

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Axminster

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113423

Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Williams

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Baxter
25217

Dates of inspection: 18th –20th September 2000

Inspection number: 225373

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lyme Road
Axminster
Devon

Postcode: EX13 5BE

Telephone number: 01297-32785

Fax number: 01297-35512

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Anne Ebdon

Date of previous inspection: January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Paul Baxter 25217	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Science Information and communication technology Design and technology	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr John Chapman 8933	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs Jill Clarke 20104	Team inspector	Under-fives Special educational needs Mathematics Geography History	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Mr David Langton 3855	Team inspector	English Art Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

WES World-wide Education Service Ltd
Canada House
272 Field End Road
Eastcote, Middlesex
HA4 9NA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a small voluntary aided Roman Catholic co-educational primary school for pupils aged between four and eleven years. It has 89 full-time pupils, of whom 49 are boys and 40 girls. At the time of the inspection, nine children were attending school on a part-time basis in the reception class. Most pupils come from the town of Axminster, but a significant proportion travel in by cars or bus from the surrounding rural communities. Pupils come from a background of mixed council and private housing that is broadly average in socio-economic terms. At present, there are 25 pupils with special educational needs attending the school which represents a similar proportion to that found nationally. No pupils come from homes where English is an additional language or from ethnic minority backgrounds. Approximately seven per cent of the pupils are registered as eligible for free school meals, and this is low in relation to the national average. Taken together, the attainments on entry generally match those found nationally. There have been considerable changes to the teaching staff and governing body of the school over the past twelve months, including the appointment of a new headteacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Mary's is now a good school. By nurturing and harnessing its very good Catholic ethos, the school is rapidly re-establishing a purposeful commitment to high standards of pupils' academic achievement. In the relatively short time that she has been at the school, the new headteacher appointed last year has provided excellent leadership. With the full support of staff, parents and a re-organised and focused governing body, the headteacher is promoting good teaching and learning in the school. The school has addressed the significant under-achievement of the pupils and the unsatisfactory provision in a very effective manner over the past twelve months. As a result, standards are rising quickly and the school is now providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and, together with staff and governors, ensures excellent educational direction to the school.
- The pupils enjoy very good relationships with each other and with staff, and react positively to the high standards of welfare provide by all the adults who work in the school.
- The pupils derive much benefit from the school's very good links with the parents.
- The life and work of the school are enriched by a very strong commitment to the Catholic ethos and to helping pupils achieve academic success.
- In response to good teaching pupils achieve well as they move through the school.
- Most pupils attain standards which are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of both key stages.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), particularly the pupils' skills when using computers to control and model mechanisms, are below the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Although it has been improved in English, mathematics and science, there are still weaknesses in the use of assessments of pupils' work to inform future teaching and learning.
- The individual educational plans completed for pupils with special educational needs do not specify the targets for improvement with sufficient clarity, and this restricts the pupils' progress.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Under the leadership of a new headteacher and with full support from new and existing governors and staff, the school has shown substantial improvement in several areas since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the school have been considerably strengthened and there is now an excellent educational direction which is raising standards. Teaching has been significantly improved, unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated, and teaching is now a developing strength across the school. As a result, standards of pupils' attainment have been improved in the majority of subjects, particularly in English, mathematics and science. In the lessons observed, pupils are now achieving well. The strong partnership with parents has been retained and developed, and together with a shared commitment to the Catholic ethos, it is underpinning an improved approach to the care and welfare of the pupils. Significant improvements have been made to the planned curriculum, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are now met in full. The use of assessments of pupils' work to inform future teaching has been improved in English, mathematics and science, but their use in other subjects remains a weakness. Overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection, particularly since the appointment of the new headteacher, and the school is well placed to continue to raise standards in the future.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	1999
English	C	E	B	D
mathematics	D	E	D	E
science	C	E	C	E

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

Given the small and differing numbers of pupils and differing proportion of boys and girls in each year group at this school, care must be taken not to place too much emphasis on one year's performance, especially the comparison with similar schools. Nevertheless, in response to under-achievement, the school has analysed test results and has significantly strengthened the provision. Consequently, the results obtained by eleven-year-old pupils in this year's National Curriculum tests show a significant improvement over the previous year's results and reflect the strengthened quality of education provided by the school. They were generally above the national average in English, average in science and below but close to the average in mathematics overall and, in particular, showed an increased proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in each of these subjects. Given the meal arrangements at this school, the comparisons with similar schools, which are based on the numbers of pupils having free school meals, are hard judgements but show significant improvements over the very low performance of pupils in 1999. Inspection evidence shows that standards continue to rise in response to good teaching and the school is on course to achieve the targets set for this year, a trend reflecting the higher expectations and the ongoing improvements. Most

