

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Castleford

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108261

Headteacher: Mrs E F Greenoff

Reporting inspector: Miss K Manning
20267

Dates of inspection: 13th – 17th November 2000

Inspection number: 225085

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior and infant

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Pontefract Road
Castleford
West Yorkshire

Postcode: WF10 4JB

Telephone number: 01977 723060

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. S Durcan

Date of previous inspection: 14th October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
K Manning 20267	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Mathematics History Physical education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements. Teaching and learning. Leadership and management.
T Smith 19741	Lay inspector		Partnership with parents and carers.
Ann Welch 31012	Team inspector	Geography English Music Art and design English as an additional language Equal opportunities	Quality and range of opportunities for learning. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
K Roberts 8769	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology	Pupils' welfare, health and safety.

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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school. It is of average size, with 89 boys and 108 girls in classes from reception to Year 6. A further three boys and nine girls attend the reception class part-time. This number increases each term. When they start school in the reception class, many four-year-olds speak English well. They have begun to read and write and they know how to count. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds but most share the Catholic faith. They are predominantly from English families and all speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is similar to many other schools. Thirty-five pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs because they have learning, physical or emotional difficulties. Of these, four pupils have statements of special needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. It is led and managed well and most of the teaching is good or very good. By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve as well as they can in English and science. There is still some work to do in order to raise standards in mathematics. Pupils are keen to learn and behave well. The school receives an above average-sized income because they are successful at raising extra money and gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher, governors and senior teachers provide good leadership for its work.
- Two thirds of the teaching is good or better.
- Children in the reception class get a very good start to their education. They progress rapidly in their learning and are well prepared for their work on the National Curriculum.
- Good teaching means that, by the time they leave the school, many pupils achieve standards in English and science that are above the national averages.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Their enthusiasm for school and relationships with one another and adults are very good.
- Its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and leads to them being mature and sensible.
- It has very effective relationships with parents.

What could be improved

- Work in mathematics, which is not always challenging enough for the brightest pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- The number of lower attaining pupils who reach the expected level in mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved at a good rate since the previous inspection in October 1996. All of the key issues have been tackled systematically. There is more good and very good teaching than previously. Some of this is the result of training but much of it is because there are now good quality schemes of work to help teachers plan lessons in all subjects. These also ensure that pupils know more about other cultures than they did at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers consistently remind pupils that handwriting has to be neat and tidy and consequently pupils try their best. The only key issue that has not been tackled in full is the one concerned with teachers' monitoring of teaching and checking standards. While the school has done this very successfully in English and mathematics, teachers with responsibility for other subjects have not had the chance to monitor in the same depth. This is something that is planned to happen over the next year. The school's results in National Curriculum tests are increasing at a similar pace to the national trend and it is on course to achieve the targets it has set for raising standards in tests in 2001.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	D	A	A*	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
mathematics	D	E	C	C	
science	C	D	A	A	

Standards have improved considerably in the last year. By the end of Year 6, standards were well above the national average in English and science. When compared with similar schools, pupils' test results were in the top five per cent of all schools for English and well above average in science. In mathematics, pupils' performance was close to average both nationally and when compared with similar schools. However, test results indicate that pupils have not made enough progress when standards are compared with their prior attainment. This is a key area for the school to improve. The school set realistic targets in English and mathematics for 11-year-olds and exceeded them in both subjects.

By the end of Year 2, standards were close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, fewer pupils than in most schools achieved the higher level in writing or mathematics. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance was below average in English and average in mathematics. It was better in mathematics because more pupils reached the expected level than they did in reading or writing.

In information and communication technology, standards are typical of seven and 11-year-olds.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to work and school. They listen attentively and concentrate well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Pupils act sensibly and are polite and friendly to one another and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils form very good relationships with other children and adults. They show a mature and growing understanding of other people.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are satisfactory and reflect the fact that pupils enjoy their time in school.

Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and sense of responsibility all reflect the caring Catholic ethos of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Most is now good or better. In the lessons seen it was good in 50 per cent and in a further 17 per cent it was very good. In the remaining 33 per cent it was satisfactory. Teaching is particularly strong in the Foundation Stage although good teaching was seen in every class. Teachers are good at teaching the basics of literacy and numeracy.

Teachers' good knowledge of most subjects increases pupils' understanding. Sharing the aims of lessons provides pupils with good knowledge of their learning. Very good relationships improve pupils' concentration, interest and effort. The brisk pace of lessons keeps pupils attending to their work. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and make good progress. However, in mathematics, work is not always pitched at lower attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6. Although teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, they do not always write comments to help them know where they have gone wrong or to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is enriched by good links with the local community and church. Visitors and educational outings bring subjects alive and promote pupils' personal development. The school provides a satisfactory range of after-school activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The strong Catholic ethos of the school helps promote pupils' spiritual development. Social and moral development is taught in lessons, assemblies and in the day-to-day life of the school. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is now good. Pupils learn about a far wider range of cultures and traditions than at the time of the previous report.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and keep a close check on their personal development.

There is a good relationship between the school and parents. Everyone works together for the benefit of pupils. For example, for several years, parents have run a mathematics club once a week, giving pupils the chance to play mathematical games in an informal setting. As well as helping pupils develop skills in number, shape and space it also contributes to their social development.

Although the procedures for assessing pupils' achievement and learning are good in English, mathematics and science, they are not so structured in other subjects. For example, in physical education there is no agreed system of recording what pupils can do. Subject co-ordinators have identified this as the next step to take in order to continue to improve the school's provision.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, overall. The headteacher provides good leadership for the work of the school and has set realistic priorities for the school to continue to improve. The deputy headteacher and co-ordinators play a major part in setting and pursuing targets and play their part well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities ably. Through their commitment, they help give direction to the work of school. They make sure that the school is always striving for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, governors and co-ordinators have a good view of what needs to be done to improve the school's performance.
The strategic use of resources	There are sufficient qualified teachers and support staff to teach the full curriculum. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning

Pupils' performance in tests is compared with local, similar and all other schools. The school does this well. Decisions about the curriculum are reviewed at least annually to see if they are effective in maintaining standards. Governors and the senior management team try to ensure that they get the best possible value for money and that pupils have good quality resources to help them learn. Parents' views about the school are sought on matters such as homework.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents are pleased that their children like school.• They believe that their children are making good progress in school.• Parents think that most of the teaching is good.• They are glad that their children are expected to work hard and do their best.• They are pleased that teachers help their children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.• Some parents are not happy with the amount of homework their children get.• Parents would welcome more information about how their children are getting on.

About a quarter of parents returned questionnaires and eight gave their views at a meeting prior to the inspection. Most of these had very positive views about the school and were pleased with the efforts made on behalf of their children. Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. Parents' concerns about homework and lack of information are unfounded. All pupils are given homework regularly. It helps them understand the work they are doing in school and prepares the oldest pupils for secondary school. The information given to parents is useful; letters tell them about school events and reports are clear about what their children can do. There is an appropriate range of after-school clubs and activities for pupils, though these are mostly for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 When children start in the reception class, their achievements vary widely but are mainly typical of four-year-olds. Most children know about books and numbers and have a wide experience outside their own homes and families. Inspection findings are that children make very good progress in all the areas of learning¹ in the Foundation Stage. Consequently by the time they are five, most children achieve many of the early goals expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development, reading and writing, mathematics, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development.
- 2 Standards have been low in the past two years, despite good and improving teaching. However, this is because of the higher than average number of pupils in Year 6 classes who have had special educational needs. Consequently, fewer pupils have reached the expected and higher levels and this has brought the school's results down.
- 3 Standards in English improved considerably in National Curriculum tests in 2000. The results of tests for seven-year-olds showed that standards in reading and writing were in line with the national average. However, a significant number of pupils failed to reach the expected level in reading and no pupils reached a higher level in writing; this brought down the school's results when compared with similar schools. Teachers have already begun to remedy this situation by giving more support to pupils with their reading, more opportunities for pupils to write and by teaching them to write in a cursive style. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards were well above the national average and more than half of the pupils achieved a higher level. This was a very successful year, with pupils' performance being in the top five per cent when compared with similar schools. The school exceeded the targets it had set for the year 2000 and has set fairly challenging targets for 2001. Inspection findings confirm the school's results in tests; seven-year-olds achieve standards that are typical for their age and by the time pupils are in Year 6 standards are well above average.
- 4 Standards in mathematics also improved last year. In National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2000, standards were in line with the national average and almost all pupils reached the expected level. However, fewer pupils than in most schools reached a higher level even though the same pupils often did well in English and science. This is one of the reasons why teachers view this as an area for further development. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards were in line with the national average and a proportion of pupils similar to most other schools reached a higher level. An area of concern here is that a significant number of pupils failed to achieve the expected level and when compared with their prior attainment these pupils had not made sufficient progress. This too is an area for further development, which the school intends to tackle by giving greater emphasis to mathematics in booster classes. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance is average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Despite this lack of achievement on the part of higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2, and lower attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6, the school exceeded the target set for the year 2000. Inspection

¹ National policy descriptions of what young children should be able to do by the end of the reception class.

findings confirm that standards match the levels expected of seven-year-olds by the end of Year 2 and 11-year-olds by the end of Year 6.

