

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST LUKE'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Shaw Lane, PRESCOT, Merseyside

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104460

Acting Headteacher: Mrs M Keating

Reporting inspector: J D Foster  
Registered number: 21318

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> September 2000

Inspection number: 225244

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shaw Lane Prescot Merseyside
Postcode:	L35 5AT
Telephone number:	0151 426 6917
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Green
Date of previous inspection:	15 April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Foster OIN: 21318	Registered inspector	Mathematics Physical education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? - The school's results and pupils' achievements
Mary le Mage OIN: 9348	Lay inspector		How high are standards? - Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mike Williams OIN: 19388	Team inspector	English Geography History	How well is the school led and managed?
Paul Stevens OIN:28200	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art Design and technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mary Harrison OIN: 13066	Team inspector	Science Children under the age of five Special educational needs	How well are pupils taught?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Luke's RC Primary School caters for boys and girls and is slightly larger than other primary schools nationally. At the time of inspection 256 pupils attended the school, 134 boys and 122 girls, including 31 in the nursery. There will be 52 children in the nursery when all have been admitted, a full-time equivalent of 26. The school is about the same size as at the last inspection in 1996 when the number on roll was 296. The general level of attainment of children entering the nursery class is below that expected nationally. Ten pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is about average, and the percentage of pupils with formal statements of need is below the national average. At the time of inspection one of the deputy headteachers was acting headteacher.

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

There are many strengths at St Luke's School and these outweigh the weaknesses. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good and this has a positive effect on their learning. Throughout the school the teaching of the basic skills of numeracy and literacy is good. Over recent years standards have been about average in English, mathematics and science, though the current Year 6 pupils are attaining levels below those expected nationally in these subjects. The leadership provided by the acting headteacher is good. Since taking responsibility for the school in January 2000, she has re-established a sense of purpose and direction in the school. Priorities for development have been clearly identified and this has led to successful short-term improvement. Despite recent positive developments, however, insufficient improvement has been made since the last inspection. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in information and communication technology is good
- The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good
- Pupils' achievements in art are very good
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are all good
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good
- Procedures for monitoring attendance, good behaviour and bullying are very good
- The leadership provided by the acting headteacher is good

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

- Levels of attainment are too low in the current Year 6 in English and mathematics and in information technology
- The governing body has not yet devised a long-term strategic plan to identify the school's priorities for development or adequate systems for evaluating expenditure
- The governors' annual report to parents does not fulfil all statutory requirements
- The school's administrative system lacks clear procedures for ensuring effective financial control
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory

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

The level of attendance is too low

What the school does well outweighs the weaknesses identified. The school has many strengths which support the education given to its pupils.

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

Since the last inspection the school has not made sufficient improvement in addressing all the key issues identified in that report. The last report failed to give a judgement on the school's value for money. The school improved the planning and coverage of the information and communication technology curriculum, though standards remain below those expected nationally. There has been an emphasis on the development of pupils' writing skills and this has had a positive effect on standards in English. Teachers now plan their lessons with more clearly identified learning objectives. The arrangements for assessing pupils' work is satisfactory, though in some subjects the arrangements are still to be fully developed. Whilst the school has made some positive development in the use of its accommodation, the Key Stage 2 library remains inadequate in design and in its stock. It is not used effectively to support pupils' learning.

Subject co-ordinators for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are effective in monitoring the quality of work for their subjects. Other subject co-ordinators are beginning to monitor their subjects more effectively. The school has made satisfactory progress in making pupils aware of their own and others' cultures. The governing body has not yet made sufficient progress in developing arrangements for checking the effectiveness of spending. As a result, there is no long-term plan incorporating funding requirements or which identifies priorities for development. The acting headteacher, however, since her appointment in January 2000 has instigated good quality measures to deal with most of the issues effectively. These recent measures have not yet made a significant impact on the school. The governing body has recently had new appointments and is committed to improving the school further.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils achieve appropriate standards for their age by the time they leave the school. The current Year 6 group of pupils, however, is unlikely to maintain this level. This particular group of pupils was identified as being a low attaining group when they first started school. The results of their national Key Stage 1 tests and the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the group confirm this assessment.

The table above shows the variation in standards year by year.

- Standards in English were below average in 1997, rose to well above in 1998 and were average in 1999. The results for 2000 indicate that pupils in that year have achieved well. In mathematics and science the results indicate attainment above average from 1997 to 1998, but fell to below average in mathematics and in line in science in 1999. Results for 2000 indicate good achievement in mathematics and science.
- When compared to similar schools, pupils achieve above average standards in English and science and average in mathematics.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning between the ages of five and 11.
- In art and design, pupils make good progress and achieve levels well above national expectations. Though they make satisfactory progress in information technology, they still achieve standards below those expected nationally
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress is maintained in both key stages.
- The school sets appropriate, attainable targets for 11-year-olds.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to come to school and are well involved in school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in class and as they move around the school. The exclusion rate is low.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and with adults are consistently good.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The level of attendance is below the national average.

Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy school. Some pupils come to school very early to play with their friends. The older pupils look after and care for the youngest children well. The pupils are very aware of the impact their own behaviour has on other people. The very poor attendance of a small number of pupils has had an overall detrimental effect on reported figures.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

- The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. It is very good in seven per cent of lessons; good in 54 per cent; satisfactory in 35 per cent and unsatisfactory in four per cent of lessons.
- The quality of teaching is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics and in science.
- The small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in the upper end of Key Stage 2.
- Where the quality of teaching is very good, the teachers plan effectively and ensure that the work set for different groups of pupils is challenging and appropriate to their needs. In these lessons teachers have high expectations of behaviour and work levels and motivate the pupils well through their own enthusiasm.
- In the small number of lessons where unsatisfactory teaching occurs, the planning is unsatisfactory and teachers allow excessive noise to distract the pupils' attention.
- The teaching of numeracy and literacy is good. Teachers use frequent opportunities to teach these skills in other subjects effectively.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities to meet the learning needs of pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. For children in the Foundation Stage provision is good and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. They make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision is good for moral and social development and satisfactory for cultural and spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. There are very good procedures for monitoring attendance and promoting good behaviour.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership given by the acting headteacher is good. She has had a significant impact on the school, having made very positive improvements in the short time since her appointment. Curriculum co-ordinators, particularly for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are very effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has many members who have only been recently appointed. The governors give the school good support, but have not yet established a clear vision for developing the school in the longer-term. They have become more involved in the policy and decision making for the school in recent months.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory, though in its earliest stages. The staff have recent, clearly defined job descriptions. They have begun to be more effective in monitoring teaching and learning and have produced action plans to develop the National Curriculum subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Resources are satisfactory and the newly developed computer suite is a positive addition to resource provision. Specific grants are used effectively. Administrative systems within the school are not sufficiently effective.

There is a need to develop fully the accommodation to create a more welcoming atmosphere to the school. There is an adequate number of appropriately qualified staff to meet the needs of the school. Resource provision is satisfactory, though the quantity and quality of books in the Key Stage 2 library are inadequate. The acting headteacher provides positive leadership and has moved the school forward substantially since her appointment in January 2000. The governing body needs to build on the positive developments of recent months when formulating the school's strategic plan.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Thirty-three parents completed the parents' questionnaires (12 per cent) and 18 attended the parents' meeting

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
Their children enjoy school They feel happy to approach the school with concerns or problems knowing they will be dealt with properly The school shares their high expectations for their children The school is well led and managed The high quality of teaching helps their children to make progress in their learning The school helps their children to be responsible	Their children do not get the right amount of homework The range of out-of-school activities is limited They are not kept well enough informed about the progress their children make

The inspection team fully endorses the positive views of the parents. The partnership between the school and parents is satisfactory. Parents are satisfied with the school's provision and achievements. A very small percentage of parents completed the parents' questionnaire (12 per cent). Of this number about two-fifths expressed dissatisfaction about the school's provision for out-of-school activities, a third about the homework their children are given and a third felt that they were not kept sufficiently well informed about their children's progress. Inspection findings indicate that the school provides the right amount of homework and that the provision for out-of-school activities is adequate. The team supports the parents' views that the information they receive about their children's progress is unsatisfactory. The end-of-year reports fail to give adequate information about the children's achievements.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 1999, pupils' performance in English and science was broadly in line with the national average and below the national average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools pupils attain levels that are above the national average in English and science, and are broadly in line with the national average in mathematics. The results for 2000 indicate that pupils have continued to make sound progress and have attained the targets set for them by the school. The school sets appropriate targets for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and in the national tests for 2000 these were exceeded in mathematics and English.
2. In the similar tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, pupils attained levels broadly in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, and were above the national average in writing. When results are compared to similar schools, pupils' attainment is well above average in reading and writing and above in mathematics. The results for 2000 show similar patterns in Key Stage 1 to those indicated for Key Stage 2.
3. Inspection judgements for the current Year 6 pupils indicate that they attain levels below those expected nationally in English and mathematics, though they attain levels broadly in line with national expectations in science. The main reason for the discrepancy between this cohort of pupils and the results from previous years is the lower overall ability level of many pupils and the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The school identified the group as being low achievers when they entered the nursery, and this was borne out by the low results achieved by these pupils in the end of Key Stage 1 tests in 1997. In these tests pupils' attainment was well below the average in reading, below in writing and broadly in line in mathematics. The current Year 2 pupils attain levels which are broadly in line with those expected nationally in reading, writing and in mathematics. In this year group, however, there is also a higher than normal percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils throughout the school achieve appropriate standards in numeracy and literacy.
4. During the four years from 1996 to 1999, the school has maintained the standards at the end of Key Stage 2, though there have been variations from year to year. In English the results rose considerably from below average to well above average between 1997 and 1998 and settled to be broadly in line in 1999. In mathematics and science, pupils' attainment was above national averages in 1997 and 1998 but below in mathematics and in line in science in 1999. When comparison is made to similar schools, pupils attain levels which were above average in English and science and which were broadly in line in mathematics. Pupils' attainment has shown gradual improvement in Key Stage 1 in writing from below average in 1997 to well above in 1999. This is due to the school having identified the development of writing skills as a priority in recent months. In reading, attainment levels rose from below in 1997 to broadly in line for the next two years. Pupils' attainment in mathematics improved from 1997 and 1998 when it was broadly in line with the national average, to above average in 1999. There is no evidence of any significant differences in attainment between boys and girls over the last three years.
5. Since the last inspection the school has made satisfactory progress in maintaining standards. Though there has been variations in attainment year-by-year, standards have consistently been about average in English, mathematics and science. There has been improvement in standards in information and communication technology though current

standards remain below those expected nationally. Standards in art are good at both key stages.