pupils are now on course to attain standards which are above those expected for pupils of this age in English, mathematics and science, with an increasing proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. Standards generally match those normally achieved by pupils of this age in most other subjects, except in ICT, where the pupils' skills in the controlling and modelling strands of the subject are below expectation. Taken together, most pupils are on course to achieve above average standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Younger children in the reception class achieve well in their 'Foundation Year', and pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their particular needs. Across the school, most pupils are making good progress in lessons, which shows the impact of the strong teaching.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and show good attitudes to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils accept responsibility willingly and diligently and demonstrate very good personal development.
Attendance	Good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is much improved, is a strength of the school and has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning. It was good overall and was satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed. It was very good in 20 per cent and it was good in 54 per cent, which means that it was good or better in almost three-quarters of the lessons observed. Owing to the timing of the inspection early in the school year, it was not possible to judge the quality of teaching in geography overall and in art in Key Stage 2 and in history in Key Stage 1. The teaching is good overall in English and mathematics, science and for children under five, and it is good in history in Key Stage 2 and in art, music and physical education in Key Stage 1. Teaching is satisfactory overall in design and technology and in ICT, and it is satisfactory in music and physical education in Key Stage 2. The teachers' strong knowledge of subjects and their good planning underpin their successful teaching. The pupils' learning closely reflects the quality of the teaching and it is particularly good in English and mathematics. Pupils are learning equally successfully across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory overall with good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and good involvement with the community, local schools and playgroups.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Effective day-to-day support, but the provision is not underpinned by precise targets for improvement in the pupils' individual educational plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, well supported by the Catholic ethos. Satisfactory cultural development but limited preparation for life in Britain's multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall, with strengths in the procedures for child protection, for ensuring pupils' welfare and for monitoring and improving attendance.

The school continues to promote a very successful partnership with parents, and this makes a strong contribution to the pupils' learning

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall; excellent leadership by the headteacher, well supported by the staff, especially the administrative assistant.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good overall; the governing body is now more informed and involved. Together with the headteacher and staff, the governors now provide excellent educational direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, much has been achieved in a very short time, and standards are rising.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are used well to help the pupils to succeed.

The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory overall. The staffing is good and the headteacher has been released from a class responsibility and is teaching and supporting learning successfully across the school. The outdoor provision for the children under five is developing well and is almost ready for use. The governing body has developed a very effective strategy for ensuring that the funds made available to the school provide best value in support of the pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and behave well. • The teaching is good and children are helped and expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The parents judge the leadership and management to be good and would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. • The school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The amount of homework set for their children. • The progress made by children and the information provided by the school concerning their children's progress.

The inspectors endorse the parents' positive views. The school has responded to the parents' concerns: homework is being developed in accordance with the school's policy and government guidelines and is appropriate; the school has addressed weaknesses in previous annual pupils' reports and this year's reports provide good information about how pupils are progressing; the school is introducing additional after-school and lunchtime clubs, and provision is satisfactory, despite the difficulties with transport.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 The reliability of all pupil attainment indicators (whether based on tests or teacher assessments) on measures of school performance, depends upon the number of pupils in a year group. Given the small number of pupils and the differing proportion of boys and girls in each year group at this school, care must be taken not to place too much emphasis on one year's results. This year's National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments at the end of both key stages showed a much higher standard of pupils' attainment compared to the significant under-achievement evident in the previous year's results. This raising of standards occurred as a result of the considerable improvement in the quality of teaching and the planned curriculum over the last twelve months promoted by the new headteacher. The results showed that the performance of seven-year-old pupils was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and was in line with the national average in science. Comparisons with the performance of seven-year-old pupils in similar schools this year also reflect this improvement, especially in reading and mathematics where they are well above average. Comparisons between the performance of boys compared to girls are difficult given the differing numbers in each cohort. In this year's tests girls out-performed boys in English, in line with the national trend, but contrary to the national picture boys out-performed the girls in these tests.

2 The performance of eleven-year-old pupils in this year's end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests was generally above the national average in English, in line with the average in science and below but close to the average in mathematics. Comparisons with similar schools at the end of Key Stage 2 are hard judgements for the reasons mentioned above. They are improved over the very low results of 1999, but are still below but close to the average in English and well below average in science and mathematics. The significant feature of the results at the end of both key stages this year, however, is the much higher proportion of pupils, particularly girls, attaining the higher grades, a consequence of the increased challenge presented to potentially higher attaining pupils. Girls significantly out-performed the boys, especially in English and mathematics, at the end of this key stage.

3 Inspection evidence shows that, taken together, the children's attainments on entry to school generally match those found nationally. Most pupils achieve well, in relation to their prior attainment, whilst under five and in the Foundation Year, which is their first year in the reception class. The school is implementing the new Foundation curriculum effectively, and this is enabling most children to achieve the early learning goals as specified in national guidance in most of the recommended areas of learning, particularly in literacy and language, mathematics and in their personal and social skills. The teacher promotes warm relationships and, in response, most children are developing confidence well and demonstrate positive attitudes to school.

4 Observations of lessons for pupils in Key Stage 1 show that, in response to strong teaching which promotes challenge and very positive attitudes to learning, most pupils are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics, where their skills are on course to reach an above average standard by the end of the key stage. The pupils' attainments are generally in line with those expected of pupils of this age in most other subjects, although in history there was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of attainment owing to the school's cycle of planning. Overall, the standard is significantly higher than the average standard identified at the end of this key stage during the last inspection. Most pupils make good progress over time in Key Stage 1. Systematic implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy

Strategies and careful planning of the curriculum are supporting good teaching and are enriching the pupils' learning, and, as a result, standards are rising steadily.

