

# INSPECTION REPORT

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

Great Eccleston

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119625

Headteacher: Mr A Manfredi

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Hooper  
15334

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 225218

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Mary's Road Great Eccleston Preston Lancashire
Postcode:	PR3 0ZJ
Telephone number:	01995 670364
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Lyons
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J Hooper OIN No.15334	Registered inspector	English Geography History Music Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	The school's results and achievements How well the pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed Equality of opportunity
Mr J Vincent OIN No. 9691	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and values How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
Mr C Lewis OIN No. 22831	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art Design and technology Physical education	Curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils Special educational needs

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a very small Catholic primary school in the village of Great Eccleston, ten miles east of Blackpool. Although most of the pupils currently at the school are Catholics, the school's admission policy states that it welcomes pupils from other faiths. The school caters for boys and girls aged between four and 11 years old and at the time of the inspection five of the children were under five and attending full-time. There are 32 pupils on roll in two classes, which is nearly half the number of pupils on roll at the last inspection held in March 1998. Most of the children when they start school have had some pre-school education. They come from a wide range of backgrounds and have had many different experiences, but overall, their attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average. The school has identified seven pupils as having special educational needs, which, as a percentage of the total number of pupils in the school, is similar to the national figure. At present there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below that nationally. All pupils are white and all speak English as their first language.

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

St Mary's Catholic Primary School provides a safe, warm and friendly environment built on firm Christian values that strongly supports learning. Overall, teaching is good and frequently very good or better, especially at Key Stage 2. This has had a significant impact on pupils' learning and has contributed greatly to the steady rise over the last three years in the standards pupils achieve in English, mathematics and science when they leave the school. The school provides very well for the pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy being at school, are very well-behaved and keen to learn. Very good relationships exist between pupils, and staff and pupils. Parents are supportive of the school. The headteacher, with the full support of the staff and governors provides very effective and enthusiastic leadership. He has created a team spirit where all members of the school's community are committed to raising standards. Although the cost of educating individual pupils is very high compared with that nationally the school gives value for money.

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

- Overall, teaching is good and frequently very good and this has a very significant impact on pupils' learning. It contributes greatly to significant improvement in standards over the last three years in English, mathematics and science which pupils achieve by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils are very well-behaved, enjoy very good relationships with each other and the staff and the very positive attitudes they have to their work enable them to make good progress in their learning.
- The very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes high standards of personal development and enriches the curriculum.
- The headteacher provides very effective and enthusiastic leadership so that the entire school community is committed to raising standards.
- The school provides well for those pupils who have special educational needs so they make good progress in their learning.

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

- The role of the subject co-ordinators in the management of the school.
- A more structured approach to monitoring and evaluating school developments.
- Whole school systems for recording the progress made by individual pupils in their learning in all subjects.

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

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

Since the last inspection in March 1998, the school has made vast improvements. Standards achieved by pupils in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school have improved dramatically. The school has responded successfully to the key issues raised in the last inspection report. Standards in information and communication technology, physical education and music at Key Stage 2 have improved. The quality of teaching has improved considerably and is having a very positive impact on learning. The leadership and management of the school are now good and the headteacher has more time allocated for his administrative duties. Schemes of work, including those for information technology, are now in place and are clearly linked to National Curriculum requirements; this has led to improved lesson planning. Teachers use results of their assessments of pupils successfully to plan work to meet the needs of the wide range of ages and abilities of pupils in their classes. The school has an appropriate policy to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of the pupils, and provision for all of these aspects of pupils' development has improved; the provision for the pupils' moral and social development is now a strength of the school. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. In general, resources have improved and significantly so for information and communication technology and physical education. In addition to the issues raised at the last inspection, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils have improved and this is having a positive impact on their learning. The accommodation is much better with a new classroom and a hall fully equipped for physical education activities. The school has effectively introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies over the last two years. Although since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements it is clear from its comprehensive school development plan that the school is well placed to develop even further.

## **STANDARDS**

The standards achieved by 11 year olds over the last three years, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests, are not published in this report. There were fewer than ten pupils who took the tests and government legislation takes account of confidentiality of publication of results to protect individual pupils from being identified, as would happen if any comments or explanations were made on these results. Also, comparisons of trends in national assessment tests are unreliable where cohorts of pupils are small as they are in this school. This is especially so when the number of pupils with special educational needs has a disproportional effect on the results. However, the standards achieved by pupils when they leave the school have improved substantially over the last three years in English, mathematics and science. The school has also set realistic yet challenging targets for pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 for the next two years in these subjects and, if achieved, this upward trend will continue.

Most of the children who are currently under five are likely to surpass the standards expected for children of their age in their personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy development and mathematical development. In all other areas of development they are on line to at least meet the expected standards. At the time of the inspection there were only two pupils in Year 2 and, in order to protect these individual pupils from being identified, an overall judgement on attainment of pupils by the time they reach seven years old in any subjects, is not possible. However, pupils throughout Key Stage 1 are working at an appropriate level for their age and ability in all subjects. In English, mathematics and science as in all year groups, there are a significant number of pupils working above the expected levels in these subjects. By the time they are 11 years old, it is probable that most pupils in the current Year 6 will achieve at least the standards expected nationally for pupils of their age in English, mathematics and science with a significant number on line to achieve beyond this, making overall attainment above average. In all other subjects by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are working at appropriate levels and attaining

standards expected of their age group. Throughout the school, standards in reading and speaking and listening are above average, and nearly all pupils present their work in a neat cursive style of handwriting to a high standard.

The school caters well for pupils who have special educational needs and for higher attaining pupils and both groups usually make good progress in their learning.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. They display a genuine interest and pleasure in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in and around school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. The relationships between pupils and pupils and adults are very positive.
Attendance	Good.

Pupils contribute greatly to the purposeful and orderly atmosphere existing in the school. Their attitudes and behaviour, and relationships built on mutual respect, have a very positive effect on their learning.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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

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

Overall, teaching is good and frequently very good or better, especially at Key Stage 2. This has a very significant impact on pupils' learning. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Eighty-seven per cent of teaching was good or better and 40 per cent very good or better. At Key Stage 1, 86 per cent was good or better and 14 per cent very good. Of the teaching at Key Stage 2, 88 per cent was good or better and 63 per cent was very good or better. In the small number of lessons observed for the children under five the teaching was good. Teachers are conscientious, enthusiastic and clear about what they expect pupils to learn. Overall, teachers have a good knowledge of the needs of the pupils in their classes and cater very well for the wide range of ages and ability levels in their classes, ensuring that most pupils frequently make good progress in their learning. They have high expectations of work and behaviour and the mutual respect that frequently exists between the teachers and their pupils creates a fruitful learning environment. Teachers' enthusiasm for promoting learning frequently shows in their lessons. This is particularly so in literacy and numeracy lessons when teachers successfully provide a good balance between building on and reinforcing pupils' previous knowledge, and presenting them with new ideas and information. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the effective support they receive. Support staff and voluntary helpers make a very valuable contribution to the pupils' education.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which fully meets statutory requirements. A good range of extra curricular activities enhances the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The effective provision enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision overall, is very good with the provision for moral and social development a particular strength. Christian values strongly support learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school promotes pupils' welfare very effectively through its concerned attention to their physical and emotional well-being.

Overall, the school has a good working partnership with parents.

The school has good systems in place for assessing pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics. However, currently there are no whole school systems for recording the progress made by individual pupils in their learning in all subjects.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very effective and enthusiastic leadership. He and his highly supportive staff are committed to providing the best education for the pupils and raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very supportive, take an active role in the management of the school and fulfil their statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	In general, good. The school has a broad overview of its work, and improvements needed are generally linked into school development planning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes effective use of all staff, material resources and its accommodation.