- 5 Standards in science continue to be average for seven and 11-year-olds. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2000 showed that standards were in line with the national average and that far more pupils than in most other schools reached a higher level. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards were well above the national average. It was a similar picture when pupils' performance was compared with similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that standards are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- 6 In national tests at the end of Year 2, boys have performed slightly better than girls in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers have analysed test results and found no apparent reason for this. There are no significant differences between boys' and girls' results of tests in Year 6.
- 7 When judged together, standards in all three subjects are improving at a similar rate to the national trend. This means that despite changes to the number of pupils with special educational needs the school is managing to overcome the challenges presented by each group of pupils and helps pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- 8 Pupils with special educational needs, whose difficulties are identified, make good progress towards the targets of their individual education plans. They do particularly well in English, where all pupils reached the expected level in last year's tests. Throughout the school, they benefit from working in small groups and the time that they have to read with adults. Those in Year 3 benefit from additional support in literacy and pupils in Year 6 are given a further push from booster classes.
- 9 Standards in information technology are typical of what is expected of seven and 11-year-olds. The school has done well to maintain standards despite the shortage of computers and software. When links to the Internet are operational, standards will rise even higher.
- 10 In all other subjects except art and design, standards match the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. In art and design, standards are above average for seven-year-olds and typical for 11-year-olds. In geography, pupils have a firm understanding of the local area and the countries they study. In history, pupils know about English history and that of other civilizations by the time they leave the school. In both subjects they are good at researching facts from books and other sources. In music, pupils benefit from the many opportunities they have to listen to and play musical instruments and to sing in the choir and in concerts and assemblies. In physical education, many pupils are good at games and nearly all swim the recommended distance by the time they are in Year 6. They are competent gymnasts and enjoy athletics and dancing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 Pupils' attitudes to school are good, as was noted in the last inspection, and this makes a positive contribution to their learning. The attitudes of children under five are good and, at times, very good. The sensitive and caring way they are welcomed into the school community helps them adjust to school life very easily and they quickly learn to listen carefully and not to call out during discussions with their teacher. Most pupils, in all year groups, enjoy going to school and their enthusiasm is very apparent as they talk

about their favourite lessons and activities. There is an eagerness on their part to acquire knowledge, they respond very well to challenging questions, and, when set work, they keep at it with or without adult supervision. Pupils with special educational needs also have positive attitudes to learning because of the extra support they get and the success they enjoy from activities planned to match their needs. They show increasing confidence because their teachers take care to include them in all activities.

- 12 Pupils' behaviour is also good. In lessons, they listen to what their teachers say and settle down and concentrate on their work. Lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions with happy chatter between pupils and the ladies who supervise them. During breaks, pupils of all ages mix and play in a friendly way. Pupils, parents and teachers agree that incidents of bullying are rare. A small number of pupils have been excluded from school for short periods in the last year; this reflects the school's insistence on good behaviour.
- 13 The school has maintained the high standards of personal development achieved at the last inspection. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good; this strength underlies the caring Christian ethos of a school where pupils feel happy and valued. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities such as tidying up and helping their teachers to prepare. As they get older, pupils take more responsibility for a range of important jobs including setting up the hall ready for assembly, checking the equipment for the weekly mathematics club and helping younger pupils at lunchtime. These duties are carried out in a sensible and trustworthy manner. Many of the pupils are mature and confident for their age. This was evident when pupils in Year 6 presented a very moving presentation of their work about Remembrance Day in an assembly.
- 14 Attendance remains satisfactory. Unauthorised absence has fallen significantly since the last inspection and is now just above the average for primary schools across the country. Punctuality is good. Almost all pupils arrive on time and are settled in class promptly at the start of lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 15 There is more good and very good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection. In the lessons seen it was good in fifty per cent and in a further 17 per cent it was very good. In the remaining 33 per cent it was satisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school and there was good teaching in every class. Classroom assistants and nursery nurses also make a significant contribution to the quality of the teaching. The school is at a stage where it has a good idea of strengths and weaknesses in teaching; because of this, it is well placed to keep the improvement going.
- 16 Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of reading and writing and use the National Literacy Strategy to good effect in both key stages. In literacy lessons, infant pupils are taught how to use pictures or sound out letters to help them read unfamiliar words. This gives them the confidence to have a go at quite difficult texts and pupils are pleased when they finally get the words right. The previous inspection highlighted handwriting and the presentation of work as areas that needed improvement. As a response, teachers now emphasise the importance of punctuation and spelling in written work and presentation in English and all other subjects is much improved. Teachers realised that not enough pupils were reaching the higher level in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and have taken steps to improve the

situation by placing greater emphasis on shared writing activities and teaching pupils to join their letters.

- 17 While teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to provide lessons that are fast and pacy, there are one or two aspects of planning that need to be changed if the school is to raise standards in mathematics to the same high levels as English and science. In Years 1 and 2, the brightest pupils are sometimes given work which is too easy for them and not enough pupils reach the expected level by the end of Year 6. This brings the school's results down and needs to be remedied. Apart from this, teachers make mathematics lessons enjoyable and the emphasis on mental mathematics means that many pupils know their multiplication tables by heart.
- 18 A strength of the teaching is the good provision made for pupils with special educational needs. This is most noticeable in the way they are given extra help and support in lessons. Pupils' difficulties are diagnosed early in the Foundation Stage and prompt intervention means that many pupils catch up quickly. Further up the school, additional support for small groups helps lower attaining pupils in Year 3 to improve their reading and writing and often re-awakens their interest in books. Pupils in Year 6 are given an extra push to help them do as well as they can in National Curriculum tests through *booster classes*. The headteacher also works with a small group to try to raise standards in mathematics. Both of these initiatives have been successful in raising standards by helping lower attaining pupils reach the expected level in English but less so in mathematics. This is something the headteacher intends to remedy in the next year, by giving more time to mathematics. Teachers make good use of the time and talents of classroom assistants and other adults to work with small groups in lessons. Very often, this is planned meticulously and is based on each child's targets in his or her individual learning programme. As a result of all this support, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- 19 Teachers use good methods to raise standards in most subjects. In a very good history lesson in Year 1, the teacher encouraged pupils to think about their grandparents' teddy bears and this helped them see how precious toys had been kept for many years. The topic was enriched considerably by the way the teacher had asked parents and families to complete a questionnaire about their favourite toys and to lend some to the school for a display. In a very good physical education lesson in Year 5, the teacher helped pupils improve their performance by explaining the rules of invasive games as she encouraged them to practise passing and evading an opponent. Because they could see a reason for developing the skills pupils made rapid progress.
- 20 A further strength of the teaching is the way that teachers manage pupils. Their success is built on the very good relationships that all staff have with pupils. Because teachers treat pupils with respect and are concerned about their well-being, most pupils respond by trying hard to please their teachers.
- 21 Teachers make better use of information from assessments of pupils' work to plan the next stage of learning in English and mathematics than in other subjects. Since the previous inspection, considerably more value has been gained from the way in which teachers use the information from the results of National Curriculum and other regular tests in English mathematics and science. By recording pupils' achievements, teachers track their progress effectively. In this way, they can judge if pupils are doing their best, or are underachieving in the light of past attainments. Teachers recognise the need to use similar strategies to record progress and plan work in other subjects; this is a priority for development since not all of the other subjects have a system of recording what pupils can do. A strength of teachers' day-to-day assessment is the

good use they make of questioning to find out what pupils have remembered. This was evident in a good music lesson in Year 4 when the teacher prompted pupils to use technical words, such as ostinato. The only weakness in assessment is that although teachers mark work conscientiously they do not always provide written comments to help pupils know where they have gone wrong.