6. The school has been successful in introducing the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy. This has had a positive impact on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils are making good progress in acquiring these skills though standards are currently in line with those expected nationally.
7. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. They achieve appropriate standards and reach the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. Children enter the nursery at levels which overall are below those expected for children of that age. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage supports their learning well in the nursery and reception classes so that, by the time they join Key Stage 1, they achieve levels which are broadly in line with those expected.
8. Pupils are currently achieving satisfactorily between the ages of five and seven in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. They achieve very well in art. Though they achieve satisfactorily in information technology, by the time they reach the age of seven, pupils attain levels below what would be expected nationally. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards in information technology were well below those expected nationally.
9. Whilst in Key Stage 2, pupils achievements are satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. In art the high quality of teaching supports learning well and pupils achieve well in these lessons.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress throughout the school due to the sound level of provision made for this group of pupils. There are appropriate individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs which target their specific needs. The quality of teaching and support for pupils with English as an additional language is good and they make good progress with their learning. Throughout the school the highest attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged in their work and, due to this, they do not make the progress in learning of which they are capable. The expectations of teachers for this group of pupils is not high enough and this often results in work set for them which is too easy.

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

11. The school has maintained the standards of behaviour and relationships which were good at the time of the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attitudes to school are good; they arrive promptly at school and play well together prior to the start of the school day.
12. Throughout the school pupils have good attitudes to their learning. They show interest in their work when the content of the lesson is stimulating and the teaching is effective. Pupils sit quietly, respond quickly and are eager to contribute when questions challenge, probe and make them think. However, their ability to sustain concentration is variable and is dependent on the quality of the task set and the way in which it is managed. Throughout the school, pupils work independently and co-operatively, demonstrating a satisfactory awareness of, and respect for, the views of others.

13. Behaviour in the school is good and pupils behave well in most lessons. The expectations detailed in the draft behaviour policy are well known and clearly understood by pupils and are well supported by the staff, including lunchtime staff. A small minority of parents believes that pupils' behaviour is not good enough. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Occasionally some pupils behave inappropriately in lessons when, for example, the introduction to a lesson is over long, the task does not interest or challenge them sufficiently or the teacher's expectations of behaviour are too low. The ethos of the school, where pupils are encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on others, has a very positive effect on behaviour and attitudes. There were no incidents of bullying seen during the inspection and there has only been one fixed-term exclusion in the last year.
14. Relationships between pupils and with adults in the school are good. Pupils work well with each other in lessons and play well together in the playground. They are very polite, friendly and helpful to visitors. Older pupils enjoy the responsibilities of assigned jobs around the school, such as collecting registers from the classrooms, assisting the younger children to line up in the playground and setting out chairs for assembly. They play with the very young children during lunchtimes on rainy days and do this well. Although pupils carry out some research for themselves, they are not as involved in planning and evaluation and other independent learning activities as they could be.
15. Attendance at the school is below the national average and is unsatisfactory. However, this situation is partly the result of the very poor attendance record of a very small number of pupils. The school has thorough procedures for following up recurring absenteeism and unauthorised absence and well-structured initiatives to encourage attendance and punctuality. The poor attendance record of some pupils has a detrimental effect on their levels of attainment and progress.

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

16. At the time of the last inspection no clear judgement was given on the overall quality of teaching. However, the report indicated that the quality of teaching was:
  - effective in the nursery;
  - variable but sound in Key Stage 1;
  - better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1;
  - outstanding in a proportion of lessons at Key Stage 2.
17. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that the quality of teaching and learning has been maintained and it is satisfactory overall. In the Foundation Stage it is good and for pupils aged five to 11 it is satisfactory.
18. The quality of teaching is:
  - very good in seven per cent of lessons;
  - good in 54 per cent of lessons;
  - satisfactory in 35 per cent of lessons;
  - unsatisfactory in four per cent of lessons.
19. There are clear differences in the quality of teaching between different age groups of pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. For the higher ability Year 2 and the Year 3 pupils the quality of teaching is good, whilst for other pupils in these two key stages it is satisfactory. This has a clear effect on the quality of learning for pupils at different times throughout the two key stages. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics lessons is satisfactory throughout the school.

20. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers use a range of opportunities in other subjects to develop pupils' skills. For example, in science lessons pupils write reports and draw graphs to record the results of their experiments.
21. The quality of learning is directly linked to the quality of teaching. It is:
- very good in four per cent of lessons;
  - good in 55 per cent of lessons;
  - satisfactory in 35 per cent of lessons;
  - unsatisfactory in six per cent of lessons.
22. In the Foundation Stage the teachers work and plan effectively as a team and this results in good quality teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception), with 85 per cent of lessons good and 15 per cent satisfactory. Teachers' planning is closely linked to the Early Learning Goals identified in the new Foundation Stage curriculum and is based on the teachers' good understanding of that document and the ways in which young children learn most effectively. They welcome the children into school and train them well in school routines from the start. This results in the children coming into school happily and confidently and behaving well during their lessons. They concentrate well and react quickly to instructions. The teachers give the children very challenging work and this contributes to the good progress they make during their time in the Foundation Stage. The teachers link learning in different areas of the curriculum effectively; for example, they draw on the children's previous knowledge of zebras when they teach road safety using zebra crossings. The teachers assess children's progress very effectively. They record the progress children make within each learning goal and this information is used well in preparing future work for the children. The classroom support assistants are effectively employed in the nursery and reception classes. They are well briefed on their duties and support children's learning well.
23. The quality of teaching for pupils in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. It is very good in 21 per cent of lessons, good in 29 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 50 per cent of lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Key Stage 1. It is good for English and design and technology; very good for art and satisfactory for mathematics, science, geography, music, information technology and physical education. No history was observed at this key stage. Where the very good quality teaching was observed in the Year 2 class, the teacher's planning was meticulous and included clear learning objectives and strategies to achieve them. The work set for pupils was particularly challenging to make them think carefully about the progress they would make. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher challenged them to add or subtract 10 to a range of numbers before they were allowed to cross it off their game board. The pupils were very excited and keen to take an active part in the lesson. Where the quality of teaching was good, the teachers' positive management skills ensured that pupils maintain a high level of concentration on their work resulting in good learning. In these lessons the teaching is brisk and the time available is used well. In a music lesson, for example, the teacher moves learning forward effectively by leading the singing of a new song to be learnt and the pupils repeating the words to the tune immediately. The pupils learned the song very quickly. The quality and use of assessment is satisfactory. Teachers mark work effectively, though limited opportunities are taken to give positive feedback to the pupils to help them develop their learning fully. Where teachers assess very well, they know exactly what level each pupil is working at and what their next step in learning should be. The impact of this is that the pupils are equally aware, respond accordingly and work independently.

24. In Year 3, at the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils experience good quality teaching, though throughout the key stage the quality is satisfactory. For pupils aged seven to 11, the quality of teaching is very good in four per cent of lessons, good in 52 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 37 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in seven per cent of lessons. Where the quality of teaching is good, the teacher uses assessments to plan for pupils' learning very effectively. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher makes appropriate adjustments in the weekly National Numeracy Strategy planning to address a lack of understanding by some of the pupils. Teachers use time and resources effectively overall. In a design and technology lesson the teacher prepared the resources for the pupils in advance of the lesson and the time available was then used effectively to support pupils' learning. They were taught to handle tools with care and these skills were used effectively when making their models. Where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, teachers' planning ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher plans work for pupils' different levels of attainment. This allows each pupil to work at the appropriate level to develop learning, though the challenge offered to some of the more able pupils in the class is too low. In lessons where unsatisfactory teaching occurs, the quality of teachers' planning is low. There are inadequately defined learning objectives and this links closely to the resultant low levels of learning as the time available is not used well. In unsatisfactory lessons, teachers fail to control pupils' behaviour effectively and the resultant high levels of noise impede on pupils' learning. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall. Where the quality of teaching is good, teachers are, through assessment, fully aware of pupils' needs and plan work accordingly. They constantly monitor progress in the tasks, for example in an information and communications technology lesson. Though not consistent, the quality of marking is satisfactory. Most teachers mark pupils' books methodically and include appropriate comments to help the pupils to make progress in their learning.
25. The use of homework is inconsistent. In some classes pupils are set regular homework which extends their learning beyond school time. In other classes, however, homework is set spasmodically. This results in pupils making less progress in their learning in some classes than in others. The school is aware of the inconsistency and plans are in place to remedy the situation.
26. Overall pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their learning, though progress for these pupils is better at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. The main reason is the greater levels of provision and support for the younger pupils. This is particularly noticeable in the Foundation Stage where the high level of effective support enables the lower ability children to make good progress in their learning. The school makes good use of the local education authority's support service to develop learning for pupils with special educational needs. The behavioural support team has made a positive contribution to pupils' development through the advice and help given to teachers and classroom support assistants, in managing inappropriate behaviour. Teachers use pupils' individual education plans effectively when planning work for the pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their learning due to the high levels of support they are given by teachers.