5 The inspection evidence shows that the pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national expectation overall, reflecting the continuing improvement in response to the good teaching. Their attainments in English, mathematics and science are above the standards expected of pupils of this age. Most pupils attain standards which match those found nationally in most other subjects, except in ICT, where the pupils' skills in using computers to control and model mechanisms are below expectation. The pupils' skills in word processing are developing well, however, and the school is effective in helping pupils to use computers to support learning in other subjects, when studying Anglo-Saxons in history, for example. Owing to the school's cycle of planning and the inspection taking place at the beginning of the school year, there was insufficient evidence to judge attainment in art at the end of this key stage.

6 Overall, these findings represent a substantial improvement compared to the average standards achieved during the last inspection, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Improvements in the quality of the teaching, especially the teachers' higher expectations of what pupils should achieve, and improvements in the planned curriculum, are having a very beneficial effect on the pupils' learning. Most pupils make good progress over time through Key Stage 2, and an increasing proportion of pupils are on course to attain higher standards by the time they leave the school.

7 The school now examines the pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments carefully and uses evaluations to help raise standards. To support this strategy the school has set appropriate targets, in English, mathematics and science, for pupils to attain by the end of Key Stage 2 next year. Evaluations of test results are also used to consider the attainment of boys compared to girls and focused teaching is now raising the performance of boys and is narrowing the gap between boys and girls. The new headteacher is promoting improved teaching and learning successfully. National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, mental work in mathematics, practical investigations in science and effective curriculum planning are having a beneficial impact on the pupils' learning. Standards are rising across the school, and the school is on course to achieve the targets set.

8 In response to the improved planning of the curriculum and the focused teaching, most pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons, but targets for learning, identified in their individual educational plans, often lack clarity and, consequently, their progress towards the literacy, numeracy or behavioural targets is limited. Overall progress is satisfactory. Potentially higher attaining pupils are challenged well by the teachers' good use of questioning and consistent expectations and make good progress.

9 Numeracy skills are applied and developed well in other subjects. In science lessons, for example, pupils in Key Stage 1 compare the length and weight of objects when exploring materials and pupils in Key Stage 2 measure pulse rates when investigating the circulation of the blood.

10 The pupils' literacy skills are also applied and developed successfully across the school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 write and speak about smooth and rough and hard and soft surfaces in science and pupils in Key Stage 2 consider pitch and tone in music and differentiate between the nouns and verbs such as half and halve in mathematics. The pupils' writing in religious education is significantly enhanced by their improving vocabulary skills.

Across the school, the teachers' intentions that pupils should use appropriate technical language are enabling an increasing proportion of pupils to learn well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 When children start school they settle quickly and establish very good relationships with each other and adults. They soon gain confidence in the secure classroom environment, show an interest in everything around them and are beginning to show that they understand right from wrong. They are well behaved in the classroom, when moving around the school and in the playground.

12 Since the last inspection, pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development have been maintained well and are good overall. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are good. The results of the parents' questionnaire indicate that 93 per cent of the parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that their children are keen and eager to attend school. The pupils settle well in lessons and respond positively to teachers' high level of challenge; Year 3 pupils worked independently, using atlases to identify hot and cold regions of the world and made very good use of the facts about the equator they had acquired the week before. Pupils are well motivated and interested in learning, listen attentively in lessons and are keen to respond to questions.

13 Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and courteous and listen to their teachers and to one another attentively. Pupils are involved in creating class rules, which they abide by, and this has a significant effect on achievement. It creates a good ethos for learning, because teachers do not have to waste time disciplining pupils. Children under five in the Foundation Stage also behave well. They are confident, co-operate cheerfully with each other and staff and form good relationships. In 95 per cent of returned questionnaires parents are satisfied that behaviour is good, and they are confident that any isolated instances of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. No issues related to discrimination or oppressive behaviour were identified during the inspection.

14 Pupils' personal development is good. They understand that their actions can have an impact on others; for instance, when large groups of pupils practise shooting using the netball hoop, or play chase and capture games, they restrict themselves to specific areas of the playground and do not occupy all of the space. Pupils show respect for school property, use equipment such as calculators and library books sensibly, and there is no damage to the school or graffiti on the walls.

15 The school has a strong Catholic ethos, and a great deal of respect is shown for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Pupils are encouraged, and are able and confident, to articulate their views and beliefs. Year 4 and 5 pupils entered into discussion and helped each other make decisions about the meaning of the terms 'invade' and 'settle'. They showed confidence in speaking up and sharing their thoughts, knowing that their contribution would be valued. Older pupils are tolerant of younger ones; when Foundation Stage children shout out the answers to questions in assembly, older pupils understand that these young children are new to the school and do not try to take advantage of the situation by calling out themselves. Most take pride in their work and are keen to demonstrate their achievements to visitors.

16 From the very start of their school life, children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to become independent and take on responsibilities such as being monitors in the class. As the pupils get older, they continue to perform routine tasks that help with the smooth running of the school and classrooms. By the time they are in Year 6, they assume further responsibilities; for example, they become librarians and have lunchtime responsibilities, such as supervising in the lunch hall and looking after younger ones who

have a packed lunch. Older pupils take increasingly more responsibility for the organisation and presentation of their work, particularly in English and mathematics. The presentation of experimental work in science still requires support but is improving because of good teaching. Pupils contribute to school life, extend their areas of interest and make the most of opportunities offered to them through taking part in a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, such as French, Japanese, recorders, netball, football, and homework clubs.