The headteacher and the staff work together as a strong team to meet the school's wholly appropriate aims so that a very positive ethos pervades the school. Governors are enthusiastic and have high levels of expertise. The school monitors and evaluates its performance closely and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The budget is operated according to the factors of best value.

The school has made an effective start on monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and

teaching and the impact it has on pupils' learning especially in English and mathematics. However, although teachers have designated roles as subject co-ordinators, this aspect of the management of the school is under-developed. The headteacher, staff and governors have identified future improvements for the school in a comprehensive school development plan but there are no clear procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the progress being made.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small classes.</li> <li>• Committed staff and high quality of teaching.</li> <li>• Good behaviour.</li> <li>• The positive and enthusiastic atmosphere.</li> <li>• The staff are approachable and the school has an 'open door' policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more consistent approach to homework.</li> <li>• The school working more closely with parents.</li> <li>• More information about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>

In general, the inspection team agrees with the parents' positive comments.

The school has recently introduced a more formal approach to setting homework. It also works very hard to ensure parents are fully involved in their children's education. The team acknowledges that some reports last year provided insufficient detail about their children's progress in some subjects, and that this was due to unavoidable circumstances at the time. Plans are in place to ensure that this does not happen again.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The standards achieved by 11 year olds over the last three years, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests, are not published in this report. There were fewer than ten pupils who took the tests and government legislation takes account of confidentiality of publication of results to protect individual pupils from being identified, as would happen if any comments or explanations were made on these results. Also, comparisons of trends in national assessment tests are unreliable where cohorts of pupils are small as they are in this school. This is especially so when the number of pupils with special educational needs has a disproportional effect on the results as was so in the tests taken by last year's seven year olds. However, the standards achieved by pupils when they leave the school have improved substantially over the last three years in English, mathematics and science. The school has also set realistic yet challenging targets for pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 for the next two years in these subjects and, if achieved, this upward trend will continue.
2. Most of the children who are currently under five are likely to surpass the standards expected for children of their age in their personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy development and mathematical development. In all other areas of their development they are on line to at least meet the expected standards.
3. At the time of the inspection there were only two pupils in Year 2 and, in order to protect these individual pupils from being identified, an overall judgement on attainment of pupils by the time they reach seven years old, in any subjects, is not possible. However, pupils throughout Key Stage 1 are working at an appropriate level for their age and ability in all subjects. In English, mathematics and science as in all year groups, there are a significant number of pupils working above the expected levels in these subjects. By the time they are 11 years old, it is probable that all pupils in the current Year 6 will achieve at least the standards expected nationally for pupils of their age in English, mathematics and science with a significant number on line to achieve beyond this, making overall attainment above average. In all other subjects by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are working at appropriate levels and attaining standards expected of their age group.
4. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are above average. Most pupils speak clearly, and communicate their thoughts and feelings well in lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers and each other. Standards in reading are also above average. Throughout the school pupils read a variety of appropriate texts. The youngest pupils at Key Stage 1 associate sounds with different letters and many read simple text, making good use, when necessary, of phonic, pictures and the meaning of the sentence to help them decipher unfamiliar words. By the time they are 11 years old, most pupils are fluent readers and show a good understanding of the text. They are also attaining at least average standards in writing with a significant number achieving above average standards, as in all year groups throughout the school. Within the literacy hour pupils develop their writing skills appropriately and learn to write for different purposes and audiences. Overall, standards of spelling and grammar are satisfactory. Nearly all pupils take a pride in their written work, presenting it in a neat cursive style to a high standard.
5. The school has adopted and implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well. Under this new scheme of work and curriculum pupils undertake a wide range of work in all areas of mathematics. Samples of pupils' work demonstrate that pupils in both key

stages undertake an appropriate variety of work on shape, space and measures, and tackle a range of problems involving handling data and investigation during the course of the school year. Lesson observations confirm that pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills in other curriculum areas such as science.

6. Lesson observations and a scrutiny of work undertaken indicate that pupils undertake a range of appropriate science activities covering all areas of the science curriculum, such as, studying life processes and living things, materials and physical processes, and pupils at both key stages develop satisfactory investigative skills. Five and six year olds are asking questions about their science work, are beginning to use focused exploration and investigation to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding and are attempting an explanation of their discoveries and drawing simple conclusions. The oldest pupils make predictions and test hypotheses in their work based on scientific understanding.
7. Standards have improved since the last inspection in design and technology at both key stages and in information and communication technology, physical education and music at Key Stage 2, so that pupils are achieving standards expected nationally. In all other subjects by the time pupils leave school, and throughout Key Stage 1 apart from information and communication technology, history, music and physical education where there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements, pupils are attaining standards in line with national expectations.
8. The school caters well for pupils who have special educational needs and for higher attaining pupils and both groups usually make good progress in their learning.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and have improved since the last inspection. This is a strength of the school.
10. The children under five quickly adapt to the routines of school life and move quietly and confidently around the school. They are quick to learn routines of good social behaviour from older pupils in the class who act as good role models. The children are friendly towards one another, listen with interest to what others have to say, particularly in whole-class discussions, and share equipment fairly.
11. Throughout the rest of the school pupils work hard, take a pride in the presentation of their work and always try to meet the high expectations of their teachers. The safe, warm and friendly atmosphere provides an environment that promotes pupils' learning. There is a culture of constructive collaboration between adults and pupils built on mutual respect. Most pupils are well motivated, enthusiastic about their lessons and proud of their achievements. A good example of the enthusiasm and dedication to learning was observed during the inspection. The bell rang for playtime and because pupils were so engrossed in their work no one moved until instructed by their teacher. The strong Christian values promoted throughout the school encourage and support pupils' learning.
12. Pupils behave very well in and around the school. Again, this has improved since the last inspection. Parents appreciate the behaviour standards promoted and maintained by the school. All staff are excellent role models and lead by example. As a result relationships between pupils and adults are now very good and this is fostered further by the differing age groups in the two classes. There have been no exclusions. No anti-social or oppressive behaviour from pupils was observed during the inspection and it was noticeable how the older pupils cared for their younger peers without prompting.
13. Personal development of pupils is very good. Apart from taking responsibility for routine

tasks pupils use their initiative and when they notice a need, they act unprompted. Many examples were observed during the inspection. Routine tasks and duties are carried out quietly and efficiently and without the need of supervision. Most pupils are courteous, polite, confident and remarkably self-assured for their age.

14. Attendance levels are good and well above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. The school is aware of some unusual patterns of authorised absence and is liaising closely with the educational welfare officer over this matter.