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

27. The quality and range of opportunities for learning are satisfactory. The school teaches what is expected of it in all subjects, and makes appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs. The organisation and resources for these pupils ensures that they make good progress in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress between the ages of five and 11. Appropriate work is set for children under the age of five, based on

the Early Learning Goals identified in the new Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning for the overall curriculum is good and satisfactory for day-to-day teaching, though the needs of higher attaining pupils are not fully met. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory and are effective in developing pupils' skills. The school has adopted the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy and these are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' learning. The school day is structured well to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between pupils' different activities. However, there are subjects where pupils' experiences are either limited or infrequent. Pupils do not sufficiently apply their literacy skills in extended writing in English, or to communicate what they learn through research in geography and history. Although pupils learn the necessary computer skills these are not transferred to interrogate and interpret data or to exchange information for their own purposes. The infrequency of work in design and technology prevents pupils from developing their own ideas which they can adapt. Associated with these limitations is lack of progression in the development of skills in history and geography in spite of satisfactory programmes of work and regularly reviewed policies. The result is that many pupils lack confidence in applying what they learn to research. While learning through topics helps pupils to make links between different subjects, not enough time is always given to studying, for example about an era in history, in sufficient depth.

28. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is satisfactory. A significant number of the parents who responded to the parents' questionnaire expressed concern that the range of extra-curricular activities was too small. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Many of the staff volunteer their time outside lessons to run clubs. There is a book club for all pupils, and those in both key stages can learn French or have lessons in dance. Older pupils have many opportunities, sometimes seasonal, to attend clubs and tuition for different sports and performing arts, as well as to develop their learning through a homework or a computer club. For these and all school activities the school ensures that, with due regard to age, all pupils have equal opportunities to take part.
29. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Although there is no separate policy for these aspects of development, they are adequately dealt with through subjects or incidentally as appropriate. Sex and drugs education is part of the curriculum for science, and there are regular visits by specialists in aspects of health and hygiene. Although there is no formal policy yet to ensure a consistent approach, most classes provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss personal and social matters. The 'Rainbows for all God's Children Association' provides valuable support for pupils and parents who have serious needs through such experiences as bereavement.
30. The school makes good links with the local community, the church and with other educational institutions. There is a mother and toddler group, and some parents show their babies being fed and bathed to pupils in the Foundation Stage. Visiting speakers stimulate interest when pupils start their topics. The police, fire brigade and others meet older pupils to discuss more serious matters. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop their social skills well through such activities as interviewing shopkeepers, and older pupils undertake a number of duties as part of their contribution to school life. Some pupils have contributed to the local community by taking part in the regeneration of Prescott town centre. As a church school, there is a very good relationship with the local priests who play an active role in helping the school develop its good ethos. The curriculum is strengthened through good links with the local receiving secondary school. Teachers and technicians from the school add their expertise in art and computer work, for example. This has led to ideas and techniques being developed in a very sophisticated way to benefit pupils' learning. Pupils have the opportunity to attend summer schools in English and mathematics.

31. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. This is most evident in moral and social education. Through assemblies and daily routines, teachers raise pupils' awareness of issues which affect other people's lives. Each class displays a sensible code of conduct, and there are good systems to deal with inappropriate behaviour and support positive efforts to be kind and helpful. Older pupils take care of younger ones at lunchtimes, and citizenship is taught to pupils when they reach Year 4. Visitors from outside bodies such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children raise pupils' awareness of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. The extra-curricular activities make a positive contribution to pupils' social development, as does the programme of visits which includes one which is residential.
32. The environment is caring, happy and supportive, based on the school's Christian principles. The school acknowledges good effort in classrooms and assemblies, both with regard to work and to attitudes towards others. There is a clear ethos in the school whereby pupils are taught right from wrong and this is incorporated into the day-to-day teaching. There are a few opportunities, outside religious education lessons, for quiet reflection on deep matters which enhance pupils' spiritual development. Good opportunities for increasing pupils' awareness of their own and others' cultures are taken through inviting artists, storytellers and theatre groups. However, pupils' cultural awareness is developed incidentally in geography, history and English and is not positively supported through exciting displays and imaginative ways to acknowledge festivals in different faiths. There is limited evidence of pupils being made aware of the wider context of how other people live in a multi-racial society.

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

33. The school's arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The school environment is one in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued. All statutory checks are undertaken, safety is given high priority in lessons and the general welfare of pupils is well catered for in the daily life of the school.
34. Child protection procedures are very good and have improved since the time of the last inspection. All staff are aware of the procedures.
35. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory. The school carries out all statutory assessment requirements and reports the results to parents. In addition to statutory assessment, a range of other assessment procedures is in place covering all subjects of the National Curriculum. These procedures concentrate on assessing attainment and the development of these procedures to monitor progress is less evident. Tracking of individual pupils' progress is at an early stage of development. Statutory assessment results are analysed and used to amend curriculum provision, though the use of the results of analysis to guide curricular planning is, likewise, in the early stages of development. However, there are elements of good practice in the school in the way in which assessment information is used in organising pupils by ability for English and mathematics. Assessment across the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, when it was a key issue, and is now satisfactory.
36. The support and guidance for pupils' educational and personal development are satisfactory. The recently introduced procedures to monitor and promote attendance are very good and the school works closely with the education welfare officer on isolated cases of poor attendance. Though these procedures have only been in place a few months, there is evidence of a short-term positive impact in improved attendance rates. The longer-term effects remain untested. The systems in the school to monitor behaviour

and promote desired behaviour are very good, enabling staff to identify patterns of behaviour, ensure consistency of approach and plan further initiatives.

37. Support for pupils during major changes in their school life is good. The introduction of children into the nursery class, one child at a time, is particularly good and they are part of the whole school community from their earliest days in school. After only a few days in school, for example, nursery children took an active part in the infants' 'Rejoice' assembly.
38. The academic progress of pupils is supported and monitored through the assessment procedures, but its effectiveness is limited as there is no procedure for the setting of individual academic targets for pupils, although group targets are set in English. The monitoring of all pupils' personal development is largely informal, relying on the teachers' knowledge of the pupils. However, the school is responsive to the needs of specific individuals or groups of pupils and uses a variety of initiatives to address their needs. Parents view the support given to their children in a very positive way. A large proportion believe that the school encourages their children to achieve high standards.

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

39. The effectiveness of the partnership between the school and the parents of its pupils is satisfactory and parents are satisfied with the school's provision and achievements. A very low percentage of parents completed the parents' questionnaires (about 12 per cent). Most parents are pleased with the way in which the school helps their children to mature and become more responsible, the high expectations the school has of the children and the progress their children make at school. Some parents, however, are dissatisfied with the range of activities available outside of lessons, do not feel their children get the right amount of homework and do not feel that they are well informed about their children's progress. Inspection evidence does not support the parents' views that homework and the range of outside activities are unsatisfactory. However, inspection evidence supports the views of some parents that they are not sufficiently well informed about their children's progress.
40. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school prospectus is informative and comprehensive and there is regular contact with parents through a variety of means; reading diaries, the recently introduced monthly newsletter, termly curriculum newsletters for each class and an annual report on their children's progress. The reading diaries form an effective dialogue between home and school. The best curriculum newsletters give sufficient information for parents to be able to support their children's learning at home and work closely in partnership with the school. Others merely give headline information. The induction booklets for parents of nursery and reception children are good and give good guidance on how parents can support their children's learning. Shortcomings lie in the annual reports on pupils' progress. They all give good descriptions of what the pupil knows and understands in English, mathematics, science and religious education, but do not explicitly report on progress. In other subjects, the reports frequently highlight pupils' experiences rather than the progress they make in their learning. In part this is a consequence of the early stage of development of assessment in the school. Reports make no reference to attainment in relation to National Curriculum levels except at the end of each key stage.
41. The school has recently re-established its Parent, Teacher and Friends Group. The group has already raised money for resources in the school and worked in the school improving the physical environment. A number of parents help voluntarily in school on a regular basis, and the school has begun to seek the views of parents across the whole spectrum of school development.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The leadership and management of the school were judged effective at the last inspection. The school was reported as well led with appropriate structures and processes for taking it forward. However, these were largely at early stages of implementation and too untried to judge their longer-term effectiveness, for example the role of the subject co-ordinators, curriculum planning and the assessment arrangements. One significant weakness was identified. The school had not developed adequate systems for evaluating its expenditure. Though improved, this remains an underdeveloped area of the school's management. In respect of the other developments, some progress has been made. The school is now better equipped to assess its strengths and weaknesses than it was in 1996. However, this achievement is very recent and to some extent still untested. Given the positive comments made about the school's leadership and management at the last inspection, progress towards meeting the goals set in 1996 has been limited and often unsatisfactory. Not until the appointment of the acting headteacher in January 2000 is there clear evidence of significant, and positive, developments in the school's management. Until then, the picture is of an increasingly uncertain and deteriorating financial situation. The auditor's report of 1998 lists extensive weaknesses in the school's financial planning and management, with large budget deficits overshadowing clear educational policy.
43. The 1999 auditor's report indicates that this failing has been successfully addressed in the short term, through a series of measures that will produce a balanced budget in 2001. However, without further adjustment to the school's expenditure in relation to projected income the school, according to its own financial forecasts, will again be in significant debt by 2003. Currently the school has no published longer-term plan for dealing with the situation. This remains a serious issue for the school and threatens to undermine the work and efforts of the acting headteacher and her staff to give the school a sound and consistent basis for raising standards.
44. The acting headteacher has been the key figure in re-establishing staff confidence at St Luke's. She has provided staff with a sense of direction and purpose, and a renewed self-belief in their own abilities. The rapid progress made during the past six months with the key issues from the 1996 report is principally the result of her drive and commitment. In this she has received valuable support from a dedicated team of staff determined to raise standards and to provide pupils with a high quality education.
45. A key step forward is the implementation of procedures and guidance to support teachers, both in their management and classroom roles. All teachers now have job specifications and clearly defined responsibilities. The duties of subject co-ordinators are equally clearly defined and discharged by staff, who feel increasingly empowered to play a real part in the school's advancement. Co-ordinators have made a successful start in monitoring teachers' planning and checking standards of learning. At the moment, this is focused largely on literacy and numeracy where effective sampling of work and performance analysis provide the basis for arranging pupils into ability groups and identifying appropriate learning targets. The school is accurately assessing its immediate educational priorities. As a result, action plans, appropriately costed and with success criteria, have been drawn up specifically targeted at raising standards in aspects of pupils' learning that need attention, for example in writing and information technology. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides sound leadership. Effective use of ancillary staff, mainly in Key Stage 1, enhances the provision for pupils with special educational needs and impacts positively on the good progress many of them make. Delegation of responsibilities and a joint commitment to succeed are strengths of the new management approach and arrangements.