17 Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good and are based on mutual respect. Pupils are confident to talk to adults, to answer questions, contribute ideas and work with independence and self-discipline. In response, teachers value the contributions pupils make. Pupils work collaboratively across a wide range of subjects; they collaborate very well, for example, in Year 6 when researching information related to the ancient Olympic Games. They work well as a team, sharing responsibilities, to find out if statements they have been given are true or false.

18 At 95 per cent attendance is good and above the national average. This is a significant improvement since the last reporting year, when attendance was 91.2 per cent. Unauthorised absence has been virtually eliminated, and authorised absence relates mostly to medical problems and holidays, although this latter excuse is being restricted by guidance from the local education authority. There are no obvious patterns to attendance save the usual spread of illnesses in the months leading up to Christmas and the occasional holiday in the summer term.

19 Lateness is not a problem and rarely exceeds three incidents in a week. Lessons begin on time and are not disrupted by latecomers. There is no incidence of exclusion.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20 The quality of teaching is good overall across the school, for children under five and in their first year in reception - the new Foundation Stage - and in each key stage. The teaching varies from satisfactory to very good, impacts positively on the pupils' learning and fully lives up to the parents' appreciative views expressed in the meeting with the registered inspector and in their responses to the questionnaire. Teaching was very good in 20 per cent, good in 54 per cent and satisfactory in the remaining 26 per cent of the lessons observed. The quality of teaching in the school is now a strong and consistent feature, and this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory in approximately 20 per cent of the lessons observed. The school has maintained the warmth of the relationships and other strengths found in the teaching of the youngest children and has greatly improved the teaching for pupils in Key Stage 2. Through the careful appointment of new staff and by well-targeted training and support, the new headteacher has been instrumental in raising the quality of teaching. Improved approaches to the teaching of literacy and numeracy and an increased emphasis on pupils' learning through first-hand experiences, such as by investigations in science, have also improved the overall quality of the teaching and, consequently, the standards attained by the pupils.

21 Significant strengths of the teaching are the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum and of the areas of learning for the youngest children. Other features of the most successful lessons observed were the clear lesson plans, specific learning intentions, effective management of pupils' behaviour and increasing expectations of pupils' achievement. The teachers are now planning more purposefully for pupils of differing prior attainment, from potentially higher attainers to those with special educational needs. The very good relationships which the teachers and classroom assistants promote in class also support learning successfully and are helping to raise the pupils' own perceptions of what they can, and ought to, achieve.

22 Occasionally, the teachers' lesson objectives are too general and the pace of learning is reduced. This happened in an ICT lesson where learning was diminished by the pupils' subsequent loss of enthusiasm in 'developing word processing skills'. At other times, during practical work in science lessons, for example, the teachers' expectations of the pupils' effort and behaviour slipped and a few pupils took advantage to distract others from learning more effectively. Although the school aims to make an increasing use of ICT in other subjects and this was clearly evident in the teachers' plans, several lessons were observed during the inspection which lacked such enrichment to learning.

23 Teachers make effective use of homework to reinforce what is learned in school and to develop pupils' independent learning skills. Pupils' work is regularly marked, and to a good standard in English, where they are given clear targets for improvement. Generally, the teachers' marking is effective in informing the pupils about the progress they are making, and this encourages the pupils. Assessment information is used well by teachers in planning work in English and mathematics, and it is used effectively in science. However, although teachers work hard and effectively on a day-to-day basis to find out and use what pupils know and understand, recorded assessment procedures are not developed or used satisfactorily in other subjects. This restricts the impact of the good teaching on pupils' learning, particularly at this early stage of the school year, when teachers are having to spend more time finding out what pupils new to the class already know and can do.

24 The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good across the school. Such lessons are well planned and follow recommended methods. In literacy, teachers promote a love of books and show good knowledge when discussing texts. The teachers use questioning effectively, and pupils are given many opportunities to speak in lessons. Other opportunities for pupils to respond in drama and to take part in performances are less well developed. In both key stages, good opportunities are provided for developing pupils' writing skills in English, although evidence of extended writing in other subjects such as history, geography and science was limited at the time of the inspection. The school has been focusing effectively on raising the quality of boys' writing and regular checks of examples are having a beneficial impact on standards. Handwriting skills are developed satisfactorily as pupils pass through the school. Teachers make good use of questioning to check and extend pupils' mathematical understanding and to promote their numeracy skills. Such positive questioning is now a constant feature at the beginning of most mathematics lessons. Increasingly, teachers use plenary sessions effectively at the end of lessons to review and reinforce what has been learnt.

25 The teaching of science is much improved and is good overall. There is a good emphasis on practical investigation, which is developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding successfully. Although teaching of ICT is now satisfactory and the curriculum meets statutory requirements, its impact on pupils' skills is relatively recent. Pupils in Year 6 have yet to experience sufficient opportunities to develop appropriate skills in using computers to control or model mechanisms. The teachers now have sufficient expertise and are planning purposefully to provide such opportunities in the near future. The quality of teaching of religious education is reported separately in the Diocese's Section 23 report.