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

15. Overall, teaching is good and frequently very good or better, especially at Key Stage 2. This has a very significant impact on pupils' learning. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is a great improvement since the last inspection. Eighty-seven per cent of teaching was good or better and 40 per cent very good or better. At Key Stage 1, 86 per cent was good or better and 14 per cent very good. Of the teaching at Key Stage 2, 88 per cent was good or better and 63 per cent was very good or better. In the small number of lessons observed for the children under five the teaching was good. The significant strengths of this good teaching which most effectively help the children to make progress in their learning are the quality of the relationships, a good understanding of what interests young children, clear instruction and effective questioning, and, in the main, high expectations.
16. Teachers are conscientious, enthusiastic and clear about what they expect pupils to learn. Work is planned appropriately to meet the demands of the National Curriculum an improvement since the last inspection. Literacy and numeracy lessons are executed in line with the strategy requirements. Teachers have a good knowledge of the needs of the pupils in their classes and cater very well for the wide range of ages and ability levels in their classes, ensuring that most pupils frequently make good progress in their learning. For example, in an excellent literacy lesson the teacher of the older pupils set different work for pupils in three ability groups, which challenged and promoted their learning. The high expectations of the teacher of behaviour, and the good working ethic he had built up with the pupils, enabled him to make a full and well paced input into teaching individual groups, whilst the others carried on with their tasks conscientiously. As in this lesson, all teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and the mutual respect that frequently exists between the teachers and their pupils creates a fruitful learning environment. This is particularly so in literacy and numeracy lessons when teachers successfully provide a good balance between building on and reinforcing pupils' previous knowledge, and presenting them with new ideas and information. Also, in these lessons basic skills are taught effectively. For example, during a numeracy lesson the teacher of the younger pupils was teaching a group to multiply two numbers. She promoted learning effectively through skilful questioning to stimulate thought and by giving pupils the opportunity to work practically. Through a very appropriate practical activity the pupils gradually built up the understanding of multiplication. They continued to demonstrate and reinforce this learning by recording these facts accurately in pattern and in numerals and showing they had also learned that, if they changed the position of the two numbers they got the same answer.
17. Teachers' enthusiasm for promoting learning frequently shows in their lessons, reflecting the good and often very good teaching observed during the inspection in most subjects. In a history lesson the older pupils were studying the Celts and Romans. The teacher had a very good knowledge of the subject, gave clear explanations and injected a sense of humour into the lesson. Hence, the pupils listened attentively and were enjoying gaining knowledge imparted in this exciting way.

18. Marking is of a high standard which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers achieve a good balance between making supportive comments and suggestions for improvement and development. Homework is frequently used well to support learning. For instance, older pupils are encouraged to learn tables at home and younger ones regularly take their books home to read with parents.
19. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the effective support they receive. Teachers very carefully match tasks to their needs and abilities and they are provided with an appropriate blend of help and challenge. Support staff and voluntary helpers make a very valuable contribution to the pupils' education.

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

20. The school provides an appropriately broad and well-balanced curriculum and a satisfactory range of learning opportunities which successfully meet the needs of all its pupils. The curriculum meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects in the National Curriculum and religious education and younger pupils are provided with an appropriate curriculum based on the recommended early learning goals for pupils under five years of age. This is a significant improvement since the last OFSTED inspection and the school has dealt very well with the key issues relating to the curriculum in the last inspection report. The curriculum for information and communication technology now meets all statutory requirements and there are now appropriate, largely government recommended, schemes of work in place for all curriculum subjects which give appropriate guidance to teachers and ensure pupils develop their skills progressively as they move through the school.
21. Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good. A register of special educational needs is kept by the special educational needs co-ordinator and appropriately detailed individual educational plans are provided for pupils on the register. There are currently no pupils with statements of educational need on the register but there are good systems in place for providing appropriate and good quality support where this becomes necessary.
22. The school has implemented the government's recommended National Literacy and Numeracy strategies well. Planning and teaching, given the admitted difficulties of so doing with the small year groups of pupils and the inevitable mixed-age and, at times, mixed-key stage classes, take appropriate account of the recommendations both for lesson format and for lesson content. The school provides effectively for equality of opportunity and the curriculum is enriched through the provision of a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sporting and adventurous activities, throughout the school year. This represents another significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school now makes good provision for homework, which is set regularly, particularly in the class of older pupils.
23. The school makes very good provision overall for pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the warm family atmosphere that exists in the school. This very good provision promotes high standards of personal development and enriches the curriculum. There have been considerable and significant improvements, especially in the quality of provision for social and cultural development, since the last OFSTED inspection. A whole-school policy for the provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been developed and is now in place.

24. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Through the overall, whole-school ethos, built on strong Christian values, the religious education syllabus and whole-school assemblies, the school provides pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs and enables them to reflect on their experiences.
25. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Principles distinguishing right from wrong are promoted appropriately, and consistently by all staff, who provide very good role models for the pupils. This clear moral code provides a firm basis for the very good behaviour evident throughout the school, both within the classroom and outside.
26. Provision for pupils' social development is similarly very good. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and take responsibility for their work and for others. Class and school responsibilities increase appropriately as pupils get older, and pupils demonstrate a high level of initiative and responsibility in the confident way they execute their duties. For example, a Year 6 pupil with the responsibility for ringing the school bell at the end of sessions, does so, on time, without being reminded to do so by the class teacher. Pupils' social awareness is further developed by such activities as carol singing in the village and local nursing home and collecting for and delivering Harvest Festival baskets around the village. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world community are increased through a range of activities such as raising funds for world wide charities. Older pupils are given the opportunity to take part in adventurous activities, Year 5 pupils during a residential weekend and Year 6 pupils during a visit to France, which adds greatly to their social development.
27. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. Pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities to appreciate their own cultural traditions, taking part in a range of local and county festivals and visiting local historical and industrial sites. A range of opportunities is provided for pupils to develop an understanding of the diversity of other cultures. Much of this is delivered through the curriculum, for example, through stories from other cultures in literacy lessons, studies of contrasting communities in geography, study of the work of a range of artists, appraisal of music from other cultures and, to a lesser extent, the study of other religions in religious education lessons.
28. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The governing body has decided to include sex education in the curriculum and appropriate health and drugs awareness education is provided as part of the science curriculum. The school's links with its partner institutions are good. Pupils move to a number of secondary schools when they are 11 and links with the schools to which most transfer are good; pupils attend secondary schools for induction visits and staff from the secondary school visit the school. There are satisfactory links with the immediate locality which further enrich the range of curricular opportunities provided for the pupils.

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

29. The school promotes pupils' welfare very effectively through its concerned attention to their physical and emotional well being. A family atmosphere permeates the school and all staff strive successfully to provide a good standard of pastoral care. Strong formal procedures also reinforce pupils' well being.
30. Procedures for monitoring attendance although simple have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Attendance registers are marked neatly and the school has very effective methods for investigating unexplained absence. The school has a good child protection policy in place with the headteacher having received the appropriate training. All members of staff know their pupils very well and are aware of the necessary procedures. A member of the governing body has responsibility for health and safety

matters. The very good school behaviour policy is displayed throughout the school. The combination of this policy and the example set by all staff ensure pupils meet and sometimes exceed the standards expected from them.

31. Procedures for pupil assessment are good and show an improvement since the last inspection. The school assesses the attainment of pupils as they enter school and at the end of that first year to establish whether pupils have made appropriate progress. As pupils move through the school they undertake assessment tests in English, mathematics and science, which are analysed to ensure pupils are progressing as well as they should be. Teachers use the results of these tests to provide appropriate work for individuals and groups of pupils in their classes. Currently there are no assessment systems in place for formally assessing attainment in subjects apart from the core ones of English, mathematics and science. Although currently teachers keep their own individual records, the school recognises the need to formulate whole school systems for recording the progress made by individual pupils in their learning in all subjects. Assessment procedures are used well to identify and monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator maintains a register of special educational needs pupils. Pupils requiring additional support are identified early and there are appropriate procedures for placing pupils on the register. Pupils are well supported and integrated into the school community. The governor for special educational needs works with pupils for one morning per week and liaises with the special educational needs co-ordinator during these visits. Good systems are in place for providing appropriate and good quality support where necessary. The informal monitoring of personal development of pupils is satisfactory.
32. Overall, procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The school knows and looks after its pupils very well.