- 22 All teachers set homework that is relevant to what pupils are learning in school. From reception class onwards, pupils are encouraged to take books home to read with parents or carers. As they get older, the amount of homework given increases and they are asked to learn spellings and multiplication tables. Each week they are tested on what they have learned and it is evident from results that pupils benefit considerably from help at home.

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

- 23 The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum to promote pupils' intellectual, physical and moral development effectively. The school has remedied the limitations in information communications technology evident at the time of the last inspection. The school offers children in the Foundation Stage a stimulating programme of learning experiences, which provides a very good balance between play and more structured work. The curriculum is based on the early learning goals and gives children a very good preparation for work in the National Curriculum in Year 1. Health, drugs abuse and sex education are integrated effectively with science and religious education.
- 24 The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies with success. This has already raised standards in English at the end of Year 6 to well above the national average. However, the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 do not have equal opportunities to reach the higher levels because there are not enough opportunities to use their handwriting skills. Similarly, the lower attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not have equal opportunities to make progress in mathematics, as their work is not matched to their prior attainment.
- 25 Contrary to the views expressed by a large number of parents through the questionnaire, the school provides sufficient extra-curricular activities. They currently include a choir, which makes good contributions to music, a new dance and drama club and sports such as netball, football and kwik cricket. Plans are also in place to start a computer club in the near future. In addition, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have an opportunity to take part in residential adventure activities that help to develop their social skills and general confidence.
- 26 Good links have been maintained with the local and wider community, and these continue to enrich the range of pupils' experiences and contribute to their learning and personal development. Visits to places of interest are used effectively to support the work pupils do in class, particularly in history, and visitors, such as those who took part in the recent literacy fortnight, also provide a good range of first-hand experiences for them. Pupils' awareness of the needs of others is raised through generous support for charity and occasional links with elderly residents. There are well-established links with other local schools, and effective arrangements are in place for transferring pupils from Year 6 to secondary school.
- 27 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and has improved since the last inspection to become a very strong

feature, central to the work of the school. The school's ethos, the quality of relationships and the quality of teaching contribute very positively to this aspect of school life.

- 28 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The aims of the school strongly reflect Christian values. All teachers and adults in the school share these aims and provide very good role models for pupils. Daily prayer helps pupils to think about what they hear and to reflect upon their own beliefs. The school recognises and respects the beliefs of other world faiths while promoting a very strong Catholic ethos, with very close links with the parish church. Prayer plays an important part in developing pupils' spirituality. Pupils in Year 6 shared their own prayers with the whole school in their *Remembrance Day* assembly. Their prayers, which showed a mature sensitivity to the suffering of others and to their own failings, were received very appreciatively with a caring and spiritual response from other pupils.
- 29 The school promotes a very strong moral code. It emphasises the care and respect that pupils should have for each other. Teachers' expectations of good behaviour and sanctions, including exclusion, are used when necessary. Pupils make the rules for their own class. This helps them understand what is right and wrong behaviour. As pupils get older they are given regular opportunities to consider wider moral and ethical issues, such as conservation of the world's resources. Pupils in Year 5, for example, were shocked by the amount of water they used every day without thinking when considering the struggle experienced by people in some parts of Africa to find enough water.
- 30 The school's provision for social development is very good. The very caring relationships in the school contribute strongly to pupils' very good attitudes to social development and self-discipline. Staff are very good role models for promoting values such as courtesy and respect for others. As a result, pupils are polite and courteous to one another; visitors are greeted with a smile and made to feel very welcome. There are monitors for many of the school's routine tasks. In Year 6, teachers encourage pupils to develop their responsibilities further by giving them tasks such as preparing the hall for assembly and helping younger pupils at lunchtime. Pupils learn how charity can improve the life of others and give donations to several charities. They are particularly proud of their contribution to the *Live at Home* charity when the choir takes part in an annual concert to help elderly people to continue to live in their own homes. The school regularly involves pupils in local sporting competitions and pupils in Year 5 take part in an annual residential visit, which helps to develop social skills in an unfamiliar setting.
- 31 Provision for cultural development was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection as there were few opportunities for pupils to encounter and understand the traditions and values from different cultural backgrounds. The school has worked hard to resolve this issue and provision is now good. Pupils learn of the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society when they study faiths such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Islam. In subjects such as English, history, geography, art and music, teachers plan work to allow pupils to learn of other cultures and traditions. The school promotes interest in good quality literature written for children and invites authors to visit and talk to pupils about their work. Studies of past societies in Greece and of contemporary ones in India and the West Indies help pupils to broaden their knowledge and to compare other cultures with their own. Field work in geography, and visits to local stately homes and museums in history, allow pupils to become steeped in local cultural traditions. In assemblies, pupils hear music by composers from many different cultures and this is

strengthened by visiting musicians to the school, such as an African drummer. In art, pupils are taught about the work of artists from a wide variety of traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 32 Pupils' welfare remains a high priority of the school. A suitable health and safety policy has now been produced, and is fully implemented. Pupils are supervised carefully throughout the day, and lunchtime routines are managed well. Arrangements for dealing with accidents and illness, and giving medicine are clear, and followed closely. Local authority procedures for child protection remain in place. The headteacher has designated responsibility for liaison with outside agencies if cases of abuse are suspected and is now properly trained to carry out the responsibilities associated with this role.
- 33 High standards of behaviour and discipline are promoted implicitly through the Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils are expected to exercise good self-discipline at all times and to take responsibility for their own actions. Bullying is not a problem, but effective measures are in place to deal with any incidents that may occasionally arise.
- 34 Attendance is monitored thoroughly. Registers are completed properly and all unexplained absences are followed up promptly. As a result, the rate of unauthorised absence has fallen significantly since the last inspection. There are no specific arrangements to encourage regular attendance. Inspection findings confirm that pupils enjoy coming to school.
- 35 There are good procedures for assessing pupils' learning. Teachers are given guidance about what to assess in the schemes of work for each subject. Tests are carried out at the age of five, and at the end of Years 2 to 6. Programmes of work for science and mathematics, for example, are planned to include regular tests and reading is checked regularly. A strength of the school's procedures for assessment is the way that teachers are beginning to use their judgements about what level pupils have achieved to predict where they will be at the end of each year and key stage. This is helping them to set realistic targets in English and mathematics and identify when pupils are not making the progress they should. The only area identified by the school as needing further work is that teachers do not always make enough use of the results of tests to pitch work at the right level for all pupils. A weakness to daily assessment is that while teachers mark pupils' work regularly and praise pupils for their efforts, they do not always write the sorts of comments that help pupils know what they have done wrong.

- 36 The headteacher and subject co-ordinators examine the results of tests to identify weaknesses in pupils' learning and to meet the need for improvements in areas such as writing. Given the amount of information available and efforts to raise teachers' awareness, the school is in a good position to raise standards through assessment.
- 37 Procedures for checking on and supporting pupils' personal development, although informal, are good and teachers use them every day. Such procedures work to good effect in a small school, because teachers know all pupils well. The *Special Mention Assemblies* provide motivation and reward for pupils and promote academic and personal endeavour.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 38 The school continues to enjoy strong support from parents. They are happy with the standards achieved and indicate that they would feel comfortable approaching teachers with any worries or concerns. Parents are actively encouraged to support their children's learning, and respond well. Almost all of them have signed up to the home-school agreement. A significant number regularly work in school, providing valuable assistance with activities such as reading or the weekly mathematics club. Homework is set regularly in all classes and most parents appreciate what is provided. The Friends' Association remains active and gives generous support to the school through organised fund-raising and social events. Parents of children starting in the reception class are well informed about the school's routines and procedures and given clear guidance about its expectations.
- 39 Governors are committed whole-heartedly to involving parents in their children's education. One of the successful ways they try to do this is by providing opportunities for training and courses for parents. These courses are well attended by parents whose children attend St Josephs and other schools.
- 40 Parents continue to be kept well informed about their children's progress and also receive a regular flow of correspondence to let them know what is going on generally. The prospectus does not meet requirements in that there is no statement to let parents know that they have a right to withdraw their children from religious education and acts of collective worship. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved from the time the teacher has an initial concern and kept fully informed about subsequent developments.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 41 Good leadership by the headteacher has enabled the school to tackle the key issues from the previous inspection successfully. The need to remedy important weaknesses in the curriculum and increase the amount of good teaching has been met through systematic monitoring of some teaching, training and discussions with staff. Gaps in health and safety procedures were filled swiftly and effectively. The need to improve the quality of pupils' work has also been met, though this remains something that teachers continue to emphasise. The headteacher keeps up to date with national initiatives and ensures that the school has all of the documents and policies necessary to meet statutory requirements to guide teachers. This means that the newly appointed headteacher will be in a good position to take over the leadership and management of the school in January of next year.

