the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been implemented well. The school places a high level of emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Test results are analysed thoroughly with the result that the retention and use of multiplication and division facts in Key Stage 2 and writing across the school have been identified as areas to improve.
39. The curriculum is planned systematically with annual, termly and weekly planning systems, which are based on the national guidance documents for each subject. In addition, the school makes effective links between subjects and to national and international events. For example, pupils in Year 3 are making Egyptian clay pots in art as part of their history work on Ancient Egypt and everyone in the school made commemorative tiles as part of a millennium art project. Pupils have a good quality and range of learning opportunities in mathematics, art and English and the coverage in other subjects is sound.
40. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good indeed. Pupils' needs are identified early and individual education plans set out clearly targets to be

worked on and the additional support these pupils are to receive. There is close liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers, assistants and parents which, coupled with the programmes devised to match pupils' stage and rate of learning, ensure that pupils thrive and make good progress.

41. All pupils have good access to the curriculum opportunities in the classroom and beyond. The school makes every effort to ensure that pupils know what is available and are helped to participate fully. Following the previous inspection, the curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that work for both high and low attaining pupils is planned into lessons in order to provide an appropriate level of challenge, depending on capability. Pupils' needs are carefully considered in the provision for extra reading; writing and numeracy support and learning support assistants are used effectively to teach these programmes or to support in class. In addition, the school is currently exploring provision for high attaining pupils in thinking skills in co-operation with other local schools.
42. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides appropriately for sex, drug and health education. The personal, social and health programme is effectively integrated into curriculum subjects such as religious education and science. Pupils are knowledgeable about health and safety concerns, especially when working with tools, such as saws, in design technology lessons.
43. The school very successfully cultivates the personal development of pupils. The provision for moral and social development is very good and good for spiritual and cultural development. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when spiritual provision was satisfactory and cultural provision was unsatisfactory.
44. The promotion of spiritual development is good. Spirituality is effectively promoted through the strong Catholic ethos, reinforced by contact with the parish church. There are opportunities within the curriculum and in assemblies to promote knowledge and insights into values and beliefs. Pupils wonder at growing and life processes and physical phenomenon in science. A group of Year 4 pupils working with a teacher went into the playground to marvel at a rainbow. In English, poetry offers the pupils a chance to read about and express their own thoughts and feelings. Pupils are encouraged to respond sensitively and reflect on what they have heard or experienced. Such activities are appropriate to the pupils' age and maturity, and staff sensitively guide and encourage this reflection. For Remembrance Day, Year 2 pupils were helped to understand the sacrifice soldiers had made, and empathised with a visitor when he shared his experiences as a six-year-old evacuee. Pupils' self esteem is consistently promoted throughout the school by the use of praise and other rewards. The attractive displays of pupils' work and the general use of plenary sessions reflect the value teachers have for pupils' ideas and achievements.
45. Pupils' moral development is very well promoted. Christian principles of recognition of right and wrong and living by Jesus' teachings underpin the published code of conduct. Every opportunity is taken by staff to reinforce the Christian message, fostering such values as caring and respect for each other, courtesy and fairness. In lessons and around the school, pupils are regularly reminded to 'treat others as you would wish to be treated'. Pupils are involved in the formation of classroom rules. The school's clearly written mission statement and the application of Christian principles effectively support moral development. There are very good opportunities for pupils in both key stages to develop and express moral values and extend their social and personal understanding. In Year 1, rules governing sporting activities give understanding of fair play. Pupils in Year 2 examined the effects of the bombing on English and German families. Through science, Year 5 pupils studied the properties of gas and the impact on the environment. Opportunities to express moral values are also provided in the school's support of charities.

46. There are very good arrangements for promoting pupils' social development. There are many opportunities provided for all pupils to take on responsibility, show initiative and develop an understanding of living in a community. The head teacher, all staff and voluntary helpers provide very good role models treating all pupils, visitors and each other with respect. Throughout the curriculum and across key stages, pupils have many opportunities to learn how to relate to each other by working in pairs and in small and large groups. In a Year 1 physical education lesson, pupils' team playing skills were reinforced by working together and extended by having to take turns.
47. The school provides a very wide variety of other activities that promote social development. A varied and rich programme of extra curricular activities and many inter-school events, such as football and swimming encourages teamwork, competition and fair play. School productions, whole school assemblies, concerts, links with the local and parish community and visits provide pupils with the social skills involved when working with large numbers of people. Residential experiences for Year 3 at Buckfast Abbey and Years 5 & 6 at activity centres in Dorset and on Exmoor enhance social development. The school helps all pupils to take responsibility by giving them a variety of duties within class and around the school. Staff recently attended a collaborative learning seminar; however, this has not yet had time to influence pupils' learning.
48. The promotion of pupils' cultural development is good. The school actively supports and teaches pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions through curricular provision and an extensive range of extra curricular activities. The provision for the appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures has greatly improved since the previous inspection and is continuing to do so. Positive contributions to pupils' cultural development come from aspects of English, geography, history, art physical education, music and assemblies. Year 6 pupils participated in a schools' dance/drama production at the local theatre. A Year 2 assembly focused on living in a multi-cultural society and there are appropriate opportunities to compare aspects of other religions.
49. Pupils have the chance to study the works of artists and other cultures in history. Examples can be seen in Years 3 and 4 classroom displays on Egyptian and Roman lifestyles; Year 5 studied the Tudors and Year 6 studied the Victorians. In English, Year 2 pupils studied folk stories and Year 6 pupils studied the literary classics. Year 2, through support of a geography topic on India, had their knowledge extended by visitors sharing their experiences and providing an extensive range of resources.
50. Pupils' learning is enriched by visits to theatres and museums. This year, Years 4,5 & 6 visited the Millennium Dome. Years 1,2 & 3 used this time to organise an Airport Day with contributions from each class focussing on a different country: France, Spain, Japan, Holland and Kenya. They listened and danced to ethnic music, cooked and ate specialist food and learnt some of the languages. Visitors have added to the wide programme provided by the school. These include theatre groups, puppeteers, authors and musicians. An artist in residence was appointed to work with pupils and staff on a specific millennium project, producing ceramic tiles. These are attractively displayed around the school. Each pupil has been involved in recording a compact disc of hymns and carols. Physical, mental and creative traditions are well supported in the range of clubs provided by the school, such as football, chess, gymnastics, art, singing and Year 6 now produce their own newspaper. A concern raised by a few parents about the provision for multi-cultural promotion is not up-held by the inspection: the school has greatly improved provision and awareness.
51. The contribution made by the community to pupils' learning is very good and effectively enriches and supports the curriculum. The links with the church and

parish community are particularly strong with children regularly attending mass. Members of the parish community are invited to attend special events at the school; they also contribute books to the school library. Year 3 pupils preparing for their First Holy Communion attend a residential course at Buckfast Abbey. A nearby supermarket helps promote healthy eating and has invited pupil to carol sing to customers. A newsagent chain sponsors 'maths challenge' events, and a nationwide chain of restaurants invites pupils to try cooking pizzas and to learn about health and safety issues. The locality is well used as a learning resource. The pupils benefit from visits to the town museum, new library, theatre and local park. An extra-curricular club promotes energy saving. Year 6 pupils very successfully took part in a local competition to produce ideas to make their own homes more energy efficient, and were able to visit a newly designed and built 'eco' friendly house. Year 6 pupils attend theatre productions at a local private school; these visits extend their curriculum studies. The rural community contributes curriculum enrichment; for example, a parent who lives on a farm brings lambs to the school. The school draws on the expertise of visiting experts. A professional footballer visited to coach Key Stage 2 pupils, the town basketball club promotes interest by visits and coaching sessions and cricket coaching at the county ground is enjoyed by pupils. Opportunities for using the Internet are at present limited but improving.