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

33. Most parents' value the school highly and their links with school continue to be satisfactory. They appreciate the small classes, the commitment of the staff and high quality of teaching provided. They find all staff approachable. Parents' support of the school is good and they make themselves available when help is needed.
34. Information for parents is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The school operates an 'open door' policy in addition to teachers making themselves available for private discussions. There is one informal parent evening in the autumn term and a meeting in the spring term to discuss children's progress. Parents receive a comprehensive prospectus containing detailed and appropriate information. In addition there are regular newsletters to parents that keep them fully up to date with school activities. Notices and information are displayed prominently at the entrance where parents leave their children and pick them up. However, some parents feel that they would appreciate more detailed information on their children's progress. Some reports last year provided insufficient detail about their children's progress in some subjects, although this was due to unavoidable circumstances at the time. Plans are in place to ensure that this does not happen again. Dedicated homework diaries and separate reading diaries are now in operation, which also encourage two way communications between school and parents.
35. The Parent, Teachers and Friends of St. Mary's raise impressive funds each year through various initiatives. These funds provide valuable additional resources that further enhance the pupils' learning and personal development.

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



36. The overall leadership and management of the school are good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher appointed just after the last OFSTED inspection has overseen significant, steady improvements in the quality of the curriculum, the quality of lesson planning and of teaching through rigorous monitoring and evaluation. His very effective, enthusiastic but sensitive leadership has cultivated and developed a team spirit within the school community so there is a shared, whole-school determination and capacity to succeed in the pursuit of raising standards. This has had a significant impact on the rise in standards over the last two years by the time pupils leave the school. The wholly appropriate aims of the school are met such that a very positive ethos pervades the school.
37. Governors are enthusiastic and have high levels of expertise. They are very supportive, take an active role in the management of the school and fulfil their statutory requirements. The school monitors and evaluates its performance closely and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They make good use of the detailed analysis of assessment results and compare them with other schools both locally and nationally. Through the comprehensive and well-constructed school development plan there is a clear way forward for future educational direction of the work of the school. However, currently there are no formal procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the progress of these initiatives, and their effects on the education the school provides, or to introduce other important issues as they arise. For example, an important government requirement of performance management has not been included as part of the school's developments on the plan.
38. The governing body manages its strategic responsibility for planning the use of resources well, through its efficient finance committee. Careful consideration is given to alternative strategies for managing expenditure and handling contingencies. The budget is operated according to the principles of best value; for example, through careful tendering processes, the governing body makes sure it obtains the best value for money for all contracts. Specific grants are used appropriately.
39. The school has made an effective start on monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and teaching and the impact it has on pupils' learning especially in English and mathematics through classroom observations undertaken by outside agencies and the teachers. Although teachers in their roles of subject co-ordinators have worked hard to update policies and review and update schemes of work in line with curriculum changes, the school recognises that the co-ordinators' role in the overall management of the school is very much in its infancy and needs to be developed.
40. Special educational needs are managed well and there are effective systems for identifying and drawing up programmes of work for pupils. The headteacher who is the special educational needs co-ordinator enjoys good support from a governor who oversees this work in the school.
41. There is a good match of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. An important improvement since the last inspection is that the headteacher has more time allocated for his administrative duties. Teaching staff responsibilities are organised well to make best use of their subject expertise. For example, the wise appointment of a teacher, a music specialist, to release the headteacher for his administrative duties, has resulted in improved teaching and standards in music. Teachers are well supported by a non-teaching assistant who works very well with them to support pupils in the classroom.
42. Accommodation is good and has improved since the last inspection allowing the curriculum to be delivered in full. This is due to the fall in numbers and the addition of an

extra classroom and a useful information and communication technology suite. The school now has a hall to use on a permanent basis and has an extra classroom which houses the well stocked library as well as being used as a multi-use resource room. Colourful displays and examples of pupils' work are displayed throughout the school. Learning resources have improved since the last inspection and for all subjects are at least adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. For information and communication technology and physical education resources are good, and of a high quality, and have had a positive impact on the improvement in standards in these subjects.

43. The school has made vast improvements since the last inspection and school development planning indicates a capacity to improve even further. Although the cost of educating individual pupils is very high compared with that nationally, the school gives value for money.

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

44. In order to continue to improve the education of the pupils, the staff and governors should now, as identified in the school development plan:

- (1) Develop the role of the subject co-ordinators so that they can be fully involved in the management of the school (Paragraph 39).
- (2) Ensure there is a more structured approach to monitoring and evaluating school developments (Paragraph 37).
- (3) Develop whole school systems for recording the progress made by individual pupils in their learning in all subjects (Paragraph 31).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

15

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

25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	33	47	13	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)	Not applicable	32
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	Not applicable	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	Not applicable	7

#### 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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

45. There were fewer than ten pupils who took the national assessment tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in 1999 and 2000 and government legislation takes account of confidentiality of publication of results to protect individual pupils from being identified. Therefore the results of these tests are not published in this report.

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	27
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.3
Average class size	16

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

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	117,323
Total expenditure	113,322
Expenditure per pupil	3,063
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,246
Balance carried forward to next year	17,247



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	32
Number of questionnaires returned	25

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	36	8	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	36	8	0	12
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	60	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	56	16	4	4
The teaching is good.	40	52	8	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	44	20	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	40	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	52	4	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	40	40	16	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	48	44	8	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	48	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	72	8	4	0

## **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**

46. Provision for children in the foundation stage is, in general, satisfactory matching the judgements made at the last inspection. Children enter the school in the September of the academic year in which they are five years old. At the time of the inspection, there were five children attending full-time. Most of the children who join the school have had some pre-school provision. Due to this and the effective induction programme the school operates, the children settle quickly and confidently into the mixed class of reception and five and six year old pupils. Although the children come to school with a wide range of experiences, analysis of entry tests over the last three years indicates that overall attainment on entry is about average. Most of the children who are currently under five are likely to surpass the standards expected for children of their age in their personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy development and mathematical development. In all other areas of development they are on line to at least meet the expected standards.

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

47. In this area of their development the children are making good progress a direct consequence of the good teaching. The children quickly adapt to the routines of school life and move quietly and confidently around the school. They are quick to learn routines of good social behaviour from older pupils in the class who act as good role models. The children are friendly towards one another, listen with interest to what others have to say, particularly in whole-class discussions, and share equipment fairly. They change their clothes for physical education lessons independently. The class teacher and the nursery nurse enjoy very good relationships with the children. They make the children's learning fun. As a result, the children enjoy their work, are keen to learn and concentrate well. They constantly reinforce good habits, such as putting up their hands to answer questions or make comment, and make sure that children tidy up after activities. The staff interact calmly and constructively with the children who feel secure and develop confidence. Children participate fully in acts of collective worship.

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

48. Overall, the children make good progress in this area of their learning. Speaking and listening skills are developing well. Children listen attentively to their teachers and each other and express their ideas well to make themselves understood. They answer confidently and ask questions. The teacher ensures that all children have an opportunity to speak in a large group and she uses questions effectively to encourage the children to respond. Good use is made of stories to foster an enjoyment of literature. The children enjoy looking at books, handle them carefully and understand how they are organised. They tell stories in books through looking at the pictures and talk about favourite stories they have heard. Most are beginning to know the sounds of the letters and recognise some familiar words especially their own names. Appropriate opportunities are made for the development of writing. The children are encouraged to have a go and record using pictures, marks, or writing. Most children make very good attempts at writing their names. More formal lessons are usually based on the literacy hour; they are well planned and the teaching is good.