46. In addition to the monitoring of curriculum provision, regular monitoring of teaching is effectively carried out by the acting headteacher and key staff, with occasional support from the local education authority's advisor. Appropriate training supports teachers' needs, for example in information technology and the teaching of the Literacy Hour. This is a major step forward. All teachers have received at least one professional development interview since January. Subsequent training priorities are linked into the school development plan. Annual development planning is now firmly rooted in raising standards and although it is early days to evaluate the impact of recent initiatives, there is already evidence of improved teaching and more effective arrangements for curriculum planning and assessment. Each of these aspects now has a core of successful practice upon which to base continued improvement. More widespread, and stronger, links between assessment and curriculum planning, and more efficient systems to track pupils' progress, are the next step forward.
47. In contrast to its short-term planning, the school's longer-term planning remains weak. The school development plan, though constructed as a three-year rolling programme, is not linked into, or supported by, a clear vision of the school's future. While the annual plans are appropriate as representing the school's short-term goals, there is no guarantee that the school will be able to pay for them. This applies equally to other aspects of the school's management and development, for example the plans for the library and for the refurbishment of the school. Critical issues, such as the impact of projected pupil numbers and large class sizes, are not built into an anticipated educational and financial forecast for the next few years. The school has few longer-term strategies to consistently achieve high educational standards. The absence of clear goals and strategies to guide development planning limits, and puts at risk, the school's capacity to make continued progress. This is a governing body responsibility.
48. In other respects, the governing body gives the school sound support. Again, this follows a period when governors have not been sufficiently involved in policy and decision making. Governors meet regularly and have appropriate structures for covering their range of responsibilities. Recent appointments and changes to the governing body have produced a greater awareness of what is required to help manage the school. The governors' monitoring role is taken very seriously and a number of effective links have been established with the school, including visits to observe practice in classes. Governors have a growing knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are committed to improving the school's performance. However, as a body, they are still insufficiently involved in ensuring that they have the information to fulfil their role fully. This is reflected in the quality of the 1999 annual report to parents. It is brief, uninformative, does not market the school well and fails to meet all statutory requirements.
49. The school's income per pupil is above the national average. In the past, funds have not been prudently managed. The lack of suitable mechanisms to assess whether the school is getting value for the money it spends has been a serious and costly shortcoming. Recent audits show that funds are now appropriately managed in terms of financial planning and budget control systems and that budgets are accurately costed. Principles of best value for money are appropriately adopted. Specific grants for special educational needs, for upgrading the school's computing capacity, for enhancing the school's support staffing and for supporting the teaching of literacy, are all well targeted to improve the quality of teaching and learning in these areas, and are doing so. On the other hand, financial controls at an administrative level are not sound. The school office lacks appropriate procedures and systems for ensuring that records, financial procedures and administrative matters generally are handled securely and efficiently. Insufficient use is made of the school's technological capacity for this purpose.

50. The school has a sufficient number of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum, though some classes in Key Stage 2 have high numbers of pupils. One teacher is leaving this term and is not being replaced, as part of the strategy to balance the budget. The longer-term impact of staff reductions on educational standards and provision is not identified. Teachers are appropriately qualified and where gaps exist in their expertise, training and support are provided. There are very good induction arrangements into the school for new teachers, including a mentoring system.
51. The quality of the school's accommodation is unsatisfactory. This was a failing in 1996, and though improvements have been made, much of the school remains rather uninviting and in need of redecoration and refurbishment. Better features such as the school halls and the computer suite are offset by the unsatisfactory accommodation allocated, for example, to the Key Stage 2 library. Like the accommodation generally, it lacks stimulation and appeal, as well as being inappropriate in design. Its stock of books is limited in range, quality and sufficiency. Little use was made of it during the inspection.
52. The sufficiency and quality of the school's learning resources have been strengthened since the last inspection. Overall, they are satisfactory for teaching the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. The school's action plans indicate that continued strengthening of its teaching and learning resources remains a focus in most subjects.
53. In view of the overall satisfactory quality of education provided, the improving academic standards achieved by pupils and the higher than average cost per pupil, the school gives satisfactory value for money. Subject to the formulation of an effective longer-term plan to guide future development, the school is currently demonstrating its capacity and commitment to make further progress.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. The governing body, headteacher and staff should now build on the recently established firm foundations in the school in order to:
- 1 raise standards in information technology at both key stages and in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 by:
    - a) extending the existing monitoring and assessment systems to provide information about all pupils' achievements; use the information gained to set appropriate and challenging targets for individual pupils in order that they make consistently good progress;
    - b) consistently planning lessons to include specific and focused learning objectives and effective strategies for attaining the objectives identified;
    - c) providing appropriate computer software to support the development of skills in information technology and extending the skills acquired to support learning in other subjects;
    - d) consistently raising staff's expectations of the higher attaining pupils throughout the school;

(Paragraphs: 67, 75, 79, 121, 123, 124, 126)
  - 2 secure the school's long-term future by creating a strategic plan which includes:
    - a) clearly identified priorities for development over at least the next three years;
    - b) appropriate timescales and financial implications for the priorities identified;
    - c) systems for evaluating the success of the plan;
    - d) the human resource implications, particularly how the skills of the governors may be utilised most effectively;
    - e) systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's expenditure;
    - f) strategies for ensuring that the governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements and that it is an effective marketing tool for the school;

(Paragraphs: 42, 43, 45, 47, 48)
  - 3 strengthen the procedures in the school's administration by:
    - a) developing and implementing fail-safe systems to ensure that all transactions are efficiently handled and effectively monitored;
    - b) utilising fully the existing technology available;

(Paragraph: 49)
  - 4 improve the quality of the school's accommodation by:
    - a) establishing a programme for the decoration and renovation of the premises as part of the school development plan;
    - b) providing appropriate library accommodation and book stock for Key Stage 2 pupils.

(Paragraph: 51)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	7	54	35	4	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)	26	240
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	74

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	64

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	19	17	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	17
	Girls	14	15	14
	Total	31	33	31
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	86	92	86
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	19
	Girls	15	15	17
	Total	32	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89	94	100
	National	82	86	87

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	20	27	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	19
	Girls	19	17	21
	Total	31	31	40
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	66	66	85
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	17
	Girls	19	18	21
	Total	32	32	38
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	68	70	81
	National	68	69	75

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	7
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	206
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	1	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)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	26.7

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	64

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	52 (FTE: 26)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47

Number of pupils per FTE adult	17.3 (FTE: 8.7)
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	530,059
Total expenditure	529,052
Expenditure per pupil	1,812
Balance brought forward from previous year	- 22,112
Balance carried forward to next year	- 21,105

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 12.4%

Number of questionnaires sent out	266
Number of questionnaires returned	33

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	46	15	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	52	12	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	46	18	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	46	27	6	3
The teaching is good.	36	49	6	9	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	46	27	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	31	9	12	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	46	6	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	27	52	18	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	33	49	9	9	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	58	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	43	21	21	6

A very small percentage of parents returned the parents' questionnaire (12 per cent). Most expressed satisfaction with the school but some had concerns about the provision for out-of-school activities, the homework their children are given and how well they are kept informed about their children's progress. The inspection team supports the parents' positive views of the school. Inspection findings indicate that the level of out-of-school activities and homework are satisfactory. The team supports some parents' views that the information they receive about their children's progress is unsatisfactory.

## **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**

55. Children attend the nursery part-time from around the age of three at either the morning or the afternoon session. At the time of the inspection there were 19 children in the morning class and 11 in the afternoon class. There were 26 children in the reception class. One new child enters the nursery each day from the start of the term. Parents stay with them until they feel that their child has settled. This may well take several sessions. This is a very positive way of introducing children and helps to make them feel happy, secure and confident. The school identifies children with special educational needs appropriately. These children have good provision and make good progress because the teachers are sensitive to their individual needs. The children enter the school with attainment below that which would normally be expected for children of this age. By the end of the Foundation Stage, however, because of good quality teaching, almost all children are attaining standards in line with those expected for children by the age of seven.
56. The school is in the process of changing from the previously recommended curriculum to the current Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Teachers in the Foundation Stage have attended in-service training sessions to ensure a good transition. Children have a smooth change over to the National Curriculum as they enter Year 1. The oldest children in reception are on course to achieve standards in line with what is expected for children of this age in all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

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

57. Teaching is good in this area and, as a result, children make good progress. They are confident and respond well to the curriculum, for example in a reception class mixed activity session. Their self-confidence is apparent when children speak to a visitor without prompting to say, "You read with me yesterday". This also indicates their knowledge of time passing. The majority of children in reception and the nursery put on their own aprons when they play in water or use dough to make models. Children play well together in groups and concentrate hard on their own tasks, as in the nursery when playing with the garage and farm. The good training they receive is shown in a sense of responsibility when they put equipment away carefully. Children learn appropriate classroom behaviour. In the nursery they line up quietly behind each other. They sit and talk to each other and laugh together as they drink their milk. When it is time to go home they sit quietly waiting for their parents to collect them. Children form very good relationships and they play and share well together, for example on bicycles outside. Children learn to socialise effectively through role-play. In the nursery, for example, when acting out family situations, they pretend to be grandparents, mums, dads and sisters. In reception children role-play 'looking after babies', extending their knowledge after two babies and their mother visited the class the previous day. They practise filling babies' bottles and attaching the teats properly. New children settle very quickly in a secure and calm atmosphere.