- 42 The headteacher has built a strong and supportive team of teachers, non-teaching assistants and parents. Everyone pulls together for the sake of pupils and as a result morale is high and the school runs smoothly. This was evident when a temporary teacher had to be found at short notice during the inspection. This was done in a calm and efficient manner so that despite the short notice the supply teacher was able to fit into the school very easily and there was no disruption to pupils' learning, which continued at a steady pace.
- 43 The school has a clear and detailed plan for development. Targets for improvement to the school's provision and for raising standards are given priority and the action taken to achieve them is determined in a systematic way. Planning for improvement is backed by a comprehensive financial plan that pinpoints how money is to be spent and the cost of each initiative. The headteacher keeps a close eye on how well the school is doing and governors in turn ask her to be accountable for the school's success. All of this means that governors have a sharp overview of what is happening in school and will be in a good position to provide guidance and help to the new headteacher.
- 44 Governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities towards the school. They are involved in setting targets for raising standards in English and mathematics and also prepared to set targets for the work of the headteacher in line with proposed initiatives for appraising the work of teachers.
- 45 Co-ordinators work hard and manage their subjects well. As a response to the previous report they have adopted good quality schemes of work and they are confident that the school is ready to implement the new National Curriculum 2000. They have started to try out systems for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do because they recognise that in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, this is the next step to take in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. Although co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning, they have not all had the chance to observe their colleagues teaching and in some subjects do not keep a regular check on pupils' work. This is something they are keen to get their teeth into.
- 46 Financial planning and control continue to be good. Governors and the headteacher work together to set and agree the budget. Throughout the year, governors continue to work with the headteacher and make regular checks on spending. At the same time, the school secretary exercises good control of day-to-day spending within the limits agreed by governors. Through the conscientious work of the school's secretary, financial administration is efficient and unobtrusive. Action has been taken on all points raised for improvement at the last audit. Governors ensure that all additional funding is used for its intended purpose.
- 47 Governors and the headteacher understand the principles of best value and are well aware of the need to make the best use of finances. They use information from National Curriculum tests to compare the school's results with other schools, both locally and nationally. Spending is targeted on where it will have the best impact on standards, such as buying new computers in order to raise standards in information and communication technology. Parents are consulted on matters such as homework and the school has a good idea of its strengths and weaknesses.
- 48 There is a satisfactory match between the numbers, experience and qualifications of teachers and the needs of the planned curriculum. Good procedures are in place to introduce new teachers to the school so that pupils' learning is not disturbed. A staff handbook provides them with valuable information about the school's routines and procedures. All staff have been trained to teach according to the National Literacy and

Numeracy Strategies. The school has successfully continued to appraise the work of teachers and the headteacher has supported staff as they evaluated their own teaching for the purpose of threshold assessment.

- 49 The school's accommodation is satisfactory and has recently been improved with the completion of a new computer suite. All of the space is used well and during the inspection it was common to see small groups of pupils working in the shared spaces with a classroom assistant. The hall is put to good use to host the games club on Wednesday morning and this provides an added dimension to the curriculum. The only weakness of the accommodation is that the library is housed in corridors and this prevents large groups or a whole class from using it. In classes and corridors, lively and interesting displays make the school an attractive place for pupils to learn.
- 50 The school has sufficient resources to teach all subjects and uses them to good effect on pupils' learning. It makes very good use of visits to places of educational interest to increase pupils' understanding of subjects such as geography and history.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Governors, headteacher and staff should

- (1) raise standards in mathematics by**
- a. using the information from tests in mathematics to set a starting point for work,
 - b. planning work that is more challenging for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1,
 - c. ensuring that lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 are given work that is pitched at the right level,
 - d. keeping a close check on pupils' progress in order to determine how well they are achieving.

(paragraphs 35, 45, 84 - 91 of the main report)

In addition to the key issues identified above, a less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

Improve the quality of marking by providing written comments to help pupils understand how to improve their work.

(paragraphs 21, 35 and 82 of the main report)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	50	33	0	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

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		203
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		35

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	12	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	12	12	14
	Total	22	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (81)	82 (94)	96 (91)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	22	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (81)	85 (81)	93 (91)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	10	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	8	10
	Girls	18	12	17
	Total	28	20	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (68)	71 (52)	96 (74)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	9
	Girls	17	12	16
	Total	24	18	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (68)	64 (52)	89 (77)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

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)	8.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	147.25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	7	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	1999/00
	£
Total income	343707
Total expenditure	342037
Expenditure per pupil	1727
Balance brought forward from previous year	4890
Balance carried forward to next year	6560

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	203
Number of questionnaires returned	53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	36	6	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	40	11	2	8
The teaching is good.	58	40	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	47	13	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	30	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	30	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	53	8	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	53	36	9	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	42	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	28	19	15	17

Parents made the following additional comments, in order:

- Behaviour is mainly good, but more supervision would help on some occasions.
- Brighter pupils don't always do as well as they should.

Pointers from the meeting for parents

- Parents feel that standards are high enough.
- Parents are satisfied with the progress their children make.
- Parents feel that the school encourages appropriate values
- Parents feel that behaviour is generally good.
- Parents would like more consistency to the setting of homework. They feel that children in the foundation stage and Key Stage 1 are given sufficient homework but that those in Key Stage 2 would benefit from more regular homework in English and mathematics.
- Parents praised the school for being open and approachable.

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

- 51 The provision for children in the Foundation Stage continues to be a strength of the school and most of the teaching is very good. The reception class is organised well so that children who attend for afternoons only benefit from having time with a talented nursery nurse and opportunities to join in activities with children who attend for the full day. Staff have adapted their planning and teaching to take account of the new Foundation Stage and the *stepping stones* that lead to children achieving the early learning goals.
- 52 When they start school, most children speak clearly and confidently, they know about books and reading and have begun to write and can count and recognise numbers. During the inspection nine children in the reception class were aged under five. Assessments carried out shortly after they start school show that the attainments of most are slightly above average for four-year-olds. However, assessments were made when children began school full-time and they could have had the benefit of two terms in the class before that time. A fairer judgement would be that children's attainment on entry to the reception class is generally typical of four-year-olds.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 53 Nearly all the children enter the reception class with typical skills in personal and social development. By the time they leave they are achieving many of the early learning goals in this area. This shows good progress and reflects the skilful teaching of staff who are constantly encouraging children to be independent and make their own decisions. This is evident when children are given the chance to choose the activities they want to take part in and know that they have to tidy away once they have completed a task or game.
- 54 Children play and work together well and have friends in both part-time and full-time groups. They are very enthusiastic about their learning and are keen to have a go at practical activities such as making books or giving out the milk. Once busy with a task, children persevere and concentrate for considerable periods of time. For example, two girls spent almost fifteen minutes making a difficult floor-jigsaw; having done it successfully with help from the nursery nurse, one of them proceeded to have another go by herself.
- 55 The adults provide very good role models for children. They are calm and organised and treat children with respect and courtesy. This leads to warm and trusting relationships and helps the children to behave in a friendly manner to one another. As a result, children are caring and help one another with coats and hats or by showing the way to the washbasins.

Communication, language and literacy

- 56 This area of learning is taught particularly well. Staff have adapted the format of the National Literacy Strategy to suit the needs of both groups of children. Each day, children are given opportunities to read books, listen to stories and write. Staff promote the development of language in everything children do.