52. Links with the wider community also provide enriching experiences for the pupils. These strong links with the community and the personal development guidance pupils receive are helping them to see their place in the community. Older pupils are beginning to recognise the links between the forming of class rules and democracy. They understand that they have certain rights and that the rights also involve responsibilities, for example, looking after the environment. Local issues are discussed within lessons, and some older pupils reported that they discuss wider issues in the news on the playground. Their concern about global pollution was evident in a Year 5 geography lesson when the effects of fumes from engines, acid rain on rain forests, and radiation fall out from Chernobyl were discussed. Younger pupils in Year 3 were able to compare keeping their school environment clean and tidy to the litter around the town centre. One pupil commented, "I wish everyone would take their litter home".
53. The school has very good mutually supportive relationships with its many partner institutions. There are links with other local primaries actively supporting and working together on curriculum and extra curricular activities – music, sport, gifted mathematicians and teachers' in-service training. Other particularly strong links are with a nearby playgroup. The reception teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator, who share a job, make regular visits to the playgroup. The school and play group share a day out and have a picnic in the park in the term before the new children start at school. Parents of pupils who have not attended the playgroup are offered home visits. There are opportunities for parents and pupils to visit and spend time at the school. Children begin their schooling on a half-day basis. Pupils quickly feel secure in their new environment as the class teacher and her assistant warmly welcome each child and help them learn established classroom routines enabling them to come to school happily and confidently. Pupils transfer to six local secondary schools and there are common procedures and liaison arrangements in place. Pupils have several opportunities to make visits. As a consequence Year 6, pupils feel well prepared for the next stage in their education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

54. The school generally provides very good care for its pupils. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Overall the school ensures the health, safety, care and protection of all pupils, doing all it reasonably can to protect them from harm.

55. Very good relationships have been developed between staff and pupils, and the pupils' needs are put first. This has created a very happy, friendly and caring school community. The head teacher's and class teachers' knowledge of pupils is excellent; they are aware of their various needs and respond to them in a very positive and supportive way. Prompt informal support is given to children showing distress during daily routines and lessons. Consequently, pupils feel that they are well cared for and have confidence in all adults for advice and support. The school takes very good care of all pupils with particular special needs and works very closely with parents and other agencies to support these children to ensure that they are fully included in the life of the school.
56. Very effective child protection procedures are well established and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. Personal, social and health education is covered within the curriculum, mainly in religious education and science. Overall, the day-to-day work of the school, in terms of supervision and awareness of hazards within and beyond school, show a marked level of responsibility for the health and safety of pupils.
57. Regular health and safety inspections of the buildings and grounds are carried out. Staff stress safe working practices to children in order to avoid hazards and stress the need to be careful in handling resources, such as scissors. At the end of the day, pupils travelling by bus are seen safely on to their transport. A concern was raised by a parent about personal hygiene. This is not upheld by inspection findings: the school has implemented procedures to tackle this issue by hand-washing notices displayed on toilet doors and staff frequently giving verbal reminders. Other parents were worried about playground supervision: to an extent, this concern is justified. On the Key Stage 1 playground, generally the supervision is good and pupils and lunchtime supervisors get on well together. However, it is reported there are times when the level of supervision is unsatisfactory as only one supervisor is on duty for short periods.
58. The registers are accurately kept and monitored weekly by the administrator who checks for any unusual patterns of absence, and if necessary, alerts the head teacher. However, the school brochure does not actively discourage parents from taking holidays in term time.
59. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Pupils clearly know what is expected of them. There is a climate of good behaviour in this orderly community with clear routines and class rules agreed between pupils and teachers. Class teachers regularly and consistently give praise and thanks to pupils for their response. Each class has a reward system to encourage positive behaviour, personal development and good work. The head teacher uses school assemblies to give recognition to pupils for excellent work, good behaviour and showing kindness. All staff have high expectations of discipline and good behaviour. Disruptive behaviour is effectively and skilfully handled and pupils respond very quickly. The lunchtime supervisors have their own support system and at the end of each lunch time give out special "Thank You" cards. A very high profile is given to intolerance of bullying. The headteacher, in partnership with parents, has quickly and effectively dealt with the few serious incidents. The headteacher continues to monitor the situation carefully to ensure there is no reoccurrence.
60. Traveller children, when attending, and non Catholic children are fully integrated into the life of the school. Staff receive good support from the local authority's traveller support service when these children are in the school. Non Catholic parents appreciate the very strong Christian ethos and feel that staff handle the Roman Catholic doctrines very sensitively. Parents of pupils with English as an additional language are encouraged to retain the use of their own language at home.

61. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The school believes that personal development is as important as academic progress and therefore celebrates both equally. Pupils' achievements for effort, attitude and behaviour are acknowledged through the very effective use of praise and reward systems, such as nomination for the 'comfy chair' in assembly and letters of recognition to parents. Pupils who experience difficulty with a specific area of personal development are encouraged to improve and rewarded when they are successful. Teachers and assistants support these pupils very well and help them set their own individual targets.
62. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance are good overall. Teachers are well aware of pupils' strengths and weaknesses through diagnostic marking and regular standardised testing, the results of which are discussed with pupils and used to set personal targets for improvement. Pupils' progress is systematically recorded in Key Stage 1 but the records kept in Key Stage 2 vary too much between teachers. As a result, it is difficult for subject co-ordinators to use these to help them monitor attainment in their subject areas. However, teachers use assessment procedures effectively to help them plan teaching and learning activities each week, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has developed useful systems for monitoring the results of national assessment tests and standardised reading tests. It uses this information well to identify groups of pupils or areas of weakness in skills and knowledge so that it can target these areas for improvement. A recent analysis pinpointed weaknesses in Key Stage 2 pupils' knowledge of multiplication and division facts: a programme has now been implemented which has raised attainment in these mathematical skills. The school is also in the process of setting up a tracking system, which will show individual pupils' progress more clearly as they move through the school.
63. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is regularly assessed through careful monitoring of individual education plans. This is done in partnership with parents, learning support assistants and outside agencies where appropriate.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

64. The school has good links with parents. Their involvement in the work of the school has a positive impact on pupils' learning. This maintains the findings of the previous inspection.
65. Parents are very supportive of the school and very satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. Nearly all parents find the school very approachable, feel welcomed and appreciated. The quality of the information provided by the school is generally good. There are regular newsletters from the head teacher. Parents welcome the termly letter from class teachers, outlining topics to be studied. The school actively seeks parents' views. Results of a recent questionnaire have been analysed and used to inform the school's development plan. However, a small number of parents feel they are not fully informed about classroom procedures. Inspection findings did not support this view.
66. The school prospectus is clear, comprehensive with only minor omissions. The governors' annual report to parents is informative but also has some minor omissions. Some parents feel that the governing body is remote and they do not know who they are or what they do. There was insufficient evidence available during the inspection to make a judgement about this issue.
67. Curriculum meetings for numeracy and literacy for parents are held and are well attended. School and home work well in partnership, sharing information about pupils, their learning and how they feel. This partnership starts with very good induction

procedures and continues through a range of formal and informal arrangements for sharing helpful information to support pupils' learning. This good exchange is effective because parents find the school very approachable and know that concerns will be dealt with immediately.