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

58. Teaching is good in this area and children make good progress. Children communicate well with teachers, such as in the reception class when the focus is writing a letter. They improve their skills in speaking and listening in the reception class and deepen their awareness that print carries meaning when they have to guess what is likely to be in different food containers, for example a tin of drinking chocolate. The manufacturer's

name was recognised. They improve their language development through role-play when talking to each other, for example when 'serving cups of tea'. In the nursery, children confidently choose stories that they like to be read to them. They predict what might happen next in the story. Children join in action songs and rhymes enthusiastically, such as 'Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes'. Children have pre-writing experience, using the mark-making book in the nursery. They are taught to hold their pencil correctly and they go to the mark-making section during their activity sessions. Children are gaining knowledge about books, holding them up the correct way, turning the pages and telling the story in their own way. A few children write whole words and others a variety of letters.

### **Mathematical development**

59. Teaching is good in this area. Children make good progress in mathematical development. For example, when working with geometric shapes in the reception class, they learn the word hexagon and count the number of sides on a hexagon. Opportunities are provided to consolidate their understanding of mathematics. These include shape sorting and matching games, where specific mathematical vocabulary is reinforced by the use of words such as circle, square, smallest and biggest. Children in reception build models of people using large, three-dimensional, soft play geometric shapes. In the nursery, children sing number songs and rhymes, for example 'Ten Green Bottles'. They learn to count and take away one from numbers up to 10. Numbers are displayed around the room and many opportunities are taken to count during activities. Role-play in the 'home corner' reinforces mathematical understanding when, for example, children count the number of cups of tea they put on the tray. Children use dough to create three-dimensional shapes. In the reception class about two-thirds of children count accurately to 10 objects and about half the children can recognise numbers up to nine.

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

60. Teaching is good in this area enabling children to make good progress. Children investigate a variety of materials when making collages, both in the reception class and the nursery. All children in the Foundation Stage are given many opportunities to explore a range of materials, including wet and dry sand, water, paints and dough. They use their skills of cutting and gluing effectively when making collages in their creative work, for example in reception when making a paper and fabric collage. Children in the nursery extend their knowledge about animals when reading 'Miffy at the Zoo' with their teacher. They know that a zebra has black and white stripes. This knowledge is then related to zebra crossings and road safety, deepening their understanding of the world in which they live. Children in reception understand that people change with time after discussing what babies use and what they themselves use. They compare the baby's need for a bottle whilst they use knives and forks. Children are encouraged to find out about their environment. Children in the nursery, for example, learn to match photographs with different areas of the nursery environment. This also helps them to feel confident and secure in their school. They explore the use of technology and use computers with increasing independence. Many children are confident in the basic use of the 'mouse' and can access simple programmes and print from the screen. Other children use computer programs with varying degrees of help.

### **Physical development**

61. Teaching in this area is good and children make good progress. No specific physical education lessons were observed but good quality planning indicates that children take part in appropriate activities to increase control when rolling, sliding, throwing and spinning physical education equipment. Sessions are appropriately planned for warming

up and cooling down. Counting activities within the lessons reinforce number work. In other areas of physical activity children play well on bicycles, exercising and increasing their stamina. When building large constructions of houses and beds, children move confidently around and over the shapes, jumping over and off them. Children enjoy handling appropriate tools, such as pencils and glue spatulas, with increasing dexterity, developing their fine motor skills.

### **Creative development**

62. Teaching is good in this area allowing children to make good progress. Children explore shapes in two and three dimensions when, for example, they construct a human figure with large, soft play, three-dimensional shapes. They also make 'people' with dough. They use colour and texture when creating collages in both the reception class and the nursery. They feel the different materials, such as paper, wood shavings and wool. In the nursery they use their hands and feet to explore paint and produce bright handprints. Children's previous work shows that they have drawn self-portraits and have mixed colours, producing artwork for the reception 'Art Gallery'. Children enjoy singing songs and rhymes each day. They contribute work to large classroom displays, such as 'The Farm' in the nursery.
63. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good in all areas of learning. Eighty-five per cent of teaching observed was good and 15 per cent satisfactory. Where teaching is good, the teachers manage the children well. This has a positive effect on children's attitudes. They respect the teachers, behave well, concentrate and react quickly to instructions. Good questioning skills are used and children are encouraged to think for themselves. This has a positive impact on children's learning and they feel confident, even when they make mistakes. The teachers' knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum is good. They use appropriate language to develop children's literacy skills. They know and understand techniques for challenging children in their learning. Planning is detailed and effective. Teachers prepare well for lessons and they know exactly what it is they want the children to learn. A very calm atmosphere is created by the effective use of their voices. They train the children well in classroom routines. This has a positive effect on children's learning and feelings of security. Support staff are directed well.
64. Consistently good teaching ensures that the children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and enter Key Stage 1 with standards that are in line with those expected for children of this age.
65. Leadership is positive and the staff in the Foundation Stage work well together as a team. Effective record keeping and the use of these records ensure that children make good progress. Teachers have good relationships with parents and they work well together, for example on the new assessment sheets.
66. Improvements since the last inspection are sound. Planning has started for the transition from the Desirable Learning Outcomes to the Early Learning Goals. Contact with parents has been further developed and they now contribute more to supporting and assessing children in specific areas of work. Home visits take place prior to children starting school.

## ENGLISH

67. Standards of attainment in Year 6 are below those expected nationally for pupils approaching the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 2 (Key Stage 1) are achieving in line with the national standard for their age with a few doing better than this. On the other hand, there is a significant proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving below the expected standard for their age. In both key stages, inspection evidence finds standards to be lower than those reported in 1996. However, this apparent dip in achievement is not in line with the school's results in the end of key stage national tests in recent years. Over the period since 1997, the school has consistently achieved test results that compare favourably with national averages and which are better than those of schools with similar backgrounds. Explanations for this variance are:
- the current Year 2 and Year 6 cohorts both contain high proportions of pupils with special educational needs;
  - the inspection took place very early in the school year and could not take account of the accelerated progress customarily made by pupils in Years 2 and 6 in this school. For example, the present cohort of Year 6 pupils has not yet benefited from the nationally funded programme of support designed to raise standards at the end of the key stage. This starts in October.
68. The school's 1999 test results, the most recent year for which comparative data is available, at Key Stage 2 (11 year olds) were:
- close to average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
  - above average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
  - above average when compared to similar schools.
69. A breakdown of these results shows that, as in Key Stage 1, standards in writing are significantly lower than those in reading. The school has focused on the development of writing skills in recent months and this has resulted in the upward trend being maintained in the school's 2000 test results with 82 per cent of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard compared to 66 per cent in 1999. On the basis of current evidence, standards are not as high in the present Year 6 class.
70. In 1999 the school's results at Key Stage 1 (7 year olds) were:
- above average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in reading and writing;
  - average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard in reading;
  - above average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard in writing;
  - well above average for reading and writing when compared with similar schools.
71. These standards were largely maintained in the 2000 tests except in writing where there was a fall in the proportion of pupils achieving above the national standard. In contrast, there was a slight rise in the proportion of higher attaining readers. Inspection findings indicate that there are fewer higher attainers amongst the current Year 2 cohort of pupils in both reading and writing.
72. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in Key Stage 1 and average in Key Stage 2. Many pupils at five are already able to express their thoughts and feelings clearly and these skills are well developed in Years 1 and 2. As at the time of the last inspection, most pupils are attentive listeners and increasingly confident speakers. This was well demonstrated in a Year 2 lesson in which pupils took turns to present descriptions of a variety of fruits and vegetables to the rest of the class. The latter could frame suitable questions in order to identify the object being described. In Key Stage 2,

the quality of pupils' speaking and listening skills is not quite as strong, mainly because pupils are not provided with enough planned opportunities to develop their skills. Pupils make effective and thoughtful contributions to class discussions. They are good listeners but there is not much evidence of pupils learning to adapt their spoken language to different audiences and situations. Little structured use, for example, is made of the plenary sessions in literacy and numeracy lessons for this purpose.