## **Mathematical development**

49. In mathematics, the children make good progress overall and most are developing a secure understanding of number up to ten through counting and matching objects. Many are beginning to recognise number symbols up to ten and order them correctly. Some are familiar with larger numbers from their everyday lives. They are beginning to use mathematical vocabulary correctly, such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than' when ordering teddy bear sizes. Good provision is made for pupils to apply and develop their mathematical understanding through practical activities. For example, through playing a mathematical game with numbered cards and a dice the children were developing the concept of subtraction by identifying the number 'one less than'. Most children are familiar with simple shapes such as circles, triangles, rectangles and squares. Teaching is good. The teacher's explanations are very clear and the correct vocabulary is used. As a result, the children understand what they are taught and use the correct words themselves. The lessons are well planned. The opening oral class activity which the children share with the older pupils in the class, gives them a good opportunity to learn from one another's contributions and is well led by the teacher who effectively helps the pupils to feel confident about trying out their ideas.

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

50. Overall, in their knowledge and understanding of the world the children make satisfactory progress. Most know where they live and are beginning to understand what each line of their address means. They develop their mapping skills appropriately through looking at a local map and identifying the position of their houses. Through looking at pictures of children in art they develop a sense of the passing of time. They gain scientific knowledge successfully through discussions about healthy eating and they identify the various foods they eat at different meals in the day. They develop their design and making skills well through investigating the materials needed to make a rocket and then making one. They also design a habitat for dinosaurs in the sand. They use information technology to support their learning, for instance, using simple programs to develop their word processing skills. They particularly enjoyed the talking facility on the computer and were very clear which icon made it work. In the lessons observed the teaching was usually good and the teacher generally effected a very good balance between allowing children to experiment and making teaching points. Interesting activities were planned so that the children were keen to take part and well motivated.

## **Physical development**

51. In their physical development the children make satisfactory progress. In a gymnastics lesson the children were developing good control in the basic actions of travelling, turning and jumping and an awareness of others in the space. They were broadening the range of their skills linking movements together. Most listened attentively and followed the teacher's instructions sensibly. Ample opportunity is made for the children to use a pencil and they are effectively guided, establishing a good basis for the high standards of handwriting in the school. The outcome is that the majority are relatively proficient at handling these and brushes and modelling tools with good control. Teaching overall is good. Well-planned activities allow children to develop confidence in this area of development. However, insufficient use is made of the outdoor space to develop their skills and control on large equipment and apparatus and promote other areas of learning.



## **Creative development**

52. In their creative development the children are making steady progress. They experiment with mixing paint to make colourful patterns and observe and describe their pictures imaginatively, for example, 'it looks like a tunnel', 'lots of kites' or 'roofs on houses'. They also link their creative skills effectively with their work in mathematics when they make pictures using cut out shapes such as circle, triangles, rectangles and squares. They also use natural objects, such as autumn leaves to make attractive pictures. Most recognise and name the primary and secondary colours and black and white. Opportunities are made for the children to express their ideas and feelings through imaginative play, for instance, in the Doctor's Surgery and music. Overall, the teaching is good. Children enjoy the well-planned activities, many of which are led by the nursery nurse.
53. Curriculum planning is sound and dovetails the under-fives curriculum effectively with the curriculum for Key Stage 1. In general, the curriculum is broad and balanced and planned appropriately to the early learning goals. Teaching is always good. The strengths of this which most effectively help the children to make progress in their learning are the quality of the relationships, a good understanding of what interests young children, clear instruction and effective questioning, and, in the main, high expectations. The procedures for assessment are satisfactory and, for the most part, assessments, including baseline assessments, are used effectively to inform the planning. The teacher has very good support from the nursery nurse who makes a significant contribution to the children's learning. The quantity, quality and range of resources are satisfactory. The school maintains close liaison with the playgroup and there are regular interchange visits between staff and children. Recently, a joint project between the school and playgroup has been to buy some ride-on wheeled vehicles for outdoor activities, for children to further develop their physical and social skills. To overcome the lack of a dedicated secure outside play area for children under the age of five the school segregates the playground temporarily when necessary and all pupils respect this arrangement. The links with the parents are good. Parents appreciate the induction procedures which help their children to make a comfortable start in school.
54. The pupils make a good start in the early years, particularly in developing good working habits and attitudes, and acquiring the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

## **ENGLISH**

55. At the time of the inspection there were only two pupils in Year 2 and, in order to protect these individual pupils from being identified, an overall judgement on attainment of pupils by the time they reach seven years old in English is not made in this report. However, pupils throughout Key Stage 1 are working at an appropriate level for their age and ability and in all year groups, there are a significant number of pupils achieving standards above the expected levels. Over the three years 1997 to 1999, by the time they were seven, pupils were achieving standards in the national assessment tests well above the national average. However, in 2000 these results dropped to below the national average as there was a disproportional number of pupils with special educational needs in that particular year group.
56. It is probable that by the time they are 11 years old, the very small group of Year 6 pupils will achieve at least the standards expected nationally for pupils of their age in English, with a significant number on line to achieve beyond this. This will meet the challenging targets the school has set for the end of year national assessment tests and add to the continuing improvements that have been made over the last three years and since the last inspection. Throughout the school, standards in reading, and speaking and listening

are above average, and nearly all pupils present their work in a neat cursive style of handwriting to a high standard.

57. Speaking and listening skills are well developed. Most pupils speak clearly, and communicate their thoughts and feelings well in lessons. They speak confidently and articulately using an increasingly wide vocabulary as they move through the school. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other and improve their speaking skills through group and class discussions. For example, during a literacy lesson, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 were engaged in a very good discussion with the class teacher about use of different tenses, with all pupils totally confident to express their own opinions and comments. Pupils also have opportunities to practise speaking to wider audiences, through class and whole school presentations, such as assemblies and school concerts.
58. Throughout the school pupils read a variety of appropriate texts, and discussions with pupils and observations at both key stages, indicate that they use non-fiction books effectively for research for topic work. For example, during a history lesson, pupils in the class of older pupils were using the index and contents pages in non-fiction books very effectively to find information about the Celts and Romans. The youngest pupils at Key Stage 1 associate sounds with different letters and many read simple text, making good use, when necessary, of phonic, pictures and the meaning of the sentence to help them decipher unfamiliar words. Many of the five and six year olds read accurately from increasingly more difficult books as they get older, talk knowledgeably about characters in the stories they have read and discuss other stories they have heard. Older pupils in this class frequently predict what might happen next in the story. During a literacy hour, pupils were considering a variety of story settings and making considered comparisons about their similarities and differences. By the time they are 11 years old, most pupils are fluent readers and show a good understanding of the text. For instance, one pupil was reading a very challenging adult book with good understanding. Another talked about the beginning of the story she was reading and referred to the text when clearly explaining her ideas, for instance, that the story was not set in England because of the way the characters were speaking. Many pupils confidently discuss books they enjoy reading and their preferred authors. They choose books carefully often on the recommendation of the teacher or friend or by reading the 'blurb' on the cover.
59. Overall, by the time they are eleven most pupils are attaining at least average standards in writing with a significant number achieving above average standards, as in all year groups throughout the school. Within the literacy hour pupils develop their writing skills appropriately and learn to write for different purposes and audiences. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 were writing a story they had heard in their own words using appropriate vocabulary, whilst the Year 1 pupils were writing the story together with the teacher as the scribe. In their lesson Years 5 and 6 pupils were writing descriptions of a treasured possession using appropriately descriptive vocabulary. This was part of a story writing project where pupils were planning the plot, characters and the structure of their own narrative. Pupils throughout the school develop their writing skills further in other areas of the curriculum. For example, Years 1 and 2 pupils had considered their rocket designs made in a design and technology lesson and had written clearly the different ways in which it could be improved. Years 5 and 6 pupils had made good use of their note taking skills whilst watching a video about Roman Britain in history. For their work in geography, they had written some interesting descriptions about a day in the life of their own mothers when comparing them with a mother in Chembakolli village in India. Overall, standards of spelling and grammar are satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils use dictionaries effectively to help with their spellings. Most of the Year 2 and 3 pupils use capital letters and full stops to punctuate their sentences correctly. In their work, older Key Stage 2 pupils, by the end of one lesson had a clear understanding of the use of connecting words when joining short sentences to make longer ones. and could replace nouns with

them in given examples. Nearly all pupils take a pride in their written work, presenting it in a neat cursive style to a high standard.