68. Parents have three formal opportunities a year to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress. However, in most end of year reports, evaluation of what pupils can do is not detailed enough to ensure that all parents understand the reasons for the levels of attainment and areas to improve. Most parents are satisfied with the general information they receive, but, many are not happy with information about their children's progress and raised a concern. The findings of the inspection uphold this concern.
69. The school has a very good range of productive and consistent links with parents that help pupils learn. Parents' involvement in the life of the school is actively sought and welcomed. Many parents contribute directly by helping in classrooms, hearing readers or accompanying school trips. This additional voluntary help is a significant factor in raising standards.
70. Parents support their children's learning at home, with reading in the early years and increasingly difficult homework as pupils get older. A new strategy has recently been introduced to all parents with younger pupils to help support their basic mental numeracy skills. A concern was raised that class teachers do not hear pupils read. The home/school link books are well used by helpers and parents. Class teachers do not hear pupils read on their own as frequently but the home/school link books are monitored regularly to check the comments. Pupils' reading skills are monitored by class teachers in class during group or individual reading of a shared text. For these reasons, parents' concerns are not upheld.
71. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to be fully involved in the drawing up of individual education plans and annual reviews. They are encouraged to make informal contact and report that they value the advice and support of the special educational needs co-ordinator. They appreciate the quick response of the school when specific concerns are made known.
72. The parents' support group makes a good contribution to the life of the school and pupils' learning. As well as social activities, additional resources and practical help, it sees itself as an extra link between parents and the school. It is funding the redecoration of all the classrooms on a rolling programme beginning at the end of this autumn term, and has an ongoing commitment to fund the leasing of information technology resources.
73. The school works closely with parents and seeks to involve them in policy issues. A questionnaire was circulated to all parents as part of the school's improvement plan. Letters are sent asking for comments when a new policy is being formulated, such as for child care and health issues. Informal contact is encouraged and views sort and valued. When parents are involved, this partnership improves their children's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

74. Overall, the leadership and management of the headteacher, with the support and encouragement of the deputy headteacher and governing body, are good.

75. The headteacher is enthusiastic and has the loyalty and support of the school community. He has been instrumental in creating an ethos in which adults and children alike feel valued and appreciated. There is a climate that encourages commitment, trust and openness in working hard to improve what the school offers to its pupils. The headteacher believes passionately in partnership and consults widely with governors, staff, pupils and parents about developments affecting the future of the school such as the rebuilding of the gym and swimming pool.
76. The deputy head is the Year 6 teacher, co-ordinator for design technology and liaises effectively with partner secondary schools. Her senior management responsibilities currently include personnel, finance and administrative duties, in addition to deputising for the headteacher. She is beginning to develop a crucial role in supporting the headteacher in implementing performance management procedures, especially in co-ordinating feedback from subject managers on the quality of teaching and learning. Both the headteacher and deputy have recently completed training in these areas, which is already having a considerable effect on developing literacy and numeracy..
77. Co-ordinators provide teachers with an overview of each subject showing coverage from Year 1 to Year 6 and provide informal advice to help teachers plan an appropriate curriculum. They also check resources and present the case for additional expenditure at staff meetings. There is no designated budget for each subject as the headteacher wishes all staff to participate in deciding spending priorities. The English and mathematics co-ordinators have been successful in leading developments in the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. As other curriculum areas have not been recent priorities, less development work has taken place. There are plans to develop the monitoring role of staff with management responsibilities but these are in the early stages of implementation. Although teachers regularly evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning, this information is not collected and analysed systematically by co-ordinators to enable them to develop teaching and the curriculum. The headteacher and deputy are currently being trained in these skills and some classroom observation of mathematics lessons has taken place. This has resulted in changes in teaching and learning of the retention and use of multiplication and division facts.
78. Whilst governors are well informed generally about the school through the head teacher's regular reports to the governing body, they are not fully aware of the specific strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning that affect standards. Their meetings have recently been dominated by the financial implications of a fall in the number of pupils on roll. In this area they are very efficient and have a very good grasp of budgeting matters and hold the headteacher to account for his actions. The headteacher and governors are helped considerably in this by the very good administrative support they receive which ensures the information they need is accurate and up to date.
79. Staff and governors, following an annual review of progress and standards, devise development plans collaboratively. Some information is available about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and this has been used to modify development plans. As a consequence, work has begun to improve the teaching and learning in literacy, numeracy, science and information technology. This has effectively started through the involvement of key staff in national and local training initiatives. The school improvement plan is realistic and reflects these priorities giving clear, helpful information to governors and managers. While action plans show individual and team responsibilities and costs, the success criteria do not provide specific enough measures to evaluate the impact on pupils' learning. Developments are implemented according to agreed time-scales and are effectively monitored by the headteacher and designated governors. These plans are regularly reviewed at staff meetings. There is a commitment to self-review and continuous improvement

and some staff are beginning to acquire the necessary skills to sustain this momentum, taking advantage of training, as it becomes available.

80. The school is introducing and using new technologies appropriately but because these are recent initiatives they have not yet had a significant effect on raising standards in information technology. A useful consequence of using technologies has been in collecting and analysing assessment data to track the progress of pupils and identify and tackle individual weaknesses. Training grants are used effectively to fund prioritised staff development. Funds for special educational needs are targeted appropriately.
81. Effective use is generally made of staffing accommodation and resources. However, during the inspection the library was underused, a judgement made at the previous inspection. Teachers are regularly appraised which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Appraisal procedures are currently under review in line with new performance management requirements. Teachers are given good support for their professional development. Classroom assistants are deployed well and have a positive impact on the progress made by pupils. Induction of a new teacher and classroom assistant is reported as being effective. The classroom assistant is well supported by the class teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator.
82. The school provides a welcoming environment both inside and out and is well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff. Outside areas ensure pupils can enjoy a range of activities including using the adventure playground, grassed areas for games and exploring the pond to help with work across the curriculum. The classrooms and hall are spacious and support all areas of learning. The school has identified the gym and swimming pool as needing development and plans are underway for their refurbishment. Resources are good overall but the condition of some reading scheme books in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory; there are insufficient modern computers in Key Stage 1 and resources for music are inadequate. Funds have been allocated to tackle these deficiencies.
83. The headteacher and governors are aware of the principles of best value and apply them rigorously. They compare the standards of the school with others through benchmarking data provided nationally and by the local education authority. This information identifies priorities and informs spending decisions. They seek to gain value for money through effective open tendering whenever this is appropriate and expect to give account for their financial actions. The school community is always consulted on major issues and the views of all partners are considered. The school gives sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governing body, head teacher and deputy should:

1. Improve pupils' skills of information technology and scientific enquiry across the school and their handwriting in Key Stage 2 by providing opportunities to
 - use new technologies to support their learning across subjects;
 - pose questions in science and test out their ideas in practical experiments;
 - develop a more consistent, fluent and legible joined handwriting style in Key Stage 2. (1-3, 10,11,28,29,37,38,80,103,115,117,121,122,124-126,149.150.152)
2. Develop and support subject co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and pupils' learning and in tackling identified shortcomings. (77,105,126)
3. Give parents more helpful information in annual reports about what their children do well and what needs to be improved. (68)
4. Devise specific measures by which actions to raise standards can be checked for their effectiveness. (78,79)

There are some minor shortcomings that the governing body may wish to consider including in their action plan:

Composing skills in music	(13, 37,159)
Consistency in record keeping in Key Stage 2	(62,105,126)
Use of library	(81)
Condition of reading scheme books	(105)
Poetry books in class libraries	(105)
Lunch time supervision	(57)
Holidays in term time	(58)
Omissions in prospectus and governors' annual report	(66);

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

42

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	20	49	24	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	198
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	12
Special educational needs	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	31
English as an additional language	
	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
Pupil mobility in the last school year	
	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year		2000	15	19	34
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	15	
	Girls	18	18	19	
	Total	30	31	34	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (94)	91 (97)	100 (97)	
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	12	
	Girls	18	18	15	
	Total	31	31	27	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	91 (97)	79 (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

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year		2000	16	17	33
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	11	
	Girls	15	10	14	
	Total	27	21	25	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (81)	64 (74)	76 (81)	
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	11	
	Girls	16	13	16	
	Total	25	24	27	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (74)	73 (74)	82 (85)	
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)	

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	24.6

Education support staff: YR –Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119

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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	394110
Total expenditure	397749
Expenditure per pupil	1755
Balance brought forward from previous year	7527
Balance carried forward to next year	13888

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

198

Number of questionnaires returned

78

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	36	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	41	47	10	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	50	8	5	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	49	17	5	1
The teaching is good.	45	49	3	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	51	10	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	33	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	40	8	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	47	45	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	53	40	5	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	47	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	38	13	9	9

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents were concerned about:

- Their children not being heard to read regularly.
- Supervision on the Key Stage 1 playground.
- Children washing their hands.