- 57 As a result of very good teaching nearly all children achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Staff encourage children to listen to what adults and other children say by insisting that they take their turn in conversations and do not call out. This is having a good effect on children's self-discipline and they not only listen to others but often turn to look at the child who is speaking. Staff talk with children constantly and children are quick to learn new words, such as *transparent* by repeating what their teacher has said.
- 58 Children love books and stories. They rush to the carpet when it is time to read a big book with the teacher; during the inspection they sat enthralled at the story of *The Lion And The Mouse*. Staff encourage children to use pictures and the sounds of letters to help them read unfamiliar words. Children quickly learned the words spoken by the lion in the story and by the end of the book could spot which of the words in the phrase *who can help me* was missing.
- 59 Teachers ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for children to write each day and that children see themselves as writers. By the end of reception, class nearly all children write their own name and a few simple words independently and make good attempts at copying the writing of adults.

Mathematical development

- 60 This area of learning is also taught very well and by the end of the reception year nearly all children have exceeded the early learning goals and are working towards the first level of the National Curriculum.
- 61 One of the main reasons for this is that teachers use mathematics in everyday activities. This means that children practise their counting, adding and taking away many times each day and have no difficulty in working out how many cartons of milk are needed or how many more pieces of jigsaw they have to find. Children quickly learn to add and take away as they sing songs and rhymes. The good progress they make ensures that many record their mathematics as sums by the end of the reception year.
- 62 In addition, staff constantly reinforce children's understanding of mathematical language by asking questions such as 'is that full now?' and, 'which one is bigger?'. Children respond by using the same language in their descriptions and quickly learn to use the right terms of measurement and position.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 63 Most children have a basic general knowledge when they start in reception class. They build on this knowledge as they explore why things happen and start to understand more about the place where they live and their own family and history.
- 64 One of the strengths of teaching in this area of learning is that children are encouraged to find things out for themselves. This was evident in a very good science-based activity, when children explored the properties of materials to see which let in light. They were fascinated by the way a torch beam shone through some fabrics and the light appeared to be different colours. An extension to the activity involved reading, writing, physical and creative development as children made a book containing samples of curtains for Miss Dolly's bedroom.

- 65 Adults help children learn about their neighbourhood and families through looking at pictures and photographs. In this way children see that there are different types of houses and buildings in the town and know that they have changed in appearance since they were babies and toddlers.
- 66 Children are taught about the Catholic faith in a sensitive way. They learn about important events in the church calendar and their own life; for example, Christmas and baptism. Aside from lessons, the warm Catholic ethos of the school is also evident in the day-to-day running of the reception class and in children's attitudes to one another.

Physical development

- 67 Regular opportunities to use the hall for dancing, games and early gymnastics help children make steady progress in the development of physical skills. By the end of the reception year, they have achieved many of the early learning goals and move with confidence and control. This was evident when children ran and skipped around the hall with very few bumps into others. Teachers help children gain a good sense of space by setting exciting challenges, such as standing as near to an adult as they can get without touching them or anyone else in the group. Children loved this activity and tried very hard to squeeze as close as they could get.
- 68 Children get plenty of opportunities for robust play outside and they enjoy letting off steam with a good romp around the yard. They know that when they are out of breath and have been exercising, their hearts beat faster and they put their hands on their chests to feel how fast their hearts are working.
- 69 At a different level, teachers also teach skills such as cutting and gluing, to help children gain control of these types of movement. Having regular opportunities to use small tools ensures that children are competent when it comes to painting and hold pens and scissors correctly.

Creative development

- 70 This is another area of learning where children exceed the expectations of early learning goals. Children start reception class with skills that are typical of four-year-olds but by the time they leave most create imaginative pictures from a wide range of materials including fabric, feathers and paper. They draw detailed pictures to illustrate work in other areas of learning. For example, last year children drew pictures of the clothes they would wear in different weather conditions; their pictures included details such as scarves and hats and windswept trees.
- 71 Teachers plan a wide range of interesting creative activities where children can explore colour, texture shape and music. Children enjoy being creative and concentrate very hard on their work; this was evident in the time they took to choose the right materials for their curtain book. Children's work is valued and is displayed very effectively in the reception class.
- 72 Children's imagination is further evident in role-play, when they enjoy dressing up and acting out the part. This was evident when a small group of children took on the characters of shopkeeper in the *post office* and shoppers wanting to buy goods and an animated discussion took place about what was in the till.

ENGLISH

- 73 Standards in English for eleven-year-olds have improved since the last inspection and are well above those expected for their age. As a result of better teaching since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, together with the additional support provided through *booster* classes in the second part of the spring term, all pupils reached the expected level in National Curriculum test results and over half reached the higher level. These results were well above those reached by most other pupils nationally and very high when compared to similar schools. Tests results have risen over the past four years at a similar rate to the national trend and the school did well to exceed its targets for 2000. Generally, girls did better than boys although this varied from year to year.
- 74 The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds show that standards were similar to national averages. Although the school exceeded its targets in 2000, standards are lower than at the last inspection in 1996. The standards achieved in Year 2 in 1996 were unusual for the school, when pupils in that year group were more able and confident in English than in the following four years. In the 2000 tests, pupils did not reach the same standards in writing as pupils in similar schools. This is because no pupils reached the higher levels. The school has already taken steps to improve this situation by placing more emphasis on shared writing activities and by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length. One reason why no pupils reach the higher levels is that, although pupils in Year 2 are taught to join their letters, the handwriting of higher attaining pupils is not fully joined and this is a pre-requisite to achieving the higher level. Taking the four years 1997 to 2000, the overall performances of girls and boys were similar.
- 75 Over half the teaching seen was good and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Very strong teaching was seen in Year 6. Teachers plan activities well and ensure that they are interesting to pupils. They put considerable effort into encouraging pupils to express themselves clearly using interesting and varied vocabulary. Teachers provide many good opportunities for improving pupils' spoken language in different situations. These are as varied as, for example, asking Year 6 pupils to share with the whole school their own moving thoughts about the soldiers who died in both world wars, to encouraging Year 1 pupils to explain why particular toys were important to their parents or grandparents.
- 76 As they read with the whole class during the literacy hour, teachers place great emphasis on developing pupils' comprehension skills and this has a very positive effect on their understanding of literature. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher's pertinent questions encouraged pupils to look beyond the humour in *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* and to gain an insight into his true character. As a result, they improve their understanding of the techniques used by writers to appeal to their readers, such as Sue Townsend's subtle use of puns to show *Adrian Mole's* true feelings about his ex-best friend. Because of the emphasis given by teachers to punctuation during reading sessions, pupils in Year 1 and 2 quickly become expressive readers and adapt their style appropriately when they see speech marks and exclamation marks or bold print. Because of the regular opportunities they have to read to teachers and to take books home to share with their families, pupils have very positive attitudes to reading.

- 77 A strength of pupils' writing across the school lies in the good opportunities their teachers provide for them to write for a variety of purposes. This is particularly strong in Year 6. The school's current good emphasis on shared writing activities pays dividends; as pupils share ideas and vocabulary with the whole class, the quality of their own expressive language improves. For example, after sharing ideas about *The Witches Spell* in *Macbeth*, one pupil in Year 6 made superb use of alliteration as she wrote *Add horse's hoof, dash of dog, hair of hound, heart of hog,.....* Teachers in Years 1 and 2 understand how to teach writing and place good emphasis on the structure of a sequence of events in pupils' writing. As a result, pupils move on from linking their sentences using *then* to using connective phrases such as *later on, the next day, after a while* and *this time*.
- 78 Another strong feature of pupils' writing is that teachers provide very good opportunities for them to use different forms of writing in other subjects. In Year 1, pupils described how they felt when they acted as *servants* during a visit to Clarke Hall and a pupil in Year 4 used quotations as he described *King Alfred's* reaction when he burned the cakes. In design and technology and in science, pupils write clear reports about experiments and investigations and make good use of technical language. Pupils in Year 6 use word processors effectively to draft their autobiographies.
- 79 Because teachers encourage pupils to use dictionaries and thesauruses and expect them to learn words at home, most pupils make good progress with their spelling of frequently used words, which are generally spelt correctly. Teachers are good at teaching spelling and offer pupils many strategies to help them to learn how to spell. As a result, by the time they reach Year 6 pupils talk confidently about *prefixes* and *suffixes*, *word roots*, *double consonants* and *long* and *short vowel sounds*.
- 80 At the time of the last inspection, standards of handwriting and presentation were not good enough. The school has successfully resolved this issue by providing regular opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their handwriting skills. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 give clear demonstrations of how to form letters correctly, and in Years 3,4,5 and 6 how to join them to develop a clear and legible yet personal style of writing. This good practice is carried over to writing in other subjects, with the result that the standard of presentation in topic books is high.
- 81 Pupils with special educational needs receive good support for their reading and writing. Working closely with teachers, qualified support staff provide a programme of work that helps pupils to break down words in reading and to build them up in spelling. This support enables less able pupils to read a range of simple texts and produce written work that is often short but usually completed.
- 82 Teachers are good at assessing and recording what pupils can do. This means that they are able to set realistic targets for what pupils should be able to achieve and focus their attention on gaps in learning. Although pupils are given personal targets for improvement, teachers' marking of their work is not linked to these targets in a constructive enough way to help all pupils achieve them.
- 83 Management of English is good. With a clear focus in mind (for example, shared writing activities) the literacy co-ordinator observes lessons to check the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, she was able to determine that more emphasis needed to be placed on this aspect of writing and also, that additional time to that in the literacy hour needed to be set aside to develop extended writing. This has already been successful in raising standards in writing at Key Stage 2. Resources have improved

since the last inspection and there is now an adequate supply of good, modern fiction books.