60. In general, most pupils, throughout both key stages are making satisfactory and often good progress in their knowledge and use of English, generally through the reinforcement and consolidation of previous learning. Often, during literacy hours, pupils were observed to be making good progress in their learning due to the high expectations of the teachers and brisk pace to lessons. Overall, the pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. They are well supported in lessons and work is matched to their particular needs. Throughout both key stages, nearly all pupils are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to learn. Most pupils, even the very youngest, sustain concentration even when not directly supervised by an adult. The majority of pupils enjoy reading, and read for pleasure at home. Almost at all times pupils respond enthusiastically to their teachers, make constructive contributions to lessons and answer questions appropriately.
61. Overall, at both key stages the quality of teaching varies but is usually good, often very good and in one lesson it was excellent. In general, teachers plan their lessons in line with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers ensure the work is matched to the varying ages and attainment levels of pupils in their classes but is challenging enough to make sure pupils maintain a good rate of learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for with appropriate work set for them and good support to promote their learning. In the introductions to lessons, teachers use skilful questioning techniques to revise and review work covered in previous lessons, and they value the contributions made by their pupils. Also, they give clear instructions and explanations for follow-up work and have high expectations that pupils produce their best work. The high standards of handwriting throughout the school are an example of teachers expecting the best. Throughout both key stages, teachers monitor pupils' reading carefully, both through the guided reading sessions in the literacy hour and through pupils' independent reading. Pupils regularly take their reading books home to share with their parents and the reading record book is used as an effective vehicle for a two-way dialogue between staff and parents.
62. The school has a clear and detailed policy statement for English with comprehensive guidelines which has been updated to be in line with the National Literacy Strategy. All teachers have adapted the National Literacy Strategy lessons appropriately to meet the needs of the mixed age classes. The school is working towards raising standards in writing throughout the school, as national assessment test results over the last two years have not shown the same improvement as other aspects of English. The headteacher, the co-ordinator and outside agencies have undertaken some monitoring of the effects of the National Literacy Strategy on pupils' attainment through direct classroom observation. Resources, overall, are adequate and are continuing to be built up to meet the demands of the new curriculum. The school uses a range of commercial reading schemes, appropriately graded, to support pupils' reading. The library is well stocked with a good range of fiction and non-fiction books.

## **MATHEMATICS**

63. At the time of the inspection there were only two pupils in Year 2, making a secure overall judgement on pupils' attainment in mathematics by the age of seven impossible. However, lesson observations during the inspection and a scrutiny of work undertaken during the first weeks of the current school year indicate that most pupils throughout Key Stage 1 are achieving standards of an appropriate level for their age. In all year groups there are a significant number of pupils achieving above the expected levels. Over the three years 1997 to 1999, by the time they were seven, pupils were achieving standards

in the national assessment tests well above the national average. However, in 2000 these results dropped to below the national average as there was a disproportional number of pupils with special educational needs in that particular year group.

64. By the time they are 11, most pupils in the very small group of Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve at least the standards in mathematics expected nationally for pupils of their age and a significant number are on-line to achieve beyond this, making overall attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 above average. As at Key Stage 1, a significant proportion of pupils in each year group at Key Stage 2 are attaining standards above national expectations for their age. Attainment in the national assessment tests at the age of 11 has improved very significantly and steadily, year on year, since the last inspection.
65. The school has adopted and implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well. Under this new scheme of work and curriculum pupils undertake a wide range of work in all areas of mathematics. Samples of pupils' work demonstrate that pupils in both key stages undertake an appropriate variety of work on shape, space and measures, and tackle a range of problems involving handling data and investigation during the course of the school year. Lesson observations confirm that pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills in other curriculum areas such as science.
66. Most pupils in Year 1 count to 20 and beyond confidently. Pupils, use playing cards and dice, add three numbers together and record their findings accurately. A significant proportion of Year 1 pupils are attaining above national expectations for their age and for this early stage of the school year. Year 2 pupils, working with the class teacher's guidance, are working out simple multiplication problems such as  $3 \times 2$  and recognising that if they change the position of the numbers the answer is the same.
67. Older pupils in Year 3 understand that division is sharing equally and is the same as repeated subtraction. They record number sequences using the 'division' and 'equals' symbols. Year 4 pupils develop and refine written methods for division, using pencil and paper methods, dividing two digit numbers by one digit numbers, using the method of jumping back on a number line. A small minority of Year 4 pupils are working at levels significantly above expectations for their age and are working successfully with Year 5 pupils, dividing three digit numbers by one digit numbers, jumping back in multiples of ten, using repeated subtraction and grouping. Year 6 pupils divide three figure numbers by two figure numbers and understand that grouping is a better way to handle division of large numbers. They also understand the concept of 'partitioning' numbers and are able to multiply a three digit number by a two digit integer using this method, quickly and accurately, approximating before undertaking the calculation. Work in exercise books indicates that the majority of pupils in Year 6 are working above expectations for their age.
68. The quality of learning in lessons was good in the one lesson observed at Key Stage 1, and was very good overall in Key Stage 2. At both key stages, teachers ensure pupils are well-motivated and the pace of lessons is good or better, with a good variety of activities ensuring pupils' attention and a high level of motivation. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for appropriately in teachers' planning with suitable tasks and additional support, and make good progress towards the targets set for them. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in mathematics lessons are very good at both key stages. Pupils enjoy and are enthusiastic about their mathematics work, especially the mental and oral 'warm-up' activities. They respond very well to their teachers and work together very well without the need for constant teacher-intervention.
69. The quality of teaching in the one mathematics lessons seen at Key Stage 1 was good; teaching in Key Stage 2 ranges from good to very good and is very good overall.

Teachers utilise a good range of strategies to motivate and interest pupils. They follow the recommended numeracy lesson format and Programmes of Study closely, plan lessons very well, provide a good range of resources and use praise and questioning well. They ensure all pupils are paying appropriate attention, use correct mathematical vocabulary and terminology and provide good opportunities for pupils to explain their methods and practice what they know. Teachers provide appropriate activities and support for the wide range of ages and differing levels of ability in their classes, challenging higher attaining pupils appropriately and supporting pupils needing additional support well.

70. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall, and funding has been allocated appropriately to purchase additional resources to support the implementation of the numeracy curriculum.