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

84. Children in their first year at St George's Catholic Primary School are well provided for as the teaching is generally good and sometimes very good. The current 14 boys and 15 girls started school in September and, through an effective induction programme, settled happily into school routines. Pupils have a wide range of attainment on entry; around 20% have below average personal, social, language and mathematical skills. This is a fairly typical group although in some years, the proportion of high and low attaining pupils varies considerably. They are accommodated in a single year reception class. The children achieve well because the teachers and assistant have created a secure and welcoming environment where children want to learn. Most of them are well on the way to reaching the early learning goals and nearly all will have achieved them by the time they start Key Stage 1. This is particularly evident in the development of language and literacy skills where pupils gain a very firm foundation in phonic knowledge and confidence in speaking and listening.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

85. Children develop their personal, social and emotional skills effectively because the quality and range of opportunities provided by the teacher and classroom assistant are good. Staff know the children well and successfully help them to acquire self esteem and confidence. They praise their efforts and take time to welcome and talk to them individually at the start of the day. Consequently, children have good relationships with each other and adults. When they enter the classroom in the morning, they show initiative and independence by hanging up their coats and putting their belongings away before settling to an appropriate range of quiet activities. Children generally behave well and know right from wrong as good behaviour is constantly reinforced. They have a strong sense of fairness as a result of the well-planned opportunities for 'taking turns'. These include taking the register to the office and opening the Advent Calendar.
86. Children usually share and co-operate with each other in the wide range of activities planned for them. When playing with dough, they sensibly shared cutters and tools. In the construction area, they work independently and in pairs. They praised each other's attempts and played happily together. The children have a growing appreciation of each other's feelings, as shown in a class display that asked "What makes you happy?" Responses were 'jumping', 'counting', 'feeding the cat', 'friends', 'a hug'. These were displayed for everyone to read. The children are eager and enthusiastic learners because they are provided with a range of interesting and well planned learning activities. A wide variety of teaching methods is used that motivate children to want to learn new things.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE & LITERACY

87. Children make a good start in communication, language and literacy. They respond well to the strong emphasis on speaking and listening and express themselves clearly and confidently. Their vocabulary is enriched through the teacher's clear focus on demonstrating the use of appropriate words and terminology in all activities. Children have a good knowledge of phonics and already hear, say and identify several initial sounds. This provides a firm foundation for their literacy development. Children have obvious enjoyment of books and know that print carries meaning. They are generally making very good progress in developing reading skills. They know what is meant by

'title' and that the book cover gives information about the contents. A significant number of pupils can recognise some key words in and out of sentences. Most children can recognise their names and many can write them. Following the shared reading of a text 'No lunchbox', children were asked to think of a sentence to give the story a happy ending. Consequently, they gained insight into the type of words used in stories and were given a real purpose for their writing. The majority of children dictated a sentence, for example 'Rosie, Rosie, you forgot your lunchbox'. High attaining children are beginning to use displays and key word cards to help them write independently. Good opportunities are provided in play for children to experiment with writing. Overall, children are making a satisfactory start to forming letters correctly. They approach language and literacy with confidence because of the teacher's and class assistant's high expectations and constant encouragement. Children's learning is discussed at the end of each session.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

88. Basic numeracy is a key focus for all children and their skills are being well developed through a broad range of practical activities. Children play number games, sing rhymes, count and sort. Most of them can recognise numerals 0–10, can count forwards and with support count backwards. They were encouraged to put numerals in order on the teacher's number line. The teacher managed this activity sensitively using children's mistakes to extend their knowledge and understanding. Children are given a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate their skills. In a session on counting and sequencing, some were counting objects and writing the correct numeral, others were matching and putting numbers in order whilst lower attaining pupils were supported in counting and recognising numerals 0–6. Children are gaining confidence in using mathematical language because when new words are introduced the teacher explains meanings clearly and demonstrates their use through interesting practical activities. For example, children 'took a bear for a walk' and described the journey using appropriate positional vocabulary such as 'over', 'under', 'along', 'up' and 'down'. Nearly all children are on course to reach the early learning goals in mathematical development by the end of the reception year.

KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING

89. The curriculum provides a wide variety of experiences for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are gaining a sound foundation in their understanding of the place of technology in their lives and are well supported by the teacher in using the computer for weekly language and mathematical activities. They are beginning to develop a sense of time and sequence through helping their teacher to order the day's activities on the class timetable. Children have found out about their own homes and a visit to the park has stimulated interest in the local environment. They are introduced to scientific ideas through planting bulbs in the autumn and discussing their requirements for healthy growth. As a result, children are curious and well motivated to re-visit the park in the spring to observe what has happened. Opening the Advent Calendar and building up the class Nativity Scene has given the children a sense wonder in the period leading up to Christmas and they have a good understanding of the importance of these annual events in their lives. Children are given many opportunities to select appropriate materials and equipment when taking part in teacher directed and independent activities. There is an appropriate range of resources that are used effectively to support children's learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

90. Children's physical development is well provided for in terms of classroom space, times in the hall and gym and access to a safe enclosed outdoor play area. They also use the school's adventure play area. Children made very good progress in a gym

session when they were challenged by the teacher to travel in different ways along the large apparatus. They worked hard demonstrating a high level of skill, imagination and co-ordination. They listened carefully to a range of instructions, responded quickly and concentrated while they were working. The classroom assistant and student helper ensured that all were involved through their ongoing explanation and encouragement. As a result, the children moved confidently showing good control and co-ordination and an awareness of their own and others' space. Although the apparatus is large and not designed for young children, it is adapted and set out appropriately to enable them to succeed during the lesson. Children's handling skills are developed well through activities such as cutting, sticking, drawing, collage and painting. They learn to use scissors, brushes, pencils and construction materials with increasing control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

91. Children's creative skills are appropriately developed through a wide range of opportunities. Activities are well planned to match the age and maturity of the class, consequently the children make sound progress. Children decorating Christmas Stockings worked with care and sustained concentration, taking pride in their finished work: 'I've used lots of stickers and some up and down patterns, these are my favourite colours'. The children enjoy singing and use their imagination well in role-play. The classroom contains many attractively displayed examples of the children's work. Individuals enjoy talking about these and sharing their views with visitors. They describe how the work was produced and say why they like it. Most know their colours and are beginning to understand other useful words, such as "dark", "light" and "shade".

TEACHING

92. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage has many strengths. The teachers and classroom assistant work together as a strong team and have a very secure knowledge of education in the early years. They share high expectations of pupils. This has resulted in the provision of a rich and varied curriculum that is well planned and carefully matched to the early learning goals. Pupils' progress is well monitored and individuals' strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified. Weekly additional support for language and literacy is provided by the special needs co-ordinator for children who require consolidation of work covered in the class. The visiting specialist teacher provides effective support for developing English as an additional language.
93. Good questioning by staff helps them effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. The early years' environment is stimulating and a good range of resources is used well.