73. Overall, standards in reading in Key Stage 1 match those expected nationally but this masks a very wide range of attainment. A small proportion of pupils read very well for their age. This includes two pupils for whom English is not their first language. These pupils build systematically on previously acquired skills, both in literacy lessons and in their individual reading and make good progress in their learning. In this they are considerably aided by the good partnership between home and school, as are the most able pupils. However, there is a high proportion of pupils whose reading skills are barely appropriate for their age and a few who need a lot of help. These pupils receive good support and most make satisfactory progress in learning how to sound out words and increase the range of their vocabulary. Most are gaining in confidence and enjoy books. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to make sound progress. Many read fluently and accurately and discuss the plot of their reading book, anticipating what is coming next in the story. They have favourite authors and read a good range of books. Unlike at the time of the last inspection, classrooms are now well resourced with reading materials and pupils benefit from this. In Years 5 and 6, there is a slight dip in reading progress amongst current pupils. Their technical skills are sound and a fair proportion read well and some very well. But, as was found in 1996, the use pupils make of these skills to support their learning is still limited. The library is not widely used as a resource during lesson times and the book stock is limited in range and quality for the older pupils.
74. Standards in writing in Key Stage 1 are variable. By the age of seven, the higher attaining pupils write coherently at length, making up their own stories using accurate spelling and punctuation. In contrast, amongst the present Year 2 pupils, there are quite a number who find difficulty expressing their ideas in print. They can often identify what is required in the construction of a simple sentence but fail to produce these skills when composing a piece of extended writing. As pupils move through Key Stage 2, this divergence between the technical writing skills acquired and their use in practice becomes more apparent in their writing. Pupils are good at comprehension and grammar and receive a lot of effective teaching to this end. Some use these skills well in highly imaginative and sensitive compositions, both in narrative and poetry form. This is indicated, for example, in poems written by the previous year's Year 6 pupils, which evoke memories of their time in the school. Similar qualities are to be found in some of the Year 3 work which covers a good range of different styles and contexts; poems, diaries, book reviews, instructions and letters. In the main, however, pupils are better at learning the rules of writing than applying them. Too much of their extended writing is insufficiently focused in terms of accuracy and presentation. There was limited evidence during the inspection, or in pupils' completed work, of drafting and redrafting of work. One reason for the older pupils' apparent reluctance to use more complex language structures in their everyday writing may be that they are so often required to write simple sentences in response to the tasks they are set. The restricted language employed to complete worksheets and to retrieve factual information in subjects such as history, geography and science restricts the opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills fully.
75. The teaching in most of the lessons observed during the inspection was good. All lessons were good or better in Key Stage 1, though in Key Stage 2 standards were less consistent. The good quality teaching observed in Years 3 and 4 was balanced by the satisfactory teaching, and one unsatisfactory lesson, in Years 5 and 6. This matches the

quality of learning in the subject, which is slightly better in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. Additionally funded support for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 is used well to help teachers raise standards of attainment. Although the National Literacy Strategy is now firmly established in teachers' planning and is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning overall, its implementation was not smooth. As a result the school has not made as much progress in this respect as many schools. There is a tendency to adopt the literacy strategy with a rigidity that does not always match fully the needs and prior attainment of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2. Where the best teaching was seen, teachers ensure that the objectives of the literacy strategy are translated into very clear and precise objectives for the full range of pupils in their class. Pupils' needs are based on detailed knowledge of their attainment and progress, for example in the screening assessments undertaken at the end of Year 1. All pupils are then assigned targets which are incorporated into lesson plans to provide the basis for checking pupils further progress and the allocation of classroom support. Further up the school, this process is not yet so effectively integrated into the planning cycle. Teachers are beginning to have the information they need about their pupils through annual testing, but as yet this information does not form a secure enough basis for their lesson planning. Planning sometimes focuses too sharply on the content of the lesson with the result that pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to rehearse the skills which will enable them to deepen their knowledge and understanding, nor to express in sufficient depth what they know and understand. The effect of this shortcoming is made more pronounced by the large size of some of the Key Stage 2 classes and the absence of classroom support for these teachers.

76. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate support and make satisfactory progress in their learning. They are set specific targets on their individual education plans and teachers incorporate these into their short-term planning.
77. Literacy is used effectively in other subjects, though at times staff do not utilise opportunities sufficiently well to support learning. In most lessons the pupils are encouraged to use their speaking and listening skills when they discuss what they have learned in the lesson during the plenary session. In science lessons pupils are encouraged to formulate questions when they devise keys to classify animal groups. When they record the results of their experiments pupils use notes effectively. In geography lessons pupils collect and record information from books though their skills are not sufficiently extended to include detailed research and note taking. The use of information and communication technology to develop learning is insufficiently developed. Whilst pupils are given limited opportunities to use computers in their work in some lessons they key in details about themselves and use the 'mouse' to highlight text and change the font size.
78. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator works hard to raise standards and receives a lot of helpful support and guidance from the acting headteacher. Effective management has enabled the school to make a good start at identifying the strengths and weaknesses of its provision. Thus, the priority to improve pupils' writing skills is a product of careful monitoring and analysis of pupils' work, as is the action plan to raise standards in speaking and listening across the school. As yet, the impact of these developments is at an early stage; nonetheless, the school has the commitment and capacity to make further progress. Plans to enhance the library accommodation and the stock of books, including the provision of computing facilities, are currently under review. The school has correctly assessed the need to improve the quality of the language environment within the school. Opportunities are missed to celebrate the quality and range of the school's achievements through displays of pupils' work.

## MATHEMATICS

79. By the time they leave the school, most pupils in recent years have succeeded in attaining levels in the national tests for 11-year-olds at least in line with national averages and in 1997 and 1998 above the national average. In 1999 pupils' attainment in the national tests was below average but results from the 2000 tests indicate that standards rose again in that year. The current Year 6 pupils, however, attain levels which are below those expected nationally. This group of pupils had been identified from when they first entered the school as being a low attaining group. The results of their end of Key Stage 1 national tests confirmed this assessment, and though they have made satisfactory progress in their learning, overall standards for this year group remain low.
80. Pupils at Key Stage 1 consistently attain standards broadly in line with national averages. The indications from the 2000 tests are that pupils attained levels above those normally expected for seven-year-olds.
81. When compared to the results of pupils in similar schools, pupils at the age of 11 attain standards broadly in line and pupils' at the end of Key Stage 1 standards are above those in similar schools.
82. At the time of the last inspection standards were identified for both key stages as being in line with the national standard. Overall, there has been satisfactory progress in the subject and standards remain broadly in line with expected levels.
83. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils add and subtract mentally in tens with accuracy when given a starting number. When playing a game to develop their addition and subtraction skills, for example, they are given the number 27, and can cross out the numbers 37 or 17 on their gameboards. They know and order numbers accurately to 100 and beyond and use their knowledge in calculations. The pupils in the higher attaining group in Year 2 benefit from good quality teaching which is a major contributing factor to their good quality learning. The lower attaining group of 6 pupils attain standards generally below those expected for seven-year-olds. They work alongside the Year 1 pupils with appropriate work set for the pupils' different levels of attainment. This group of pupils add and subtract using single digit figures. Their progress is impeded when they fail to concentrate sufficiently on their work and the lesson is too noisy.
84. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress overall in their learning, though the progress they make in the lower years of the key stage is greater than towards the end. This is largely due to the higher quality teaching observed, the good behaviour of the pupils and challenging tasks set for them. In Year 3, pupils use multiplication skills to double numbers mentally. They recognise and use the correct annotation for writing money and understand the need for the zero as a placeholder when writing, for example, £3.05. Pupils in Year 4 add two- and three-digit numbers together accurately and quickly. They use different strategies to complete this type of calculation when, for example, they add tens together initially, make the units to tens to add to the total and complete the calculation by adding the units. Whilst in Year 5, pupils begin to use decimal fractions in their calculations. They multiply, for example, 3 by 0.7. They round figures up and down to give an approximation of the answer they can expect. In Year 6 the pupils are placed into ability groups for mathematics. Most pupils in this year group attain levels which are below those expected for 11-year-olds. The higher attaining group multiplies numbers by 10 accurately and calculates, for example,  $\frac{1}{8}$  of 80 as being  $\frac{1}{2}$  of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 80. The lower attaining pupils in the year group experience some difficulty with calculations of money to £20-00. Within this group of pupils the more able multiply by 5 when solving problems such as: "If a beetle has six legs, how many do 5 beetles have?" This is further extended by asking, "How many legs would 15 beetles have?" Analysis of pupils' work

indicates that throughout both key stages pupils experience a full range of work from the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. They draw and measure angles accurately, and name and label them appropriately. They calculate and make conversions in weight, measures and money. They accurately calculate, for example, the equivalent value of currencies using appropriate exchange rates.

85. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory, though at the upper end of Key Stage 1 and the lower end of Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is good. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning in these year groups. The highest quality teaching occurs when the teacher plans well for the particular ability of the pupils, with appropriately challenging work to extend their learning. This is illustrated when the pupils in Year 3, for example, are given money problems to calculate. They work in pairs, make their own assessments of the accuracy of their calculations and check with the teacher for final confirmation of accuracy. When the teaching is satisfactory, the teachers give different work for pupils' different attainment levels and have appropriate expectations of behaviour. Overall, the expectations teachers have of the highest attaining pupils are too low, particularly at the upper end of Key Stage 2. This results in these pupils making less progress in learning than they should because of the lack of sufficiently challenging work.
86. Numeracy is used satisfactorily to develop learning in other subjects. In a science lesson, for example, pupils calculate the average number of breaths they take when they undertake physical activity. In design and technology lessons they draw a range of 'nets' which may be made when a cube is dismantled and use a range of measurements when making models. Shapes and pattern are used in art lessons when, for example, pupils explore how shapes are reversed when they make prints. The use of information and communication technology in mathematics lessons is very limited. In some lessons pupils utilise the computer as a calculator and recognise how the different functions can be used in adding and subtracting.
87. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their learning. The teachers are aware of the needs of the pupils on the special educational needs register and use the targets identified in the pupils' individual education plans when preparing work for them.
88. The subject is led effectively. The co-ordinator has produced a clear action plan for future development, though this has yet to have any significant impact on teaching and learning in the subject. In recent months she has been given regular opportunities to observe the quality of teaching in the subject and this is beginning to have a positive impact on teachers' planning and their strategies to support learning. Since the beginning of the current year, she has been encouraged to lead a series of in-service training courses for the staff, in conjunction with the previous co-ordinator.