MATHEMATICS

- 84 Most pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve the standards expected for their age. However, standards are not as high as they should be for two groups of pupils. Higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they should by the end of Year 2 and in Year 6, a significant number of pupils fail to reach the standard expected for 11-year-olds. The results of National Curriculum tests in 2000 paint a similar picture and give a clear indication of what is wrong. In Year 2, almost all pupils reached the expected level in national tests but fewer than in most schools achieved the higher level. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected and higher level was comparable with other schools but the school's results were brought down because more than a quarter of pupils in the year group failed to reach the expected level. When compared with similar schools, the performance of pupils in Year 6 was below average and they had not made the progress expected. Despite this the school exceeded the target it had set for raising standards in 2000.
- 85 Standards have been low for the past two years and teachers are aware that this is an area that needs further work if they are to maintain the improvement made this year. The co-ordinator has made a thorough analysis of test results and identified gaps in pupils' learning. This has highlighted some weaknesses in pupils' understanding of the patterns and relationship in number and in their ability to solve problems. Teachers are aware of these gaps and have already begun to tackle the problem. For example, in a good lesson in Year 4, pupils were asked to solve problems involving money by using their knowledge of multiplying and dividing by ten and five. Teachers do not always make use of the results of tests to set a starting point for the work for higher attaining pupils.
- 86 The quality of teaching and learning was good in more than half of the lessons seen during the inspection. The remainder was satisfactory. A good feature of all lessons is the mental mathematics session. These are invariably fast and pacy and pupils' enjoyment of them is evident in their enthusiasm to answer questions and take part. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6, the pressure was intense as pupils got near to winning a game of multiples bingo. As a result of teachers giving more time and emphasis to mental mathematics, pupils are much better at remembering multiplication tables than they were at the time of the previous inspection. By the time they are in Year 3 most pupils know the two, five and ten times tables by heart. They go on to increase their knowledge so that by the time they leave the school, average and higher attaining pupils know all of their tables to ten and use these to work out sums involving large numbers and decimals.
- 87 Another good feature of teaching is the way teachers use their knowledge of the subject to develop pupils' numeracy skills well. Teachers concentrate on developing pupils' skills in using number in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They ask pupils questions, which make them think, and they require them to explain their strategies. This helps pupils develop their own strategies for using mathematics to solve problems. Consequently, by the time they are in Year 6, most pupils use a range of strategies to find the missing number in simple equations.
- 88 A particular strength of the teaching is the way that teachers in all classes share the aims of the lesson with pupils. This was done well in a good lesson about

measurement in the Year 5 class. The teacher stopped the lesson at appropriate times to ask pupils which target they thought they were learning. By doing this pupils could see that they had moved on from choosing which units of measurement to use to the more difficult task of changing kilometres to miles.

- 89 Teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to ensure that the work they plan for pupils is more difficult each year. This has resolved one of the weaknesses in teaching identified in the last inspection. Despite this, teachers are not planning work at the right levels for higher attaining pupils in infant classes and too often these pupils follow the same programme as average attaining pupils. This slows their learning. In junior classes, the brightest pupils are set challenging work and as a result make rapid progress. On the other hand, work for lower attaining pupils is not always pitched at the right level and even with additional support from attending *booster classes*, they do not make the progress necessary to reach the level expected for their age. This is not the case for pupils with special educational needs. They get the support they need to help them make steady progress towards the targets in their individual programmes of work. The proposed review of the effectiveness of the support given to lower attaining pupils is likely to reveal whether these pupils are getting sufficient help.
- 90 In all year groups, pupils' ability to use information and communication technology is under-developed. This is because teachers have not previously planned enough opportunities for pupils to use software, spreadsheets, programmable toys and databases. However, the school is in a good position to improve this situation now that the computer suite is ready for use. In comparison, pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in a good science lesson in Year 1, pupils sorted magnetic and non-magnetic objects into sets. Older pupils use graphs, charts and tables to record their findings in science and geography and plot historical events on a time line.
- 91 The co-ordinator manages the subject well and knows that raising standards to the same high levels as English and science is a key area for improvement. She makes good use of the results of tests and assessments to check whether pupils are learning at a fast enough rate and to predict the levels they will achieve by the time they leave the school. This has only recently started but is already helping teachers to see which pupils are not doing as well as they should be. It has also helped the co-ordinator to adjust the targets for 2001 to a more challenging level. The school has made a good start at improving standards in mathematics and the co-ordinator's clear understanding of what needs to be done next in relation to monitoring pupils' books in order to keep a check on progress puts it in a good position to be able to improve.

SCIENCE

- 92 Standards are typical of those expected of seven-year-olds and well above those expected for 11-year-olds. In 2000, teachers' assessments showed that by the end of Year 2, pupils achieved results that were in line with the national average. National Curriculum tests showed that by the end of Year 6 pupils achieved results well above the national average. Inspection findings confirm that standards in the present Year 6 are well above those expected for their age.
- 93 Inspection evidence and pupils' previous work show that teaching in science is satisfactory and frequently good. Teachers' confidence and knowledge of the subject are sound and their treatment of scientific knowledge is thorough. Emphasis on

correct scientific language is influenced by teachers' work in the National Literacy Strategy and leads to clearer explanations and better, more accurate understanding of scientific ideas for pupils. This was evident in Year 2, when pupils were investigating the use of batteries, wire and bulbs to construct simple electrical circuits. The teacher's probing questions were expressed precisely and guided pupils' thinking to important points of the work and helped to clarify their understanding. Pupils responded with correct language and explained their ideas clearly.