ENGLISH

94. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained the above average standards of speaking and listening and writing. It has improved the standards of reading in both key stages so that they are now above average. This is the result of a carefully planned programme to teach reading and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. All classes have introduced the Literacy Hour and this has given pupils greater access to different types of books and facilitated more discussion of texts. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in gaining literacy skills. This is because the school systematically identifies pupils who have special needs at an early stage and makes specific provision for them through well-targeted individual education plans and programmes of extra support.

95. Assessment results for seven-year-olds and 11-year-olds from 1996 to 2000 have been better than the national trend. The results of the most recent tests for seven-year-olds indicate that standards of reading and writing are well above average when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools, standards in reading are well above average and standards in writing are very high. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in tests is also well above the national average for reading and writing.
96. Assessment results for eleven-year-olds show that standards are above average when compared with all schools and with similar schools. Similarly, the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels is above the national average. At the end of both key stages, there is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. This is contrary to the national trend where girls out-perform boys in reading and writing.
97. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are above average at the end of both key stages. The school has set specific targets for 2002 to raise standards in literacy, which it has already attained. An action plan for raising standards even higher in spelling, writing and handwriting has been formulated with the local education authority literacy consultant and the school has begun by setting individual targets for pupils to achieve.
98. The quality of English teaching is good overall; it is never less than satisfactory with a significant proportion of good and very good teaching in both key stages. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of the subject coupled with an enthusiasm for literacy and literature, which they communicate very effectively to pupils. They place emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary and discussion skills with the result that pupils in both key stages have above average standards in speaking and listening. The youngest pupils delight in using the right word to indicate their meaning and those in Year 2 are rapidly acquiring vocabulary specific to other subjects, such as 'ration card' and 'blackout' to use when taking part in a discussion with a visitor who had been at school during the Second World War. Teachers throughout the school take every opportunity to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in all subjects.
99. By the time they are seven, they confidently ask and answer questions in an articulate way and listen carefully to others in the class as well as to adults. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise these skills through drama and school assemblies and give good guidance to improve pupils' performance. The pupils who were practising their Christmas play performed confidently and enthusiastically and made good attempts at portraying characters.
100. Pupils in Key Stage 2 give clear explanations to direct questions and try to develop ideas carefully when building up an argument or reporting back to the class. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson groups gathered their thoughts on the properties of gases to discuss with the rest of the class. One of the salient features of the good teaching in Key Stage 2 is the way teachers extend their questions to draw out pupils' responses and take them forward in their learning. Pupils develop into confident communicators as they move through the school and Year 6 pupils give thoughtful and considered responses in the course of discussions, particularly in geography and history topics.
101. Standards of reading throughout the school are above average. Teachers in Key Stage 1 teach pupils to hear and identify sounds within words in a systematic and enjoyable way, linking this effectively to the texts they read with the whole class. In addition, they work closely with classroom assistants and helpers to ensure that pupils get plenty of practice at reading. This close attention to developing basic skills ensures that the majority of children are well launched into reading by the time they

are seven. Higher attaining pupils read with expression and fluency and can identify the way characters are portrayed or how a plot develops.

102. Teachers in Key Stage 2 build successfully on this solid base and develop in many pupils a love of reading and books. Pupils talk enthusiastically of the impact of their reading. One Year 5 pupil remarked that “ Reading builds your imagination”, whilst another said that she was using her reading to help her with her writing. Teachers ensure that pupils read a variety of texts and that they develop their responses beyond straightforward understanding of plots. Many pupils can remark on how the opening of a story creates a certain atmosphere or deduce motives and character from the way a character in a book speaks. By Year 6, the majority of pupils are confident and fluent readers who have Shakespeare and Dickens in their repertoire. They are self-motivated, choose challenging texts and can locate and retrieve the information they need from reference books, when studying topics in other subjects. Although they have mature responses to the books they read, the pupils do not reflect this in the reading records kept. Comments are restricted to one or two words.
103. Writing standards are above average in both key stages. The majority of pupils spell competently and use punctuation to good effect. Teachers’ half termly and weekly planning is well thought out and evaluated regularly with the result that pupils gain writing skills in a progressive way as they move through the school. Teachers also link reading and writing well to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils very soon develop confidence in writing in Key Stage 1. They use their knowledge of sounds to help them spell and can use simple punctuation. They organise information so that they can write for example, a factual report about snails in a science lesson. Their writing shows that the majority can put their ideas into simple sentences and many do this independently. In Years 3 and 4, pupils develop their story-writing skills by using dialogue and setting to engage the reader’s interest. Their writing is imaginative and clear and most use punctuation accurately. However, a significant number have not developed a fluent joined handwriting style and often work is printed or a mixture of print and joined styles. In Years 5 and 6, pupils write in range of forms and develop their ideas in an organised way. Pupils are very aware of different audiences and choose words carefully to enliven their texts. They pay good attention to making sure their writing flows using phrases such as “from that day on”, to help to bind a text and carry the reader on to the next paragraph. They are imaginative storywriters who take care to plan the structure of the story well. Non-fiction writing, such as biography is also well organised and written so that information comes across clearly. This also shows when they write reports in other subjects, which they do easily and competently.
104. Teachers’ high expectations of pupils’ productivity, concentration and behaviour in literacy lessons ensure that most pupils try their best. They have developed very good relationships with their classes and this, combined with pacy delivery and challenging tasks, ensures that pupils make good gains in reading and writing skills. Pupils enjoy the challenges they are set. In Year 6, a lively and thoughtful discussion about a scene from Romeo and Juliet, (which they had read and seen performed) inspired pupils to investigate Shakespeare’s language and rewrite it in modern English. They concentrate well when working independently, take care over the presentation of their work and behave well. This is because teachers are at pains to inspire and enthuse their pupils.
105. Teachers know their pupils well and record their achievements regularly. This is done in an organised way in Key Stage 1 but records kept in Key Stage 2 vary from teacher to teacher. Little monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place although the school is now considering ways to organise this. Stocks of books have been replenished over the past few years but some of the reading scheme books in Key Stage 2 are outdated and worn and there are not enough poetry books in class

libraries. The library has an adequate range of fiction and non-fiction books but pupils rarely get the opportunity to use it. The English co-ordinator has recently taken up the post but has already identified targets to raise standards in English. The school analyses test results and is in the process of setting up pupil tracking data for the subject. It is in a strong position to build on the foundations established in English and continue to ensure pupils make good progress.