26 Observations of lessons show that there are strengths in the teaching of art, music and physical education in Key Stage 1 and in history in Key Stage 2. There were insufficient opportunities to judge the quality of teaching in geography across the school, in art in Key Stage 2 and in history in Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching in design and technology is satisfactory overall, and teaching in music and physical education is satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

27 The teachers are well aware of the need to meet the needs of all pupils and to include all pupils with a range of prior attainments in daily classroom learning. Their teaching ensures that all pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum and to all aspects of school life. The teachers achieve this by providing support in class for pupils with special educational needs rather than by withdrawing pupils. Teachers generally set them appropriate work, well matched to their needs, and this enables them to make progress similar to that of their peers across the curriculum. Occasionally, targets identified in the pupils' individual educational plans are imprecise, and this slows down the pace of learning. Higher attaining and talented pupils are set challenging work which extends their thinking, in Year 6 in mathematics with the headteacher, for example. This teaching builds on the pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, enables them to make good gains in their learning and represents a significant improvement in the education of higher attaining pupils since the last inspection.

28 The teaching of children under five is good overall. Sessions are carefully planned and organised, with a good range of activities and resources to support the areas of learning. Work is well matched to the children's stages of learning, with an appropriate emphasis on developing their skills, particularly in literacy and language and numeracy; consequently most children make good progress. Although there were insufficient opportunities to observe teaching in all areas of learning, it is evident that there are clearly established routines, and strengths of the teaching are the very good relationships between adults and children, as well as the teacher's very good knowledge of how children of this age learn.

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

29 The school's curriculum is satisfactory for Key Stages 1 and 2, and good for children under five in the new Foundation Stage. It is broad and balanced, following closely the recommendations for small schools made by the local education authority. The previous inspection identified two key issues arising from the curriculum – to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum for design and technology and information technology, and to make more efficient use of time in order to meet the minimum recommended teaching time at both key stages. Both these requirements have been met satisfactorily, and the curriculum has been significantly improved as a result. The curriculum now meets all statutory requirements. The school is currently updating draft curriculum maps for all foundation subjects, on the basis of the guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Curriculum development features strongly in the school's improvement plan.

30 Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good, with the literacy strategy now fully implemented across the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. A significant number of parents had earlier indicated dissatisfaction with extra-curricular activities, but inspection evidence finds that there has been a significant improvement in this area. Provision is now satisfactory, with a range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, including the learning of French and recorders, at two levels, together with coaching groups for netball and soccer, and a recently formed homework club, well attended by pupils from Years 5 and 6. These activities are supported by both staff and parents and are popular with pupils.

31 The school is committed to, and is successful in, offering equal opportunities to all its pupils. Pupils across the range of prior attainment have full access to the curriculum, and the school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs, fully meeting statutory requirements. The pupils, identified through the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs, are successfully integrated into mainstream classes and benefit from sound provision from the teaching and support staff, who are effective in promoting pupils' attainment and progress. The school is aware of gifted

and talented pupils and has in the past taken appropriate steps to enhance the curriculum for them. All pupils have equal access to curricular and extra-curricular activities. The recent introduction of a homework club is a benefit to all pupils.

32 The personal, social and health education programme is satisfactory. It is run through assemblies and religious education and other lessons, for example in physical education lessons where all teachers emphasise matters of health and safety. The governors have decided not to offer sex education, but issues such as the dangers of drugs abuse and 'Stranger Danger', together with direction on citizenship, are successfully covered for older pupils through attendance at a 'Life Skills Day', run by the local police. Every class has a beneficial educational outing during the year, but there are no residential trips to help enhance pupils' personal development.

33 There are good links with the local community, with the secondary schools, and with local playgroups, whose children spend introductory time with the reception class on a regular weekly basis. Year 6 pupils visit their new schools in advance, and Year 7 co-ordinators come to the school to meet the pupils. Soccer and netball teams play matches against other schools. The school is currently hosting a parenting programme. There are strong links with local churches. Visits to places of local interest, however, and the use made of visitors to the school to enhance the pupils' learning, are not a strong feature, and there is scope for development.

34 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now good and well supported by religious education and the Catholic ethos. There is a strong spiritual focus in all classrooms, with moments for reflection at times of daily prayer and in the saying of grace before lunch. Pupils attend a statutory act of collective worship each day, and this is evaluated separately in the Diocese's Section 23 inspection report.

35 The good provision for moral and social development identified at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained well. Pupils are made well aware of what is right and wrong. All classes draw up their own rules, and daily prayers emphasise the importance of good conduct and relationships. Pupils in a Year 3 and 4 music lesson were observed spontaneously applauding the performance of a group of singers, and, in a Year 5 and 6 history lesson, pupils worked well together in groups, helping one another. Older pupils assist with the supervision of younger pupils at lunch and in the playground. Year 6 monitors supervise the use of the school library and the changing of books effectively. All adults provide good role models for pupils.

36 Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved, but remains still only satisfactory. Although pupils are introduced to other cultures through music, religious education, and the use of visiting speakers, such as a local rabbi, they are insufficiently prepared to take their place as adults in today's multi-cultural British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37 The overall provision for pupils' child protection and welfare is very good and is a real strength of the school. The school provides a happy, secure environment, which is conducive to good behaviour and to good learning. As is common in a small denominational school, the staff know all the children well and are very sensitive to changes in their mood. They bring to their work a caring Christian ethos which values each child as if it were their own.