## **SCIENCE**

89. When compared to the results of the previous inspection, standards in 2000 show a marked improvement, although as yet no national comparisons can be made. Scientific enquiry has shown some improvement, though the school acknowledges that this is an area for further development and it is included as a specific focus in the subject action plan. The school is now using the recommended, commercially produced programme of work in the subject and planning has improved.
90. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, the National Curriculum test results in science show that pupils' attainment was close to the national average. Evidence from the inspection reflects these results, as pupils are working at the standards expected for pupils of that age. In 2000 these results improved considerably.

91. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand what a habitat is and suggest several, including fields and ponds. They know how to devise simple keys to classify a variety of animals asking appropriate questions, which require a yes or no response to arrive at the correct answer keys.
92. As the inspection was at the start of a new academic year, little of the current year's work was available. Analysis of last year's work from the previous year's Year 6 indicates that pupils worked at appropriate levels for their age. They understood that the heart acts as a pump to circulate the blood through blood vessels and named and identified the positions of major parts of the skeleton. Pupils identified solids, liquids and gases and knew some of their properties. They made predictions about evaporation and carried out experiments to confirm their predictions. Pupils' work indicated an understanding of the solar system and the Earth as a planet. All pupils worked at similar levels irrespective of their ability.
93. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils know that chocolate and sweets are not good for them and that meat and chicken are good for them. Most can sort foods according to their likes and dislikes. The lower attainers are a little confused at first about the difference between what they like and what they think is good for them, but they show greater understanding of this as the lesson progresses. The standards that they achieve are those expected for pupils of this age. Pupils' work from last year indicates that pupils worked on experiments, including ones to explore the properties of wood and paper. They made circuits when learning about electricity.
94. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers are aware of their needs and plan work at appropriate levels for all pupils, for example in a Year 6 class, when working on simple classification keys. Pupils with English as an additional language receive good support and make good progress.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Of the six lessons observed, two were good, three were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good the lively delivery, the clear explanation of tasks and the support given during the experiments contributes to pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on magnetism, the rate of learning was good as a result of the brisk pace of teaching. Teachers know their subject well and use praise effectively to motivate pupils. Experimental requirements and resources are set up for the pupils. The teachers expect the pupils to behave well. Good questioning techniques are used and teachers recap the previous lesson's work to enable them to assess how much knowledge pupils have retained, as in a Year 5 lesson on exercise. All of these factors have a positive effect on the pupils' learning and attitudes. Pupils respond well to the teacher's questions, which challenge them and make them think. The pupils work well overall with good levels of concentration. Teaching is unsatisfactory when the teacher's management skills are weak and a significant amount of time is taken up managing behaviour. Lessons have a satisfactory beginning but deteriorate when the pupils misbehave. Not all lessons maintain an element of excitement that keeps pupils motivated and eager to learn. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that in some classes all the children complete the same worksheets or copy the same text reporting on experiments carried out.
96. The co-ordinator undertakes monitoring of teaching and learning effectively. This is a recent initiative and has yet to have a significant impact on the quality of teaching in the subject. Plans are in place to develop the teachers' expertise through in-service training. It is also acknowledged that information and communication technology should be more fully incorporated into the curriculum and that a wider range of software is needed to develop this subject.

97. Science makes a sound contribution to literacy, mainly through discussion in practical sessions and writing up experiments. Science makes a sound contribution to numeracy, for example when measuring pulse rates in Year 5.

## **ART**

98. Standards of attainment in art are high throughout the school. Three lessons were seen and judgements are based on these and a portfolio of photographs of recent work.
99. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is well above what is expected nationally. Pupils make very good observational drawings of fruit which are used to produce printed pictures. Their work shows a strong sense of colour, texture, pattern and line. They produce well designed dough pictures based on the work of Archimboldo and some excellent batiks inspired by African clothes. The good quality of their work is partly due to a staged approach to the teaching of skills, whereby pupils learn to transfer designs in pencil and wax crayons to a finished article. In lessons, pupils demonstrate the necessary patience and application to explore a wide variety of media before using them to make self-portraits. Many of them, including pupils with special educational needs, clearly explain the different effects they are achieving.
100. By the end of Key Stage 2, the standard of pupils' work continues to be high, so that they work very well in both two and three dimensions, when they make paper sculptures of 'The Iron Woman'. Pupils concentrate hard in lessons to meet their teacher's expectations. Consequently, they show care when producing patterns with materials and rubbings in order to make contributions to a class collage.
101. Standards of work have improved from the previous inspection where they were already above national expectations. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of pupils' painting. This is the result of the good quality of teaching, a very broad curriculum, very good leadership of the subject and access to a wide variety of very good resources.
102. In the three lessons observed teaching was good in one and very good in two and this high quality of teaching has a positive impact on standards. Teachers structure their lessons well and achieve their objectives with clear demonstrations. They give pupils time to develop their work and hold effective discussions to reinforce what has been learnt. Teachers organise pupils very well in order to develop opportunities for them to learn. Pupils display very good levels of self-control when moving about the classroom in a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, exploring various ways of making marks. They work well alongside one another and share their resources. Teachers pose challenging questions and pace their lessons to stimulate pupils' interest and involvement. Pupils in Year 4 learn the differences between working in two or three dimensions when studying the Chinese Willow Pattern. This is further extended in Year 5 and Year 6 when pupils create designs for vases and masks, based on the work of, for example, Paul Klee, Rembrandt and Picasso. Sometimes a local secondary school teacher adds his expertise in Year 6 lessons, enhancing the quality of pupils' work still further, and encouraging them to learn by assessing their own and one another's work. Teachers have high expectations both of effort and behaviour, enabling pupils to attain high standards.
103. The clear programme of work is designed to ensure that pupils are given wide ranging opportunities to develop their skills. This is evident in the developing use of colour and texture in the pupils' work. As they get older, they recognise the warmer and colder tones of colour and use them well in their work. The frequent opportunities to observe the work of famous artists have a very positive effect on pupils' learning. For example, when pupils

draw flowers, the teachers use Van Gogh's work as an inspiration and example for them. From an early age, pupils develop the ability to control and develop their use of colour in an increasingly sophisticated way. This enables them to produce very good extensions of coloured photographs and imaginative abstract designs in Years 5 and 6. Teachers successfully develop work in other subjects through the use of art. In Year 1, for example, pupils develop their appreciation of shapes through making printed and painted patterns in the style of Mondrian. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use their knowledge of Vikings and Tudors to make three-dimensional representations of people.

104. The high standards of teaching and learning have developed in association with the very good work of the co-ordinator. She provides very clear leadership through her overview of the subject, and close assistance with planning. She organises regular school based training and ensures that resources are well maintained and pupils' work is displayed to a high standard.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. It was only possible to observe one lesson being taught at each key stage. The lack of further evidence from models or photographs makes it inappropriate to make secure judgements about standards. Pupils' attainment in the lessons observed, however, was in line with that expected nationally.
106. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils prepare vegetables using appropriate utensils, while in Year 3 they work out various two-dimensional shapes for making a cube. However, there is little evidence in Key Stage 1 of pupils creating plans and designs or using pictures and words to explain them or to make improvements. However, there was one good example of a well-made dragon-head where jaws opened and shut using balloons as a pneumatic mechanism. The ability to generate ideas and to make staged plans is also lacking in Key Stage 2. There was no evidence of pupils regularly assessing their designs or making effort to improve their products though they have produced appropriate work. Pupils in Year 3 have made some attractive photograph frames. In Year 4 pupils have designed and made bags based on Tudor designs using observational sketches. These pupils gave careful consideration to the advantages and disadvantages of different types of fastener. Some pupils have also made a valuable contribution to the church with a banner using appliqué.
107. Teaching was good in the two lessons observed in Years 2 and 3. There was effective planning and organisation so that all pupils progressed well in their learning. Teachers recognised the importance of good behaviour for safety reasons in design and technology. They provided good resources and gave good support to pupils who had difficulties. Teachers taught skills in a way which interested pupils. This enabled pupils to apply themselves well to their learning. A purposeful atmosphere was maintained in which pupils co-operated well with one another.
108. Whilst there is a programme of work, it is not used consistently to ensure that pupils develop the independent skills expected in the National Curriculum. Although those in Year 6 recall their experiences, such as making torches, skeletons with simple moving parts and bridges, they do not have the knowledge and understanding to make informed judgements about their designs and products. Evidence indicates that there are no specific arrangements made for pupils with special educational needs. As with other pupils, they make satisfactory progress in their learning.
109. Literacy and numeracy are used to enhance learning in the subject through discussion about designs and when pupils measure materials to make their models.

110. The work observed demonstrates the maintenance of standards found at the previous inspection, where they were in line with what was expected of them nationally. However, pupils' learning is now more limited by the infrequency of work in the subject and lack of thoroughness in the processes of designing and making.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

111. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. However, evidence from pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils and staff, indicates that standards in both key stages are in line with nationally expected levels. This matches the school's performance at the last inspection.
112. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of simple mapwork. They successfully construct a map of their journey to school using pictorial representations to show the main buildings en route. They are familiar with the use of simple co-ordinates to locate objects on a grid, for example finding the pirates' treasure. They work with street plans of the locality to identify key features in their community and know which is north, south, east and west. They successfully learn that parts of Africa have a very different climate and landscape from their own. This progress is not matched in the development of pupils' practical skills. The higher attaining pupils from last year's Year 2 class do not know how to read a thermometer.
113. By the age of 11, pupils' knowledge and understanding of Britain as well as other places in the world are successfully developed at a general level. By Year 4, they understand from their local study work that Keswick is different from Prescot. By Year 6, they are familiar with the major geographical features of China, India and the River Nile in Egypt. They identify the major countries of the world on a globe. However, like the younger pupils, their practical skills are not developed sufficiently well. Pupils in Year 4 know how to conduct a traffic survey and represent their findings on a graph. By Year 6, pupils are still more used to collecting information and copying it into their workbooks, than employing it to ask questions about the different places or geographical features they study. Little use is made of computer programs for this purpose. Pupils' literacy skills, such as researching and note taking, are not sufficiently extended and developed through their work.
114. The quality of teaching in the two lessons seen, both with the younger pupils, was satisfactory. Other evidence, including that from pupils' work, confirms this judgement. Teachers' planning is largely appropriate and well supported by the subject co-ordinator. The curriculum is generally sound though on occasions topics are repeated in consecutive years with little difference in the skills taught, for example in teaching pupils about plans and directions. As a result, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately for their age and make satisfactory progress in their learning. Planning could be improved by providing a better balance between the teaching of factual information and enquiry skills, particularly at the top end of the school. This limits the older, higher attaining pupils' capacity to undertake enquiry-based studies, for example in using their data-handling skills, as well as their geographical knowledge, to draw conclusions about contrasting locations and environments.
115. Since the last inspection, sound progress has been made in developing assessment arrangements to improve the school's ability to monitor pupils' learning and to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. This is beginning to have an impact on the quality of provision and provides the school with the opportunity and capacity to raise standards further.