MATHEMATICS

106. Standards in mathematics are above average for seven and 11 year-olds and are continuing to rise as they have done since the previous inspection. The school recognises that the National Numeracy Initiative has made a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
107. This is apparent throughout the school as the teaching of mathematics is good overall and sometimes very good. The focus on the acquisition of basic skills and mathematical thinking, right from Year 1, enables pupils to make good progress because they have a secure knowledge and understanding of number appropriate for each stage of their learning. Teachers report that they have benefited from the local authority's and school-based training. This has helped them structure lessons more carefully and provide more variety and interest in the learning activities. The school has done much to motivate pupils and make mathematics an enjoyable experience. This is very much down to the head teacher, who is the mathematics co-ordinator, as he has been particularly active in promoting problem solving through class, school and area competitive events. This has been of great help to high attaining pupils who have thrived on these stimulating and thought provoking activities.
108. The introductory sessions in lessons are lively and effectively reinforce recently acquired knowledge and understanding through well-targeted teachers' questioning and support. Pupils join in enthusiastically and are encouraged to take risks when solving calculations. Teachers use any mistakes to make effective teaching points and clarify misunderstandings. In a Year 5 lesson on factors, one average attaining pupil became confused over whether 15 was a factor of 100. The teacher constructively helped the pupil use a "doubling" technique and adding on 15 to arrive at 105 to show it was not.
109. Individual and group work are well organised to take account of the range of prior attainment of pupils. Teachers' work effectively with class assistants and voluntary helpers to ensure high and low attaining pupils are appropriately supported and challenged. Pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses are known and activities are adapted accordingly. As a result high attaining pupils, including a few talented mathematicians and those with special educational needs, make good progress. In a Year 3 group working with the special educational needs co-ordinator on place value, pupils found the use of number cards to break down hundreds, tens and units into component parts very helpful in enabling them to carry out addition and subtraction calculations successfully.
110. Plenary sessions are well planned to allow pupils to explain and share their achievements and explain their difficulties. Teachers make good teaching points and take the opportunity to set appropriate homework and preview the work to be studied in the next lesson. In a Year 4 class on data handling, a challenge to devise a way of representing a fraction of a set of objects using a symbol emerged when pupils had difficulties interpreting each other's graphs.
111. National assessment results in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above the national average in comparison to all and similar schools. Nearly all the current pupils aged seven have acquired a good knowledge of place value to 100 and are adept at

solving problems. Many competently count on and back in hundreds, tens and units up to 1000. They know the basic properties of simple two and three-dimensional geometric shapes and use measurement of length, capacity, weight and time appropriately for their age. They collect data and present and interpret bar graphs showing an understanding of comparisons and quantities.

112. At the end of Key Stage 2, national test results in 2000 were around the national average when compared to all schools and below in comparison to similar schools. This is because, while the proportion reaching the higher level 5 was above the national average, less than expected achieved level 4. At the end of both key stages, there is little difference between the performance of boys and girls in line with the national trend.
113. An analysis of the results and observation of teaching and learning by the head teacher identified a significant proportion of low attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 who were having difficulties retaining and using multiplication and division facts. As a result, greater emphasis has been given to this area for all pupils through more use of games, competitions and mental quizzes. In addition, small groups of low attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 are being given regular specialist support from the special needs co-ordinator. These initiatives are beginning to have a significant impact on the performance of all pupils, including the lower attainers, and attainment is currently above average in Years 2 and 6.
114. The inspection found that most of the pupils in the current Year 6 can calculate quickly and accurately in their heads and carry out more complex number operations using these skills. They enjoy exploring number patterns and relationships. They use fractions and decimals competently when measuring and handling data. They know the properties of geometric shapes and used co-ordinates to plot their outline through different rotations. They collect data and select the appropriate graphical presentation, differentiating between bar and line graphs.
115. Staff take every opportunity to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the application of mathematics in other subjects. In English, technical vocabulary is defined and learnt; in science, accurate observation in measurement is emphasised; art and design use shape and form; in geography, scale and distance are used in map work; epochs, time-lines and dates are highlighted in historical topics; and in music and physical education, careful attention to time and speed is used to refine pupils' performance. However, information technology is not used consistently across the school to support teaching and pupils' learning in mathematics.
116. The co-ordinator is the head teacher and has the advantage of not having a class responsibility so is able to undertake observation of teaching and learning. He has used this to great effect to improve standards in the use and retention of multiplication and division facts in Key Stage 2. A new published mathematics scheme is being introduced as a result of staff discussion and additional resources purchased. These are extending the range and variety of learning opportunities for all pupils. Assessment procedures are used effectively to set sufficiently challenging targets for pupils throughout the school.
117. The school continues to make improvements in mathematics and standards have risen. Apart from in the use of information technology, mathematics is well promoted throughout the school and, as a result, pupils achieve well.

SCIENCE

118. Standards at the end of both key stages are below the national average because pupils are not competent in scientific enquiry and investigation. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, have satisfactory knowledge overall but they are not able to independently pose appropriate questions and devise ways of testing their ideas. As a result of these deficiencies, there has not been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. The school is aware of these shortcomings and is beginning to implement appropriate strategies and develop plans but these have not yet had time to improve pupils' learning.
119. Although the teaching observed in lessons is improving and overall satisfactory, some teachers have insecure knowledge and confidence in teaching systematic enquiry. This has an effect on their ability to set appropriate activities that help pupils to build progressively on their investigative skills as they move through the school.
120. At Key Stage 1, pupils gain appropriate knowledge of life processes and living things, and materials and their properties. This is because teachers plan interesting topics that are appropriate for the stage and rate of learning for most pupils. Teachers know their pupils very well and ask a range of appropriate questions to encourage them to gain knowledge and understanding in these aspects of science. Consequently, pupils enjoy science and are excited when they are actively involved in appropriate practical activities. For example in a Year 2 class, pupils were investigating changes in ice cubes when heated. They knew what they were doing and why, and worked hard throughout the session. They showed a high level of curiosity and were able to share their findings at the end of the lesson. Throughout Key Stage 1, teachers are careful to use and develop understanding of correct scientific vocabulary. They display new words in the classroom and this is very effective in supporting pupils' spelling when recording their work. They enjoy using new vocabulary when discussing their science. Year 1 pupils confidently described materials using words such as "shiny", "bendy", "soft" and "tough". When asked to describe the features of glass their response was 'I can see through it, it's transparent'. Teachers take care to ensure that lower attaining pupils make appropriate progress by means of extra help or attention. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, investigations are over-directed by the class teacher and pupils do not have enough opportunities to explore and solve problems for themselves. At times, pupils complete identical worksheets. Consequently, tasks are not provided at different levels to match the prior attainment of pupils and, as a result, some pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
121. By the end of Key Stage 1, results of the nationally set tasks in 2000 show that standards are around the national average in life processes and living things, and materials and their properties. The proportion of pupils reaching a higher level in these aspects is above the national average. Inspection evidence confirms these results. However, standards are well below the national average in experimental and investigative science and physical processes. By the age of 7, results overall are well below those found nationally. Inspection evidence finds that whilst standards overall remain below the national average the implementation of a new scheme of work and support materials is beginning to improve pupils' learning and attainment.
122. Through Key Stage 2 pupils' achieve satisfactorily overall in gaining a balanced range of knowledge of life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes. Year 5 pupils learn that some gases are important to life and they confidently discussed their effect on the environment. With good support from the teacher and class assistant, they worked collaboratively and by the end of the session the majority could list properties of gases. In Years 3 and 5 there is some copying of information from books or jointly composed texts. This is time consuming and does not involve note taking or summarising which require a level of competence in selecting information. Pupils do not make enough progress in scientific enquiry and investigative skills. Whilst teachers' planning includes appropriate practical activities,

there is little evidence of pupils learning to carry out the whole process of investigation independently. They have little opportunity to test their own ideas or to choose equipment or apparatus themselves. All pupils are able to discuss their work using appropriate scientific language but many cannot say how they could improve it. This is because although marking is encouraging, teachers do not consistently give pupils guidance for improvement. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to science. They are well motivated, work hard and, with just a few exceptions, are productive in lessons.