- 94 Teachers have raised standards in 2000 through better planning and preparation for lessons, based on a good quality scheme of work. As a result, there is good focus on the requirements of the National Curriculum and pupils do well when learning about life and physical processes, and materials. Practical investigations are well chosen and prepared and pupils' investigation and recording skills are satisfactory in Year 2 and have improved further by Year 6. Pupils are encouraged to write clear explanations and their work is generally accurate and well presented but teachers are not making enough use of computers for pupils to record the findings of investigations as text or graphs. Most lessons end with well-structured questions and answers that remind pupils of the main objectives of the work and assess their understanding.
- 95 Teachers expect pupils to work hard and to behave well. Consequently, pupils show respect for one another when carrying out tasks together. Pupils work productively, either individually or in groups, in a quiet industrious atmosphere. They conduct practical investigations carefully, show respect for materials and equipment and bring critical and questioning attitudes to their findings. Pupils in Year 4, for example, showed high levels of interest in a lesson on the structure of the human arm, learning how muscles are attached and how they cause movement. They made simple card models to illustrate how movement occurs, listened to one another's explanations and tried hard to fit their thinking to observable facts. In Year 6, pupils co-operated and shared materials and equipment when selecting and testing fabrics for transparency to light. They show a high level of interest in science and try hard to produce accurate results. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make satisfactory progress.
- 96 Improvements to planning and lesson preparation in the last 18 months form the basis for further raising of pupils' attainment. The co-ordinator provides clear programmes of work to guide teaching and learning. As a result, lessons are prepared well. When teachers share the clearly defined objectives of lessons with pupils, they provide pupils with a helpful measure of what is expected of them. Arrangements for assessment of pupils' learning are good. This information is used productively by teachers to plan future lessons and to track pupils' progress. The co-ordinator gives good support for teaching and learning, and has clear targets for developing the subject but does not have sufficient time to monitor teachers' planning and teaching. Resources for science are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 97 Standards have risen in information and communication technology since the last inspection, when some requirements of the National Curriculum were not being met. Standards are now in line with expectations for seven-year-olds. Most of the work pupils do in Year 6 is now satisfactory and there are some strengths. Areas of weakness still exist in sensing, control and use of the Internet, but these will be addressed later in the year when pupils will have greater access to computers in the new suite.
- 98 The school has used the recent special government funding for computer equipment wisely to create the new suite. They have previously committed expenditure to improving the number and quality of computers and equipment in order to raise standards from the levels of the 1996 inspection. All classes have access to at least one classroom computer and these have been used effectively to raise standards. However, there have been insufficient resources to teach computer skills to more than a few pupils at a time without major movements of equipment. The result is that it takes too long for all pupils in a class to learn a new skill. While pupils in Years 1 and 2 use the mouse to manage quite complex screen controls, they are now beginning to develop keyboard skills more quickly because they can use the suite of computers regularly.
- 99 Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good word-processing skills and produce short poems and personal accounts that have good layout, use of colour, changes of font and print size and occasional graphics evident in their work. Pupils in Year 5 gained considerable skill in more advanced presentation of text and graphics while attending a residential centre for outdoor pursuits. They demonstrate good awareness of audience and purpose when making choices about their presentations. They acquire understanding of the structure and use of spreadsheets for simple accounting. Pupils in Year 2 made rapid progress in learning to manage an art program during their first visit to the computer suite. Clear instruction from the teacher and capable support from a classroom assistant resulted in confident use of colour with fill, brush and spray tools. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 1 with special educational needs receive good individual support while working with computers, sometimes from volunteer helpers trained in the school. They make good progress when using programs to increase their understanding of language and number. Some pupils use computers at home and, from an early age, many control cursors and icons skilfully with a mouse.
- 100 Pupils are interested and confident about their ability to manage computer systems. In Year 6, they demonstrated skill in locating and extracting information from a CD-ROM encyclopaedia. They performed essential commands to extract and print information, and discussed the contents of other CD-ROMs. With home-based computers, some pupils are familiar with the Internet. The school's connection with the Internet is not yet fully established. Some teachers and pupils lack skill in this area but a programme of training has already begun.
- 101 Training for information and communication technology has been a priority and the skills of teachers and support staff have improved considerably since the last inspection. As a result, staff speak knowledgeably about programs and show confidence and dexterity in managing them on screen. They coach pupils sensitively and nurture their confidence from an early age. Despite teachers' skills in using computers for administration and lesson preparation, insufficient use is made of computers as a teaching aid in other subjects.

- 102 The subject is managed well. It has clear development targets and a programme of training for teachers, partly underway, which will move to its second phase immediately the school is completely connected to the Internet. A clear set of curricular targets and skills for each year group is provided, based on a good quality scheme of work, which supports teachers in preparing good quality lessons. With these, the school is in a good position to raise standards to a higher level.

ART AND DESIGN

- 103 Standards in art for seven-year-olds are better than at the time of the last inspection. They are above those expected for their age. Standards for eleven-year-olds, are typical for their age. However, pupils do not have enough experience of specialist techniques and working in three-dimensional materials and this prevents standards from being higher. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Extra evidence was gathered from samples of work, displays around the school and discussions with teachers and pupils.
- 104 The main strength of pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2 results from the good use teachers now make of sketch books to enable pupils to experiment, practise and develop their ideas. Teachers place a strong emphasis on the skills of drawing. Pupils know how to look carefully at shape, form and shadow when drawing and sketching objects. This was evident in the detailed sketches that pupils in Year 1 made of fruit and vegetables. A further strength of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is the development of pupils' skills in colour mixing and painting which they then apply confidently in their paintings of, for example, self-portraits by Year 1 pupils and portraits of Florence Nightingale in Year 2.
- 105 Attractive and carefully planned displays of pupils' work provide a clear picture of how junior-age pupils improve and develop their skills when mixing paint, producing portraits, such as those of Tudor kings and queens in Year 6 and reproducing work in the style of well-known artists such as Picasso in Year 3. Displays in classrooms and corridors enhance the appearance and atmosphere of the school and give pupils the chance to consider what other pupils in school are doing.
- 106 A strength of the teaching lies in the confident demonstrations given by teachers of the techniques and skills they want pupils to acquire. In a good lesson in Year 3, the teacher demonstrated an arrangement of letters to be used to create an abstract design. Because particular emphasis was placed on the size and orientation of the letters, pupils were encouraged to explore and use their own ideas with confidence. They put considerable effort into their task and enjoyed sharing their finished work with the rest of the class.
- 107 Teachers establish good links between art and other subjects, particularly in Years 1 and 2. In history in Year 1, pupils sketched Victorian candlesticks and pomanders following their visit to Clarke Hall. Pupils in Year 2 used their observational skills to influence their fine ink and pencil sketches of parrots during a study of their habitats in a geography topic about Saint Lucia. Pupils in both classes apply their information technology skills and use paint programs to produce colourful and imaginative pictures on the computer. Pupils in Year 3, after writing their own poems about amazing plants, during the literacy hour, went on, using pastels and pencil crayons, to create very imaginative and original pictures of the plants featured in their poems. In Year 4, pupils deepen their understanding of Judaism as they produce detailed and accurate sketches of, for example the Torah Scrolls, a Mezuzah and a Hanukiah. Art makes a

strong contribution to pupils' cultural development. As they pass through the school, pupils widen their knowledge of the work of artists including Holbein, Turner, Van Gogh, Klee, and Hockney.

- 108 The art curriculum is currently undergoing some change owing to the school's adoption of a new national programme of work. This places the school in a good position to raise standards even higher, particularly for junior-age pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 109 In design and technology, the school has maintained the satisfactory standards in construction reported in the previous inspection and improved pupils' knowledge of the design process. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve standards that are typical for their ages, but use a restricted range of materials. Although weaknesses exist in pupils' knowledge of mechanisms, improved planning is in place to correct this shortfall in the current year. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support for their learning. As a result, their progress is satisfactory and their achievements frequently match those of other pupils.
- 110 Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers ensure that skills are taught with due attention given to safety. They concentrate effectively on the design process and ensure that it is a meaningful preparation for pupils' projects. Some projects, while producing objects of satisfactory quality, are too concerned with form and too little with function. While pupils in Year 4 produce purses with a wide range of imaginative design, some teaching offers limited freedom of choice in design and access to a wider range of materials and this limits attainment for older and more able pupils.
- 111 Teachers plan lessons well. They provide work that develops sound knowledge of the design process and link this to the development of skills in measuring, shaping, cutting and fastening. Pupils become skilful at preparing food when they peel and cut fruit and vegetables for salads and sandwiches. Pupils in Year 2 learn about and practise methods of joining fabrics prior to making *Joseph's coat of many colours* for a project in religious education. Many pupils in Year 6 show good achievement in designing and making slippers. They created card patterns from their own measurements and cut outlines carefully in fabrics and felt. While attainment in this project is satisfactory, older pupils, are capable of handling more challenging materials and tackling constructional problems with more emphasis on movement and function.
- 112 The subject is managed well and there is a commitment by all staff to improving standards. The recent adoption of a new national programme of work means that teachers are better supported in their preparation and there are better opportunities to cover weaker aspects of the subject, to ensure systematic development of skills, and to use resistive materials. This places the school in a satisfactory position to continue to raise standards. Resources for design and technology are satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

- 113 Standards in geography are satisfactory. They have been maintained since the last inspection and are typical for seven and eleven-year-olds. No teaching was seen during the inspection.
- 114 Teachers' planning for geography shows progression for pupils' learning through the year groups. They link tasks that motivate and engage pupils' interest with a clear programme of work. In Year 1, the teacher introduces pupils to geography at first hand from what they know and see in the local environment. This enables them to draw simple maps of their journey to school and to describe some of the local features such as the church, shops, the railway and public gardens. In Year 2, as they study the West Indian island of Saint Lucia, the teacher ensures that pupils have a good awareness that the world extends beyond their own environment. They build up their geographical skills as they use photographs to answer their questions about the banana plantations and the work involved in ensuring they can buy the same bananas in the shops in Castleford. They begin to develop a perception of how people affect the environment as they express concern for birds such as parrots, whose habitat is threatened with destruction.
- 115 In Year 3, pupils' studies return to the local environment as they make comparisons with a coastal village in Scotland. As they look for similarities and differences between the locations, this deepens their understanding of their own cultural heritage. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have extended their geographical knowledge to well beyond their own environment. Pupils in Year 6 not only compare features such as housing and schools in their own locality with those in Bombay but also compare the lifestyles of rich and poor families in the city. As they develop their geographical skills by finding out why so many Indians left the country to live in the cities, thereby creating slum areas, they also make good progress in developing their knowledge of the diversity and richness of a modern society other than their own.
- 116 A good feature of teachers' planning is the way teachers link geography with other subjects such as mathematics, information technology, religious education and art. Pupils in Year 5 use their mathematical skills to interpret the data collected from their traffic survey of local streets. Other pupils use a computer database to store information about the type of houses in the area. Pupils in Year 6 design their own *mandala* patterns, symbols of the universe in the Hindu religion. An aspect of teaching that could be improved is that pupils' written work is too directed at times and does not allow them to use either their research or literacy skills.
- 117 The co-ordinator has introduced new national guidelines for geography to ensure that teachers' planning covers all aspects of the work. However, the school does not provide the co-ordinator with opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and to gain a clear view of what training and resources are needed to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. This has been identified as a target for work in the next year.