## **HISTORY**

116. Two history lessons were observed, both with the older pupils. Evidence from analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils, however, indicates that standards in both key stages meet national expectations. Satisfactory progress has been maintained since the time of the last inspection when standards were reported as sound.
117. By the age of seven, pupils show a sound grasp of the past in terms 'old' and 'new', for example, in comparing the age of different household objects from the past and the present. This understanding is further developed through a study of transport one 100 years ago. However, completed work gives few indications that pupils are able to think beyond simple descriptions of the things they study, for example, olden day fire engines and steam engines.
118. By the age of 11, most pupils have a sound knowledge of some of the key events and historical figures in the Tudor and Victorian periods, and the main events of the Second World War. They recall, for example, Henry VIII's quarrel with the church and Elizabeth I's war with Spain. The higher attaining pupils in Year 6 successfully recount the events leading up to the declaration of war in 1939. Pupils understand the terms century and era. In a Year 5 lesson on the history of Ireland, pupils begin to grasp the place of cause and effect in understanding why things in the past happened as they did, for example why many people left Ireland following the failure of the potato crop in 1846. However, pupils' completed work more commonly shows lower levels of historical thinking and intellectual challenge. The Year 3 work on the Vikings, for example, is of limited range. Pupils are unaware of major figures in this period, such as King Alfred. Similarly, in Year 6, pupils' work on the Greeks lacks rigour and depth.
119. Teaching in both of the lessons seen was satisfactory. A strength of the lesson on Irish history was the strong link established between the ideas to be taught and the actual historical events taking place. Similar links are found in the study of the Second World War. Most pupils, when asked, indicate their enjoyment of lessons when they learn about the lives of major historical figures or major historical events. Too often, however, the teaching they receive does not stimulate pupils to think. History is taught as a series of disconnected topics centring on the life and times of the periods studied, frequently by means of worksheets. These, by and large, require pupils to repeat the factual information they have been introduced to earlier in the lesson. Opportunities to extend pupils' communication and numeracy skills, especially the older pupils, are missed, though sound use is made of the visits to historical houses and museums for this purpose. In lessons, too many of the tasks for the older pupils lack intellectual rigour and imaginative demand.
120. Action is currently being taken to review the history curriculum. Assessment and monitoring arrangements are in place but have not yet had any significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. Decisions are needed about the purpose and nature of the school's history curriculum and the standards of learning expected.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

121. At the time of the previous inspection pupils' attainment was well below national expectations. In the intervening period teachers have developed their own expertise and as a result the improved quality of teaching has had an overall effect on raising standards, though these remain below those expected nationally.
122. Evidence from a range of sources indicates that, by the time they reach the age of seven, pupils use computers to word-process their addresses and key in and edit their writing.

They begin to use the 'mouse' with a good degree of control. There is limited evidence, however, of pupils using information and communication technology to control robots or carry out investigations at Key Stage 1.

123. At Key Stage 2 pupils develop their skills and create travel brochures by mixing text and pictures in their work. They store and retrieve their work accurately and carefully. Whilst they use technology to handle information, pupils are not capable of using computers to interpret information. They make birthday cards, design posters and create spreadsheets using a range of programs, but are over-reliant on their teachers to give detailed instructions. They do not have sufficient confidence or knowledge to download and use the programs themselves.
124. The quality of teaching observed on inspection was good. The recent emphasis on developing the subject through improving teachers' knowledge and understanding has resulted in standards being raised. This has not yet had sufficient impact, however, to raise standards to the levels expected nationally. Where the higher quality of teaching occurs, teachers' planning is effective in order that pupils learn computer skills in clearly identified stages. In these lessons pupils have their tasks explained to them very clearly and the teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from being paired with pupils who have a higher level of skill. Teachers generally manage pupils well, though the level of noise in some lessons is too high for pupils to hear instructions clearly.
125. Information and communication technology is used sparingly to enhance learning throughout the curriculum. Though there are computers in each classroom, they are not used sufficiently well to develop pupils' learning. The teachers concentrate on the development of skills rather than the use of computers as a tool to further pupils' understanding and knowledge.
126. The school has improved its provision for work with computers since the last inspection. Teachers use the newly established computer suite regularly to teach skills in a progressive way. Based on a good programme of work, they give older pupils tasks which include most of the required skills such as modelling and controlling. However, pupils still rarely use computers to monitor changes such as heartbeats when running, and they do not use e-mail. There is no digital camera so that by the end of Key Stage 2 they cannot devise multi-media presentations. Most importantly, computer skills are neither used frequently enough nor to the expected level of difficulty. There is a limited amount of software currently, though this shortcoming is being addressed. This means that pupils are not yet confident enough to use computers for their own purposes. They need to use what they learn in the suite to support and extend what they learn in other lessons.

## **MUSIC**

127. Four lessons were observed during the inspection week with two in each key stage, together with a video of a Christmas production and a demonstration of pupils' abilities when playing percussion. However, this gave insufficient evidence during the inspection of the breadth of work in composing, performing, listening and appraising to make firm judgements about standards.
128. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' singing is already showing a sense of melodic shape, with good diction, volume, rhythm and accuracy of pitch. By listening carefully to the teacher, pupils quickly learn to recognise simple musical structures. This enabled one pupil to volunteer his own musical structure. The quality of singing is satisfactory in Key Stage 2, and pupils show a good sense of rhythm through the use of a variety of idioms.

However, their ability to use a variety of rhythms with percussion is very under-developed and limited to simple accompaniments and short one-bar phrases.

129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Where teaching is good in Year 2, the teacher uses her good singing voice to help her pupils learn new songs quickly and accurately. She generates enthusiasm by carrying out a variety of activities including percussion work using claps and instruments. This encourages pupils to apply themselves very well and learn quickly and with enjoyment. Where teaching is good with Year 5 in Key Stage 2, the teacher quickly involves all pupils at the beginning of the lesson and encourages them to assess their own performance. He ensures that the whole class supports those who have difficulty in keeping to particular beats. His very good subject knowledge, ability to play the piano and the variety of activities he employs all contribute to good learning. This is well reinforced by the end of lesson discussion. A less satisfactory aspect of teaching is when teachers fail to correct pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour in music lessons. Pupils sometimes become over-excited and this results in a small level of inappropriate behaviour. While this does not significantly affect progress in learning, it reflects a lack of control over pupils when they are asked to perform.
130. The evidence seen during the inspection week did not exhibit the range of experiences outlined in the National Curriculum, in spite of a good range of high quality resources. It is not possible to judge whether the school has improved enough.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

131. At the last inspection pupils' attainment was identified as in line with national expectations at Key Stage 1 and above expectations at Key Stage 2. Though it was only possible to observe a small number of lessons during the inspection it is clear that, in the intervening period, satisfactory progress overall has been made and at both key stages pupils achieve levels appropriate for their age. There is a suitable scheme of work for the subject which enables teachers to plan effectively in order that pupils make sufficient progress in their learning.
132. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils begin to handle equipment carefully and develop skills in throwing, jumping, running and controlling balls. They are aware of the need to warm up properly before exercise and jog, bend and stretch to warm up their bodies. The challenge offered by the teacher is responded to well by pupils. They work hard and try, with a good degree of success, to throw beanbags into a target and control a ball when dribbling in order to develop football skills.
133. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make sound progress in their learning. In a Year 4 dance lesson, for example, they warm up effectively and build up sequences of movements, putting together a set of three movements. As part of their learning, the teacher encourages them to observe other pupils and then work together to match and mirror each other's movements. Pupils match their partner's movements effectively but experience some difficulty when they attempt to mirror their movements. In a Year 6 games lesson pupils make good progress in their learning. The good quality of teaching in this lesson encourages the pupils to make their warm up more vigorous, and the overall pace and organisation of the lesson gives good opportunities for pupils to develop skills in ball control, tackling and defence and attacking strategies. The effective use of space helps to give pupils practice and experience to develop these skills further. At Key Stage 2 pupils are given opportunities to learn to swim in Years 3, 4 and 6. By the time they leave the school almost all pupils manage to achieve the requirement to swim 25 metres.

134. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers plan effectively to direct pupils learning appropriately. The better planning identifies the skills to be taught and shows how the lesson will develop so that the pupils learn those skills. The appropriate use of praise and encouragement is effective in supporting pupils' learning. In some lessons there are periods of inactivity when the teacher gives explanations which are over long or complicated and where the teacher is setting out apparatus for the pupils to use. In these instances, the time would be more effectively used in teaching the pupils how to handle the apparatus correctly and where to set it up in the hall. The school promotes extra-curricular activities in physical education well. There are teams for football and netball which actively compete with local schools.