## **SCIENCE**

71. Since, at the time of the inspection, there were only two pupils in Year 2, one of whom was absent for part of the inspection period, it is not possible to make a secure overall judgement on pupils' attainment in science by the age of seven. However, lesson observations during the inspection and a scrutiny of work undertaken indicate that most pupils throughout Key Stage 1 are achieving an appropriate level for their age and in all year groups there are a significant number of pupils achieving above the expected levels. In Key Stage 2, as in Key Stage 1, a significant number of pupils in each year group are attaining standards above national expectations for their age. By the time they are 11 years old, most pupils in the small group of Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve at least the standards in science expected nationally for pupils of their age. A significant number are on line to achieve beyond this, so that overall attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average representing an improvement since the last inspection.
72. The scrutiny of work undertaken in the first few weeks of the school year and, in some cases, examples of work from the previous year, indicates that pupils in both key stages have appropriate opportunities, during the year, to undertake a range of science activities covering all of the science attainment targets, studying life processes and living things, materials and physical processes.
73. Years 1 pupils studying light understand that the Sun produces daylight and provide a very extensive list of ways of lighting to enable them to see in the dark, recording their work in pictures. Through investigation, Year 2 pupils established that shiny things need light to make them shine. Years 3 and 4 pupils investigating solids, were comparing the properties of everyday materials, sorting them into sets according to their properties and recording their findings. They consider evidence and carry out comparisons, employing their own scientific understanding and knowledge in order to explain their observations. Year 6 pupils describe changes occurring when materials are mixed and understand that some solids dissolve in water to produce solutions and that others do not. They find ways of separating insoluble solids from liquids by means of filtration, understanding that when a liquid is separated from solution, the solids are left behind. They make predictions and test hypotheses in their work.
74. The quality of learning in lessons was good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Clear progress was made due to the very good rapport between teachers and pupils, and the very good pace and high expectations set by the teachers result in a high level of pupil motivation. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in science lessons and make good progress overall. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons observed were very good at Key Stage 1 and good in the Key Stage 2 lesson. Pupils show a high level of interest in the activities and are very keen to answer the teacher's questions,

replying with enthusiasm and confidence. They work quietly and conscientiously, working together well and clearly enjoying their science lessons.

75. The quality of teaching in both lessons was very good. Teachers give very clear explanations and are confident in their subject knowledge. They motivate pupils very well and maintain a brisk pace throughout the lesson. They have very good rapport with their pupils and appropriately high expectations of work and behaviour. Lessons are planned very well, with clear links to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, and good links with other curriculum areas such as English, mathematics and information and control technology.
76. The school has an appropriate policy and uses a government recommended scheme of work to aid teachers with their planning and to ensure pupils develop their skills in a progressive way as they get older. Resources for the subject are satisfactory in range and quality and are utilised well to support learning.

## **ART**

77. No art lessons were observed during the inspection, providing insufficient evidence on which to make secure judgements about pupils' attitudes and behaviour in art lessons or on the quality of teaching in the subject. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work at both key stages and discussions with Key Stage 2 pupils indicate that pupils at both key stages are achieving appropriate standards expected of their age group, which is a similar judgement to that made at the last inspection.
78. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have looked closely at the work of Vincent van Gogh as preparation for painting their own self-portraits and have used the opportunity appropriately to make comparisons between these self-portraits and ones made at an earlier stage of their school career. They have experimented with colour and paint mixing successfully, and have made hand-prints and collages of autumn leaves. Key Stage 2 pupils have made self-portraits in pencil and pencil-crayon, some of good quality. Pupils have sketch books which are used well to make preparatory sketches and observational drawings. They have experimented effectively with paint, mixing sand with paint to give texture, for example, with printing, using sponge techniques, and with clay, making Greek vases in a link with their history topic on The Ancient Greeks. They have studied the work of a range of artists, including L. S. Lowry, Kandinsky, Monet and Cezanne.
79. The school has an appropriate policy and has adopted the government-recommended scheme of work for the subject. Art lessons are alternated with design and technology lessons each half term and are planned by means of a rolling programme of topics in each key stage. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and are utilised well.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

80. No design and technology lessons were observed at either key stage during the inspection, providing insufficient evidence on which to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching or learning in the subject. However, a scrutiny of samples of work produced throughout the school, and discussions with both teachers and pupils, indicates that pupils in both key stages undertake an appropriate range of activities in which they design, make and evaluate products. Pupils are achieving appropriate standards expected of their age groups. This significant improvement since the last inspection when standards in design and technology were generally unsatisfactory at both key stages and especially so at Key Stage 2, is a direct link to better planning and resources.
81. Years 1 and 2 pupils designed and made a rocket, with help, considered the problem and developed an appropriate solution. They made a two-dimensional model of a rocket in card and thought about ways of improving their design and produced a second model incorporating their improvements. Older pupils designed a sandwich, considering the health implications, investigated the ingredients in bought products by analysing food labels carefully and, in a link with their science work, considered food groups. After listing the ingredients for their sandwiches and making their sandwiches, they tested them, considering and describing the flavour and texture. In other work seen, they had analysed professionally designed greetings cards, annotating the chosen card in detail. Although samples of work were not seen, pupils having taken them home at the end of the previous term, pupils describe design and technology lessons in which they designed and made a good range of other objects. For example, free-standing models of people using pipe-cleaners, and decorated boxes for a Christmas Fayre, pop-up cards, decorated to Easter bonnets, and designed and made masks.
82. The school has an appropriate policy and adopted the government recommended scheme of work for the subject to aid teachers with their planning and which ensures pupils build on their skills progressively as they move through the school. There is a generally satisfactory range of resources for the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

83. One lesson in the class of younger pupils was observed during the inspection. However, a scrutiny of work and displays around the school was made, and discussions held with pupils. This evidence indicates that by the time pupils are 11 years old they are attaining standards in line with those expected nationally and is a similar judgement to that made at the last inspection. In order to protect the identity of the only two Year 2 pupils, no overall judgements can be made on the level of attainment of pupils by the time they are seven, but, in general, all pupils in Class 1 are achieving at a level appropriate for their age group.
84. The younger pupils in their lesson were developing their mapping skills appropriately through identifying the position of their homes on a street map and then drawing a map of their route to school. By the end of the lesson, the pupils had an appropriate grasp of map making, map reading and the reasons for having maps. Work on display and in books shows that the older pupils had made an in-depth study of the life of people in the Indian village of Chembakolli. They had made careful comparisons with aspects of life there with their own, for instance, the landmarks and important places in each village, giving considered reasons of the importance of these to the different lifestyles, and the differences in the lives of mothers from each village. The work shows that although pupils work on the same topic in each class, the work the pupils undertake is appropriately matched to the different ages and abilities of pupils in the classes.

85. The pupils, in the lesson observed, were enthusiastic and interested in their work and keen to show and share their work. The teaching was good and the teacher showed clearly in her planning what she wanted the pupils to learn. Through careful questioning she reinforced what the pupils already knew and built on this successfully to extend their learning.
86. The school has an appropriate policy for geography. Geography is taught on a two-year topic cycle at both key stages. Teachers use a government recommended planning package and a scheme developed by the local education authority for small schools, to help with their planning and to ensure pupils build on their skills and knowledge from year to year. The school has adequate books and resources for teaching the subject and supplements these with books borrowed from the schools' library

## **HISTORY**

87. Only one lesson in the class of older pupils was observed during the inspection. This, along with a scrutiny of work and displays around the school and discussions with pupils indicates that pupils by the time they leave school are achieving standards at an appropriate level for their age group. This is generally a similar picture to the judgements made at the last inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements on attainment at Key Stage 1.
88. The older pupils were studying the area of Invaders and Settlers and, in particular, the invasion of the Romans. Most pupils had a clear understanding from earlier work of how the Celts lived and compared their way of living to that of the invading Romans. The teacher through very skilful questioning drew out the pupils' thoughts as to why the Celts preferred to have their dwellings on the top of hills. Most pupils gave appropriate answers and learnt through their discussions about this and other areas of Celtic and Roman life, a great deal about the characteristics and habits of both groups. In their earlier work in books and on display the pupils showed that they had gained an in-depth knowledge of Ancient Greece which they had linked very successfully to the Olympic Games taking place at the time of their studies. In this study, there were some very good cross-curricular links with, for example, art where pupils had made and painted some clay pots very effectively in the style of that time. These pupils had also successfully used the skills of note taking, learnt in their literacy lessons, to make notes while watching a video about Roman Britain.
89. During the lesson observed the pupils listened attentively to the teacher and each other and joined in discussions with keen interest. In their individual and group work, the pupils focussed on their work well, and there was a healthy exchange of ideas and thoughts about information they had found. The teaching in this lesson was good and the teacher was very knowledgeable about the subject. Her enthusiasm and good humour inspired learning. She had provided a good range of books for the pupils' individual research.
90. The policy for history is appropriate. History is taught on a two-year rolling topic cycle at both key stages. Teachers use a government recommended planning package and a scheme developed by the local education authority for small schools to help with their planning, and to ensure that pupils build on their skills and knowledge progressively as they move through the school. The school has adequate books and resources for teaching the subject and also borrows books from the library and artefacts from the museum to support these. History is brought alive for pupils when they visit places such as the museum at Lancaster, and a visit to Chester is planned for the older pupils in connection with their Roman topic.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**