38 The headteacher is the child protection officer and, as a fully qualified social worker, brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the responsibility. Although child protection

issues are rare in the school, all suspicions, however trivial, are dealt with by careful discussion and firm resolution.

39 Medical arrangements are good. Allergies are noted in the register so that new or supply teachers are alerted to pupils' needs. Head bumps are treated seriously, and parents are informed at once.

40 Health and safety arrangements are good. The school is generally secure and hazard free. Buildings are in a good state of repair and cleaned to a high standard. The extensive grounds are well fenced and well maintained. However, there was some evidence of animal faeces on the playing field, and the site of the former pool is not suitable for children to play on. Careful health and safety audits are carried out regularly by both the governors and the local education authority. Fire drills are held regularly, and equipment is checked by the appropriate authorities.

41 The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Registers are kept according to regulation, and data are entered into a computerised system. The staff keep careful note of planned absences and of reasons for incidental absence. Parents are generally very good at keeping the school informed. Where there are concerns these are followed up quickly, and parents are encouraged to respect their children's need for education and to avoid unnecessary absence. The outcome of these procedures has been a significant improvement in attendance over the past year.

42 Good behaviour is recognised as an essential component of good learning, and the procedures to support the pupils are good. All teachers demonstrated good techniques of class management, including the handling of one or two potentially quite disruptive children. While, overall, behaviour management was firm, teachers were able to use a light touch very appropriately so as not to inhibit enthusiasm and enjoyment of the learning process. No examples of oppressive behaviour were observed.

43 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall, and they are good in English and mathematics. The school has made significant improvement in standardising assessment for these two subjects and science, but has yet to fully implement procedures for other subjects. The use of assessment to inform teaching and planning is satisfactory overall. Whilst assessment data are used appropriately to place pupils in groups on the basis of prior attainment for mathematics and English, the use made of assessment to further develop the pupils' work in several curriculum subjects remains unsatisfactory. This was a key issue from the last inspection and has only been partially addressed. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are good.

44 Teachers make good use of ongoing assessment in lessons in most subjects, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons, and in one art lesson observed, where separate tasks were set to provide for pupils of all abilities, including higher and lower attaining pupils. But such practice is inconsistent. However, recently introduced assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science, using the results taken from the optional National Curriculum tests set for Years 3, 4 and 5, are enabling teachers to record and assess pupils' performance objectively against national criteria. Good use is then made of this information to identify areas of weakness, such as boys' writing and girls' science, and set targets and initiate action, such as the appointment of an additional teacher, to rectify the situation. The headteacher has productively begun to monitor lessons to see how assessment is being used to inform future planning.

45 Following recent in-service training the quality of teachers' marking has improved, and some excellent marking was observed in the newly introduced 'pupil progress books', where each month pupils are set a different written task which is then assessed in detail and matched against National Curriculum levels. This is excellent practice and is helping teachers to raise standards significantly in English. No such system exists for other subjects; for example, there are no portfolios kept of pupils' work in art. Reports to parents are of a good standard, informing them of what pupils know, understand and can do, as well as how well they have performed, together with details of personal development, targets, and recommendations for help at home and at school to advance pupils' learning. Personal development is monitored well albeit informally through the teachers' own knowledge of their pupils and evaluations are recorded in their annual reports and this aids progress.

46 Adequate general records are kept of what pupils with special educational needs know, understand and can do, but, as the targets on the individual educational plans are not specific, the assessment of how well these targets have been achieved and what the individual needs to do next is difficult. However, in the standardised National Curriculum tests over the last year the school has lowered significantly the percentage of pupils not achieving the average Level 2 standard by the end of Key Stage 1 and the average Level 4 standard by the end of Key Stage 2. This improvement indicates that the teachers know their pupils well. At the same time the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 and Level 5 standards respectively has risen, which indicates that these higher attaining pupils have been challenged.

47 Effective baseline assessment of children's attainment on entry to school is in place, and progress is noted in annual reports to parents. The key to the success of the school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development lies in the intimate knowledge of pupils and their family background that all staff possess. This knowledge is shared, as appropriate, between all the staff, who take pride in seeing young children from reception develop into confident young people in Year 6. Pupils respond well to the staff and have the confidence to confide in them and seek guidance, where necessary. Many examples were noted of suitable praise for good work, and these have a beneficial effect on raising the pupils' confidence.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48 Parents make a positive choice for their children to attend the school and retain that positive view of the school throughout their child's career. There was a high response to the questionnaire, which reflected that positive view. The concerns that were expressed have not been fully borne out by the inspection evidence. For example, there was concern about the range of activities outside lessons: the inspection noted Japanese and French, football, netball, recorder and a homework club. The scope for out-of-lesson activities is limited by the distance some children have to travel and the practicalities of a small school, and that, while the range is not as great as in some larger schools, the provision was deemed satisfactory. A second concern was homework. Some parents felt there was too much, some too little; the inspection team concluded that the school had listened to parental opinion and had struck a correct balance. Concerns about children's progress and lack of suitable information for parents have been addressed, and this year's reports provide good detail about the children's progress.