HISTORY

- 118 By the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils achieve standards that are typical for their age. However, as a result of better teaching standards are improving and gaps in pupils' learning that were identified in the last inspection no longer exist.
- 119 Throughout the school, teachers expect pupils to find information about the topics they study from books, videos and objects. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 1, careful questioning by the teacher helped pupils agree that a teddy bear was old because it was *dirty and dusty*. Working in this way helps older pupils learn that accounts of the same event can be different. Pupils in the Year 5 class were surprised to find this when they studied a range of texts about children working in Victorian England. At present the only weakness is that pupils are unsure how computers can help with their research. Discussions with pupils revealed that they had little experience of using CD-ROMs or the Internet in their research. This situation is likely to change as teachers begin to use the computer suite and new software.
- 120 In three-quarters of the lessons seen, teaching was good or better. It was satisfactory in the remaining quarter. A particular strength of the teaching, that was evident in all lessons and in pupils' work, comes from the many opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand experiences of what life was like in the past. Teachers plan visits to museums and places of interest, where pupils get the chance to dress up and act out everyday activities. Photographs and videos show pupils' enjoyment of these visits and pupils in Years 5 and 6 talked animatedly about how they experienced life in Victorian times and looked at a *real* Tudor house on visits. These experiences also play a big part in promoting pupils' cultural development; something that was identified as a key area for development in the previous report.
- 121 A good feature of teaching throughout the school is the way that teachers encourage pupils to illustrate their work. This resulted in pupils in Year 2 drawing very detailed pictures about the Crimean War that showed their understanding of the plight of soldiers. Similarly, older pupils produce portraits of Tudors and drawings of ancient Egyptians that show a sound understanding of these cultures.
- 122 The subject is managed well. As a response to weaknesses highlighted in the last report the co-ordinator has ensured that teachers now have a good quality scheme to help them plan lessons. This has brought about changes in the way the subject is taught. The most significant is that teachers place far greater emphasis on research than they did at the time of the last inspection. The co-ordinator knows that there are still some areas that need further work if standards are to continue to improve. One of these is that in order to determine how successfully the new National Curriculum is being implemented, the co-ordinator needs to observe teachers at work and check pupils' work. This is a target for next year, which puts the school in a good position to continue to improve.

MUSIC

- 123 Standards in music have been maintained since the previous inspection and are typical of those expected for seven and 11 year-olds. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection; this was in Year 4. Extra evidence was gathered from listening to pupils singing in assemblies, watching a video of the choir performing and talking to teachers and pupils.

- 124 Because they have regular opportunities to sing, pupils in Years 1 and 2 perform a range of songs and hymns from memory. As pupils in Year 2 sang *We're going on a trip*, they successfully clapped the rhythm of the last line of the chorus. They perform simple pieces using, for example, unpitched percussion instruments to accompany their singing. Through listening to the music of orchestras, pupils gain familiarity with the musical instruments they hear. They know the names of many of them and compare the sounds they make; for example, they are *squeaky and soft* for a violin, *clash, crash* for a cymbal and *boom, bang, bang* for a drum.
- 125 During collective worship and hymn practices, pupils in Years 3 to 6 sing tunefully with clear diction and adapt their singing successfully to both light-hearted, lively hymns and more complex liturgical refrains. They were particularly pleased with their performance of *Ave Maria* which they sang in Latin. All pupils sit for some time during worship and assemblies listening to music and enjoying this quiet time for reflection. Opportunities are taken to discuss the mood the music conveys and the feelings it arouses. This in turn leads to pupils identifying and discussing their own musical preferences and experiences. Listening to music by composers from many parts of the world makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development.
- 126 Lessons have clear aims and teachers' plans indicate that these are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. In the lesson seen in Year 4, the teacher discussed the key words *rhythm* and *ostinato* with pupils, which ensured that they knew what was happening and what they were expected to learn. Another good feature of the lesson was the way the teacher used her expertise to lead by example. Her acting as a conductor improved the pupils' ability to keep to the beat of the ostinato to accompany the melody. As more pupils joined in using instruments or voice sounds, the teacher's skilful conducting ensured that each group successfully added its contribution to the finished piece.
- 127 A number of pupils receive lessons in woodwind instruments from a visiting teacher. These pupils benefit from working in small groups with a skilled teacher. All pupils learn to play the recorder in Year 5 and there are recorder and guitar clubs to extend pupils' interest in music. The choir makes significant contributions to performances and concerts in school and in the local community, including an annual concert to raise money to help elderly people. The choir is an asset to the school.
- 128 The co-ordinator gives helpful advice and practical support to teachers. Useful links between music and other subjects are shown in teachers' planning. The use of information and communication technology is still in the early stages of development, although plans are afoot to develop its use further. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to compose music and this an area where their knowledge is weak. The co-ordinator has adopted a new national programme for pupils' learning in music to support teachers' planning and fill any gaps in provision. This places the school in a good position to raise standards in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 129 By the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils achieve standards that match the levels expected nationally. The picture was much the same in the previous inspection. While there is no difference in standards between girls and boys, girls are generally more graceful at gymnastics and are more enthusiastic about dancing.

- 130 Most of the teaching is good, as was reported in the last inspection report. One of the strengths of teaching is that teachers ensure that boys and girls have equal opportunities to take part in all activities and to develop their physical skills. For example, both girls and boys play football and netball and learn to dance. Similarly, all pupils get the chance to go on residential visits in Years 5 and 6. These are viewed as highlights of the year by pupils, who talked excitedly about adventurous activities such as canoeing, climbing and night walking, when they also get a chance to look at the stars.
- 131 A strength of the teaching is that pupils are encouraged to consider the benefits of exercise on their bodies and even the youngest pupils check their heart rate after a warm-up session of stretches and jogs. Pupils enjoy this part of the lesson and are interested in being healthy. Teachers also give greater emphasis to helping pupils improve their performance in gymnastics and games. For example, in a good lesson, pupils in Year 2 were encouraged to watch the performance of others and demonstrations from the teacher. Following this, they were able to modify their own performance and could transfer their weight from one foot to the other without wobbling.
- 132 Pupils in junior classes do well at games. There are several reasons for this. First, good quality tuition from specialist coaches helps pupils learn the basic skills necessary to play football, cricket and rugby successfully. For example, in cricket they learn to hold a bat correctly and bowl over-arm and in rugby they learn how to tackle an opponent safely. Then, teachers plan frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in lessons and after school. The commitment and time given by teachers and parents are also significant factors in why pupils do well in tournaments and competitions with other primary schools.
- 133 Sports events and residential visits that include physical activities do more than promote pupils' fitness and health. They play an important part in pupils' social and moral development. Through them, pupils gain a sense of fair play and a keen competitive spirit as they get older. Pupils say that they are proud when their school wins a competition or they gain a certificate for swimming.
- 134 The co-ordinator manages the subject well and keeps a close check on teachers' planning. This ensures that lessons are a good balance of sports, athletics, gymnastics, dance and swimming. Since the previous inspection, the co-ordinator has introduced a good quality scheme of work that not only provides a structure that helps teachers plan but also ensures that the new National Curriculum will be taught effectively.