123. Low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by teachers, class assistants, voluntary helpers and other pupils. In a Year 3 class, pupils were comparing the permeability of different types of soil. They worked in mixed ability groups and were sensitively helped by others who ensured that they were equally involved. Staff also encouraged them through discussing their difficulties, helping them gain confidence and become enthusiastic about learning and so make satisfactory progress.
124. National test results in 2000 for pupils aged 11 were below average in comparison to all and similar schools. The proportion reaching the higher level 5 was around the national average. Inspection evidence reflects these results as more able pupils are able to deduce the likely outcomes of enquiries without having to carry out the practical investigations. However, they rely too heavily on adults for support, consequently they are not sufficiently challenged to develop their scientific thinking skills to a higher level.
125. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound knowledge of aspects of science including characteristics of soil, the food chain and micro-organisms. Good teaching ensures that pupils quickly grasp the concept of common symbols and they use these effectively in diagrams of conventional electrical circuits. Whilst pupils understand the principles of fair testing they become confused when explaining the need to control variables in experiments. They can make comparisons and predictions but are not yet deciding on their own methods to answer questions and record their findings.
126. Science is well led by the newly appointed co-ordinator. Results of national assessments have been analysed and there is a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Effective use is made of national and local guidance in curriculum planning and this is beginning to support teaching. Practice in teachers' assessment is inconsistent and the co-ordinator does not at present have enough opportunity to monitor or influence teaching. There is an appropriate action plan, which clearly identifies steps to be taken to improve pupils' scientific enquiry and investigative skills, but this has not yet had sufficient time to impact on teaching. Resources are adequate overall and are being reviewed in the light of a newly introduced scheme of work. Effective use is made of the grounds and local area.
127. The school is well prepared to make improvements through tackling shortcomings in science.

ART

128. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two art lessons. Judgements have been made by talking to pupils, examining their work, discussions with the co-ordinator, looking at teachers' planning and from displays around the school.
129. From this limited evidence, standards in art at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are better than typically found for pupils at the same age.
130. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of 11, they have experienced a broad range of appropriate work and used a range of media. They are given opportunities to

research and identify characteristics of the work of a number of artists, including Lowry, Picasso, Monet and Van Gogh.

131. Teachers have successfully encouraged pupils to use art to express their creative ideas in many different ways. A range of visual displays are used as a source of inspiration and stimulation. Pupils' learning is enriched by the contribution of a visit from an artist in residence. As a result, every child and adult in the school participated in a project to produce a permanent display of ceramics. They designed individual tiles representing aspects of their lives in and out of school. They describe the process confidently and show great pride in the high quality finished products. Year 1 pupils painted some impressive self portraits. Initially, they explored mark making and were introduced to appropriate vocabulary to describe these: blobs, lines, stripes. They observed their faces carefully and used wax crayons to draw them, they then changed their expression and represented their images using different media.
132. Art is effectively used to support pupils' work in history. In a Year 3 class, Egyptian pictures and artefacts inspire pupils to make clay models of Anubis, an Egyptian god depicted as a jackal. They design their own tomb paintings and represent them on plaster tiles. Year 5 pupils are taught to use pencils to represent depth on a flat surface, consequently they use these new skills to produce very detailed observational drawings. They have studied Monmatre and experimented to create different textures by changing the ways to apply paint to paper.
133. Year 6 pupils have studied the work of a local artist. They gave careful consideration to the quality and range of colours used to paint a landscape. This provided a reference point for them to mix a limited range of colours and tones to use when painting their own landscapes. Pupils confidently described how they had worked through the process of exploring effects whilst developing their work. Whilst in some classes sketch books are used effectively for pupils to develop their ideas, this practice is not consistent throughout Key Stage 2.
134. The good teaching observed was characterised by planning of well sequenced lessons. As a result, pupils develop their artistic skills and techniques and approach their work with confidence. A Year 1 class had produced attractive weavings using materials of different textures and thickness. They then observed their patterns and used pastels to copy them. Effective use of additional adult help enabled all pupils to achieve success. Year 4 pupils were translating two-dimensional drawings into three-dimensional models. As a consequence of the teacher's good guidance and questioning pupils were able to refine and improve their work as it progressed. The majority of pupils concentrated and worked hard throughout the lesson because they were well motivated and interested in the activity.
135. The art co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She has a clear overview of the subject and has started to build up a portfolio of work to support teachers in maintaining their high expectations of pupils' achievement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

136. During the inspection, no lessons of design and technology were able to be observed. Judgements have been made based upon discussions with pupils and teachers, examination of pupils' work and looking at curriculum plans. This evidence indicates that pupils' attainment at age 7 and age eleven is around that expected for their age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection as teachers now have the required expertise and confidence to teach the subject effectively. This is because teachers have attended training courses and the school now uses the national guidance documents to support teachers in their planning and teaching of the subject.

137. Pupils in Year 1 have illustrated the story of 'Goldilocks' using their knowledge of simple levers, springs and sliding mechanisms to make parts of the illustrations move, for example, a pop-up bear. Year 2 pupils used appropriate techniques in their work on textiles to make glove puppets. They approached the task in an organised way, looking at examples of puppets, trying out designs, listing materials they needed and practising joining techniques such as sewing and sticking. They show pride in their finished puppets and are able to describe how they might improve them.
138. Year 5 pupils have designed and made musical instruments. Their evaluations identify what works well and what needs modifying. Pupils in Year 6 worked hard on designs for outdoor shelters. Preliminary research on materials and structures guided their initial ideas and helped them design one shelter for a desert island and another one for bicycles. The teacher linked this work effectively to outdoor education during the Year 6 residential trip. Unfortunately, the shelters were not built because of inclement weather. However, pupils show that they can develop a clear idea of what has to be done, choose appropriate materials and try out particular techniques, such as reinforcing and strengthening. They are aware of safety procedures when working with tools such as saws and can distinguish between what works well and what can be improved.
139. Generally, pupils are developing appropriate designing and making skills. The curriculum is planned effectively to cover the programmes of study and there are sufficient tools and materials.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

140. During the inspection only one geography and one history lesson were observed. Judgements have been made by talking to pupils, examining their work, discussions with co-ordinators, looking at teachers' planning and from displays around the school. This evidence indicates that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 is generally around that expected for their age in both geography and history.
141. Key Stage 1 pupils talk enthusiastically about their geography work. Both Year 1 and 2 pupils are progressively building their knowledge about other countries and places through a topic based on a bear who is taken on journeys with parents, children or staff. As a result of this topic, pupils learn to use geographical vocabulary such as "travel", "passport", "weather", "near and far". They can identify a variety of places around Great Britain and the world and locate them on a globe or map. They understand the different types of weather experienced in around the world and compare these to that experienced in their locality. Valuable and effective displays further support pupils' learning and maintain their interest in appropriate projects.
142. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils develop a satisfactory range of geographical skills including an understanding of human and environmental factors. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils understand geographical features in Britain and other parts of the world. Year 6 pupils are able to identify the various stages of a river from source to mouth. They can explain physical features of rivers and valleys and use terms such as "erosion" and "tributary" correctly. Pupils have positive attitudes and are enthusiastic about their work.
143. Teacher's good use of questioning in a Year 5 class enabled pupils to build on their previous knowledge of water and rivers and extend it to transport, cargoes and irrigation. The teacher's enthusiasm and good subject knowledge helped them to extend and share their ideas confidently using appropriate geographical language.
144. Across both Key Stages the curriculum is enriched by a range of field trips both within the locality and beyond.