49 Parents seen during the inspection were unanimous in praising the school and expressing appreciation for what the school was doing for their children. They all felt they had made the correct choice of school and would recommend it to others. They especially valued the powerful Catholic ethos, and non-Catholic families were also most appreciative of this and the benefits it conveyed to their children.

50 The school has very good links with its parents, which are actively cultivated. Many parents are unable to come to the school on a daily basis on account of either work commitments or distance, and so the school makes a point of generating opportunities for visits, which parents are quick to avail themselves of. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about the progress of their children.

51 The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are compliant with requirements, with a few minor reservations; for example, the prospectus does not explicitly describe the ethos of the school, and the governors' report fails to note when the next parent governor elections would be held. The school issues a regular series of newsletters, which are informative and chatty, and there are other occasional letters. The annual reports on pupils' progress were good and included areas for development. Parents strongly support the parents' evenings and the social occasions, the latter helping to raise money and generate resources for the school.

52 Parents make a good impact upon their children's learning. Through the work of the Parent and Teacher Association, money is raised to pay for improvements to the environment of the school, for example, the decking behind Class 1 and for additional learning resources. Parents also collect tokens on an individual basis, and recently a music stand and case were acquired as a result.

53 Parents are very supportive of their children at home, helping and encouraging with homework and supporting the school's aims and objectives. As a result, pupils have a positive view of their own education, which reflects the way their parents value the opportunities that the school provides. This commitment is demonstrated by parents' willingness to pay for transport and for extra-curricular tuition.

54 A small number of parents help in school on a regular basis, for example with football and netball. Some grandparents help project work in history with reminiscences. Class 1 is well supported by parent helpers, but work and other commitments limit the number of parents who can come into school, for example to hear children read and provide them with strong male role models. Nevertheless, the school is actively encouraging such participation.

Several of the governors are also parents, and they make an exceptional impact upon the life of the school with their dedication and good management.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55 The leadership and management of the school are very good overall and are much improved since the last inspection. The relatively new headteacher, appointed last year, provides excellent leadership and receives first class support from an experienced and talented administrative assistant. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together and now give clear and very strong educational direction to the school. After an unsettled period, when there were numerous staff changes and when standards of pupils' attainment steadily declined, the new headteacher has nurtured the supportive Catholic ethos of the school and has harnessed its spiritual vigour to raise expectations of what pupils can, and should, achieve academically.

56 The headteacher and governors have addressed the issues of the previous inspection with renewed purpose, have built well on the improvements made and have maintained the values promoted in a Christian community. The headteacher, most capably supported by a dedicated chair of governors, by experienced staff and by governors with significant expertise and vision, has created a very strong strategic view of the school. Together they provide an excellent educational direction, and this is clearly demonstrated by the way the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully introduced and by the way in which the future development of the school has been plotted. All those who work in, and for, the school now share a very effective commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. Clearly bolstered by her fine example and contribution as a class teacher, the headteacher has established a continuing process of improvements to the quality of education provided by the school, and, as a result, standards of pupils' attainment have risen.

57 The governors have re-established a firm structure with clear roles and expectations that are carried out very effectively and with expectations that are met. The governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, gained through the detailed reports of the headteacher, visits to the school and through consultations with the parents and community. Strengthened by the appointment and input of new governors, the governing body completes its duties successfully. It has improved its effectiveness over the past twelve months and significantly in relation to its effectiveness at the time of the last inspection. Governors now play a very strong role in shaping the direction of the school and meet all their statutory obligations.

58 The day-to-day support of the pupils and the strategic deployment of staff are very well managed by the headteacher and are making a positive contribution to the rising standards of pupils' achievement. Encouraged by the governors, the headteacher has been released from a class responsibility, and this is enabling her to make a significant and beneficial impact on the quality of teaching and levels of pupils' attainment across the whole school. The day-to-day running of the school is very efficient. Teaching is monitored and evaluated very productively, and this has led to significant improvement since the last inspection, when approximately a fifth of the teaching was unsatisfactory. This unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated, and almost three-quarters of lessons are good or better. This is a creditable proportion of good or better teaching, and much credit must go to the corporate spirit, the welcoming induction of new staff and the sharing of expertise encouraged by the headteacher.

59 The planning and breadth of the curriculum have also been substantially improved since the last inspection, and the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are now

met. All pupils now benefit from an appropriately planned curriculum, which enables them to learn progressively as they move through the school. The new Foundation Curriculum is being introduced effectively for the children in their first year in the reception class and curriculum maps based on the new 'Curriculum 2000' have been developed to ensure that all pupils build effectively on previous skills. The above average attainment of the pupils on leaving the school, particularly in English, mathematics and science, illustrates the positive impact of these improvements on the pupils' performance.

60 The school has a clear set of aims, which are published in the school's prospectus. They are underpinned by a shared commitment to the Catholic ethos and are very well reflected in the work of the school. There is an improved and effective balance between values and achievement, and, as a result, all pupils make good progress towards these agreed aims.

61 The school has a very good development and improvement plan. Clear and well-chosen priorities are identified, with decisions sensibly based on careful evaluations of previous action and the budget available. Information from the headteacher's reports and reviews contributes to the plan and future action focuses effectively on raising pupils' attainment. The careful consideration of long-term factors, such as future numbers of pupils seeking entry to the school, informs very good financial planning and control. This approach to school improvement has been very effective over the past twelve months in strengthening the curriculum and in helping pupils to achieve the realistic targets set for their attainment.