91. Only one whole-class lesson was observed during the inspection, at Key Stage 1. Secure judgements on attainment at the age of seven are not possible because of the very small group of pupils in this age group in school at the time of inspection. Although no information and communication technology (ICT) lessons were observed during the inspection in the class of older pupils, pupils were observed working at the computer in other lessons and samples of on-screen work and print-outs of work produced using the computers were scrutinised. Discussions with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils provided further evidence to indicate that attainment in ICT is satisfactory overall by the age of 11 and that pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in ICT lessons. This is a significant improvement since the last OFSTED inspection when attainment was below expectations and the National Curriculum for information technology was not fully taught.
92. In the one lesson observed, at Key Stage 1, pupils were using a simple word-processing program, to create simple sentences using a word bank. Most pupils use the keyboard appropriately and are familiar with the position of the main keys, understanding the function of the shift key, for example. They use a mouse properly, selecting text by highlighting to delete letters and words. Discussions with Year 6 pupils reveal that pupils have undertaken an appropriate range of information technology activities. They know how to manipulate text and how to find and insert 'clip art' into their texts. They use a paint program effectively to create patterns and use "Publisher" to design posters and name tags. They use a range of CD-ROM strategy games and a range of information CD-ROMS appropriately to research work in support of other subjects such as mathematics, geography and history. They understand how to program a programmable toy and how to draw shapes with an on-screen turtle. They use a database program to produce block graphs for mathematics and understand how to use a scanner, scanning photographs of Great Eccleston for use in the production of a leaflet. All pupils have their own disk of work and understand how to print and save their work. Pupils have some limited opportunities to use sensor equipment, for example, during the Year 5 residential visit when pupils programmed traffic lights and new equipment has been purchased by the school to further extend opportunities for work using sensor and monitoring equipment. However, due to continuing problems with the school's internet facilities, pupils have not had the opportunity to send Emails or use the Internet for research purposes.
93. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was good; the teacher had good subject knowledge and had produced a detailed plan for the lesson. She made good use of questioning and motivated pupils well. Pupils responded very well to the opportunity to work at the computers. They worked enthusiastically, particularly enjoying listening to the computer-generated voice reading their writing. They work together well and take turns appropriately, without the need for constant teacher-intervention.
94. The school now follows a government recommended scheme of work for the subject which ensures all aspects of the subject are taught systematically. The school has a good range of up-to-date resources for the subject. Since the last OFSTED inspection, the school's information technology resources have been improved significantly. National Grid for Learning funding has been used to purchase additional computers and an Internet link to resource an ICT suite which is situated between the two classrooms and is readily accessible to pupils and staff. These new resources are being used well and are having a positive impact on pupils' and teachers' skills and confidence.

## **MUSIC**

95. The only lesson observed during the inspection was in the class with the older pupils, so

no judgements can be made on pupils' standards by the time they are seven years old. In the lesson observed all pupils were working at an appropriate level for their age groups and so by the time pupils leave the school they are likely to achieve standards in line with those expected nationally. This represents an improvement in standards since the last inspection.

96. During the lesson most pupils were listening attentively, recalling sounds and rhythms and 'layers' of sound in recorded music with drums, trumpets and cornets. Most pupils were developing a good understanding of how music can be structured to create varying moods and effects, and how time and place can influence the way music is created, performed and heard. When working in groups the pupils were improving rhythm patterns effectively, based on their response to music from different cultures. The pupils also practised songs for the Christmas performance, which they sang with clear diction and pitch.
97. Although most pupils were well behaved, some displayed some excited and silly behaviour at the start of the lesson which the teacher had to continually quell, slowing down the pace of learning. Overall, the teaching was satisfactory. The lesson was well prepared and planned, with good resources. The teacher has a good knowledge of the subject and uses musical vocabulary effectively.
98. The co-ordinator is a music specialist, appointed since the last inspection, and teaches music to both classes. This also provides a very good opportunity for in-house training for the usual teacher of the younger pupils, who works alongside the music specialist in the lesson to improve her knowledge of the subject. The co-ordinator has developed an appropriate policy and is currently using a government recommended planning package, which she adapts to suit the needs of the school, to help with planning and the progressive building on of pupils' musical skills. An improvement since the last inspection is that the school has adequate resources for the subject, which are stored centrally in the spare classroom. This room also provides a good space for practical group work, another improvement.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

99. Observations of physical education lessons indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress overall in physical education in both key stages. Although it was not possible to make a judgement on pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with expectations for their age. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when raising the attainment in physical education at both key stages was a key issue to be addressed. Older pupils attend a local swimming pool for one lesson per week for two terms during the school year and by the end of the key stage the great majority of pupils are confident swimmers and are able to swim 25 metres easily.
100. Years 1 and 2 pupils are employing basic skills in travelling, being still, jumping and skipping and finding and using space safely, both on the floor and using apparatus. They are broadening their range of skills, linking skills and actions into short movement phrases and demonstrating increasing control and co-ordination in their work. In Key Stage 2, pupils are aware of the short-term effects of exercise on their bodies, talking about the role of oxygen, muscles, pulse rate and breathing patterns and understand the importance of warming up before exercise. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils are employing basic skills in travelling and being still and are beginning to devise and perform sequences of movements. They are considering the similarities and differences between their own and others' work. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils understand the terminology of 'points' and 'patches' when referring to their bodies and move around the floor using combinations of

these. They are using understanding gained from comparing and commenting on the skills and techniques of others to improve their own performance.

101. The quality of learning in the Key Stage 1 lesson was satisfactory, as were the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. These younger pupils participate enthusiastically; they work together well, relating well to their peers and to adults and, in most cases, taking part in the activities confidently. In the class of older pupils the learning was good and pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good. They enjoy the activities, respond very well to the teacher's instructions and cues, supporting and evaluating their own and others' performance maturely.
102. Although it is not possible to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching based on such a small sample of lessons, teaching in the one lesson seen at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory and the quality of teaching in the Key Stage 2 lessons was very good. In the better lesson, the teacher demonstrated very good subject knowledge, used praise appropriately, had very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, gave very clear instructions and maintained a good pace throughout the lesson, changing activities frequently to maintain pupils' interest and enthusiasm.
103. Resources for the subject, which were unsatisfactory at the time of the last OFSTED report, have been improved significantly and are now good. The school now has a well-equipped hall for gymnastic and dance activities, and most equipment for physical education lessons is new, of very good quality and is utilised well. A good range of extra-curricular sporting activities is provided at different times during the school year. In addition, Years 5 and 6 pupils have opportunities during residential visits to undertake outdoor and adventurous activities.