145. In history, pupils at Key Stage 1 are developing a sense of chronology. They understand that history is about the past and understand the principles of “then and now” using appropriate vocabulary. They know that information about the past can be discovered by looking at photographs and buildings, from books and by asking people about their experiences. Teachers make effective use of the visits within the locality. Year 1 pupils comparing old and new houses used a digital camera to take photographs to illustrate their recordings back at school. High quality displays and collections of artefacts motivate and stimulate the pupils’ interest in history.
146. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have studied a range of historical periods including Greeks, Romans, Vikings, Egyptians, Aztecs and the Victorians. They understand that through researching primary and secondary sources such as artefacts, reference books, photographs and the internet they can discover further information about periods of history. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their class museum. that includes a range of interesting evidence to stimulate enquiry and support learning. Year 4 pupils were keen to state how a visit to Caerleon to become Romans had furthered their understanding and enjoyment of the subject. Thorough planning and perceptive questioning supported good teaching in Year 2. As part of their work on Remembrance Day, pupils interviewed a visitor about his experiences as a child during the war. Pupils developed their historical study skills well as they asked carefully considered questions such as “What’s a doodlebug?” They empathised with the plight of families during the war because the teacher used questioning well to encourage them to think and extend their ideas. For example when she asked how German families might have felt, the response was “the same”.
147. Throughout the school support from parents and members of the community in providing artefacts and in talking to the pupils has a positive impact on the quality of their learning experiences.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

148. Only one lesson and two group sessions of information technology were seen during the inspection. Judgements have been made based upon these observations, discussions with pupils, interviews with teachers and examination of curriculum plans and pupils' work.
149. There has been some improvement in raising standards in aspects of information technology since the previous inspection, mainly in communicating through the use of word-processing at the end of Key Stage 2. Hardware has been updated, more appropriate learning resources purchased and teachers are becoming more confident as they use new technologies themselves. However, while the school has development plans for the subject these have not been completed and overall standards in information technology are below average throughout the school.
150. Standards in both key stages are variable across the different strands of information technology. Pupils do not have much understanding of controlling and modelling, although some of the oldest pupils can programme a four-wheeled vehicle to carry out a series of set moves. Similarly, in communicating pictorially and handling information graphically and with spreadsheets, pupils' knowledge and understanding are limited. However, they are confident users and quick learners, which shows in the way many pupils have mastered word processing skills. Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the use of new technologies in modern society and the effects on their lives.

151. All pupils enjoy using new technologies and they work together well in pairs and small groups. Two Year 6 girls were so motivated to complete the words of a song they had composed that they spent break time word-processing and printing copies for their friends. They set up the page in portrait, organised the text by cutting, copying and pasting, used the spell checker correctly and selected appropriate fonts, styles and sizes for the print.
152. The school relies heavily on the support of voluntary helpers to supervise individuals and small groups. While this assistance is very much appreciated, sometimes sessions are disrupted when support is not available throughout the week because the helper has other engagements. In addition, the limited amount of modern equipment means that pupils' time is severely rationed and individuals often only have two or three minutes on a machine. In Year 2, pupils took turns to work individually with a helper to complete a 100 number square. The helper was appropriately supportive and most pupils completed the task successfully. However, high attaining pupils found the activity easy and there was not enough time to allow these pupils to explore patterns and sequences; a challenge the computer program was highly suited for.
153. While teachers are beginning to be more secure in their knowledge and understanding of information technology, they, too, do not generally have sufficient an overview to be able easily to help pupils when they encounter difficulties. In a Year 5 lesson exploring the nature of fields and the classification of information, the pupils' lack of previous experience hindered their ability to devise a suitable questionnaire to identify the preferred choice of Christmas presents by different groups of children. The teacher tried to break down the learning into easy stages but it took him a long time to find a level of understanding for the pupils to begin to make progress.
154. While all teachers are beginning to introduce new technologies to support teaching and learning, there is no clear guidance to ensure that activities are matched appropriately to the stage and rate of learning of different pupils. This should be remedied as the school embarks on a major nationally funded development programme. During the inspection sufficient evidence was seen to indicate that teachers are keen to take advantage of the opportunities that information technology has to support teaching and learning. In Year 1, the contents of lunchboxes were shown using a block graph as part of a mathematics topic; in Year 2, appropriate games and challenges reinforce literacy and numeracy; in Year 3, the Internet has been used successfully to download information about the history project on Tutankhamun; in Year 4, a digital camera was used to record the class visit to Caerleon; in Year 5, pupils have collected and presented data in different forms; and in Year 6, pupils are desk top publishing a newspaper. In addition, pupils with special educational needs are making increasing use of new technologies to improve their recording and communication skills.
155. The head teacher is the information technology co-ordinator and he has worked with the local authority's consultant to raise staff awareness and prepare for the major development programme starting in the spring term. Funds raised by parents have been used effectively to purchase and lease additional new computers and software, supplementing considerable school expenditure.
156. The school is well aware of the shortcomings in information technology and is on course to raise standards further over the next year.

MUSIC

157. During the inspection, only two lessons of music were able to be seen. This was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on pupils' attainment (except in singing) or on the teaching of music.
158. Since the last inspection, the attainment in singing has improved. Pupils' singing in both key stages is marked by enthusiasm and enjoyment. Pupils sing songs tunefully and with rhythm. Year 1 pupils sustain concentration well in music lessons as a result of the teacher's high expectations and challenging activities which motivate and interest them. They know the names of simple instruments and can control the volume of sound they make when singing. They sing familiar songs from memory and accompany them with a simple beat on a percussion instrument.
159. Year 6 pupils sing with expression and perform the songs rhythmically. In their lesson, the teacher gave pupils the opportunity to practise songs for an imminent performance of 'Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat'. Teaching in this lesson was unsatisfactory because there was no guidance or planning to improve pupils' performance, the CD player was not working properly and an assembly had over-run.
160. Pupils in the lunchtime club sing well because of the expertise and encouragement of the music co-ordinator. They improve their performance and pay good attention to the overall affect they are trying to achieve with particular songs. A small number of pupils attend recorder clubs and music tuition lessons. The music curriculum is further enhanced by joint performances with other schools and performances at a local supermarket at Christmas time. The school has also recorded two compact discs of songs.
161. The school reports that currently, composing and recording of compositions is not being given enough emphasis in the music curriculum. However, the school has created a higher profile for listening and appreciating music. As a result of the school's decision to concentrate on implementing the national initiatives of literacy and numeracy, some of the actions planned for music have not been achieved.
162. There are shortcomings in the quality and number of tuned and non-pitched instruments with the result that pupils' use of them is restricted.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

163. Only two lessons of physical education could be seen during the inspection. Consequently, no overall judgement about the standard of pupils' attainment in physical education is possible. However, all pupils leave school aged 11 being able to swim 25 metres and they are aware of the principles of water safety.
164. In the lessons seen, the teaching was generally sound and pupils gymnastic and games skills were as expected for their age. In a Year 1 lesson developing team skills, pupils generally worked co-operatively and showed an appreciation of fair play and the need for simple rules. The teacher planned the lesson well with an appropriate build up of skill development activities ending with a competitive game of throwing a beanbag accurately to knock over skittles. In a Year 4 gymnastic lesson on twisting and balancing, pupils learnt to observe each other carefully and make helpful observations on how to improve their movements. The teacher kept the session lively and pupils joined in enthusiastically. A few boys behaved inappropriately on occasions, rolling around and not paying attention, but these were isolated incidents and did not disrupt the learning of others.
165. The school has a balanced programme of activities covering athletics, dance, games, swimming and outdoor activities that meet requirements. The co-ordinator is new to

the school and he is keen to raise standards by developing a more integrated programme where pupils see how the skills developed in one area can be refined and used in another. He is particularly interested in building up the extra-curricular provision. Sessions for tag rugby, tennis, football, cricket, net ball and dance are well attended by Key Stage 2 pupils. Opportunities for younger pupils are being planned to focus on special events that do not require a long-term commitment after school, as these are not judged appropriate for this age.

166. The school benefits from a large gym and covered swimming pool. Although these facilities are in need of modernisation, they are valuable assets. The pool is used in the summer by all classes and by other local schools. The gym is spacious but unheated and on winter mornings the cold is quite daunting for the youngest pupils. Other resources are good and well used. Apparatus and equipment are sufficient and of good quality. There is an appropriately marked out grassed area adjacent to the school that also includes an adventure playground.