62 The school has an improved and positive focus on pupils' achievement, and the staff value and appreciate the pupils' efforts, promote warm relationships and ensure equal opportunity for all pupils. The school has improved its support of potentially higher attaining and gifted pupils since the last inspection and has introduced strategies designed to raise the standard of boys' writing, to good effect. Daily acts of collective worship comply with the statutory requirements and are evaluated separately in the Diocese's Section 23 report. The school fulfils its statutory obligations in respect of pupils with special educational needs. Specific grants for pupils with special educational needs, those for literacy and numeracy and additional grants for staff development and to improve resources, are all used very effectively.

63 The school is well staffed, and teaching and support staff collaborate purposefully to meet the pupils' needs. Strategies for monitoring and appraising staff are effective, and new staff are inducted well. The school makes good use of the local authority's advisory services to support teachers and to monitor standards. The accommodation and resources for learning have been improved since the last inspection and are satisfactory overall. A significant amount of information technology equipment has been purchased in recent years and resources are now adequate to meet the pupils' needs. The facilities for children under five are good and are being enriched by additional outdoor facilities. Generally, most resources are used successfully to support the pupils' learning.

64 The very capable headteacher, administrative assistant and chair of governors' development committee have considered the numbers of pupils to be admitted and the finance available, and have plotted the future development of the school over the short and long term. They ensure that funds are directed purposefully in helping pupils to achieve. 'Best value' is considered with care, and expenditure is matched closely to the pupils' needs. For example, the release of the headteacher from a class responsibility is designed to enable her to monitor and drive up standards across the whole school, and the effectiveness of this strategy will be judged by her impact on raising attainment. National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments are evaluated to ensure that expenditure impacts positively on standards. Overall, taking into account the quality of education provided, the standards achieved and the good progress that the pupils make, the school provides good value for

money. This represents a considerable improvement on the unsatisfactory value for money identified at the time of the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65 In order to continue the successful development of the school and to bring all aspects of pupils' achievements to a high standard, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- 1 *Raise the pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) at the end of Key Stage 2, specifically the pupils' skills in controlling and modelling mechanisms, and continue to improve its contribution to pupils' learning in the wider curriculum by: (paras. 5,22,25,85,90,98,119-124)
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn by using computers across the breadth of subjects;
 - developing strategies, such as rotas, to ensure that pupils are able to acquire the necessary skills by using computers on a regular basis.
- 2 *Further develop the use of assessments of pupils' work in subjects other than English, mathematics and science in order to inform curriculum planning and to set future learning targets for individual pupils across the range of subjects, including ICT. (paras. 43-45,96,102,108,112,118,124,128,133)
- 3 Improve the quality of the targets set for pupils with special educational needs within their written individual educational plans so that, by achieving these targets, the pupils can build steadily on their previous learning. (paras. 8,27,31,84)

In the context of the school's many developing strengths, the following point for improvement should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan: (paras. 36,112-113, 118)

- promote more specifically the wider cultural development of the pupils so that they are better prepared for a life in a multi-cultural society.

*Issues already identified for improvement within the school's development plan and within the last inspection report.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20	54	26	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	98
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	20

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	8.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	9	8	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88	88	94
	National	83	84	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	13	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88	75	88
	National	84	88	88

Figures for Key Stage 1 are omitted where there are fewer than 11 boys or girls who took the tests.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	5	12	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	5	12	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82	65	88
	National	75	72	85

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	5	12	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77	70	70
	National	70	72	79

Figures for Key Stage 2 are not included because fewer than 11 boys took the tests.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	92
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	41

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	195349
Total expenditure	192735
Expenditure per pupil	1853
Balance brought forward from previous year	-4211
Balance carried forward to next year	-1597

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	104
Number of questionnaires returned	65

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	31	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	38	11	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	40	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	42	18	0	2
The teaching is good.	56	36	8	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	37	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	29	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	40	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	51	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	25	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	34	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	45	33	5	6

Other issues raised by parents

The parents expressed strong appreciation of the Catholic ethos of the school and its positive effect on their children's values and attitudes.

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

66 Children are admitted into the reception and Year 1 class at the age of four in the September of the year of their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, there were nine children in the Foundation Stage, eight of whom attend part-time. A good induction programme helps the children settle into school life, and they are quickly integrated into the welcoming atmosphere of the class and respond well to the routines. The class teacher and adult helpers provide a good programme of activities to support the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage with strong emphasis on language, literacy, mathematics, and personal, social and emotional development. Good links have been established with the local playgroup, and useful opportunities are in place to allow these young children to integrate with the rest of the school, so ensuring a smooth transition from one setting to another and on to the next class.

67 Children are assessed during their first few weeks in the reception class whilst they are still four years old. This indicates that, overall, four-year-old children start with broadly average knowledge, understanding and skills, although the results show slightly below average understanding in mathematics.

68 The inspection took place very soon after the start of the new school year, and most of the Foundation Stage children attend only the morning session until the week before the half-term holiday. As a result, a very limited number of observations were made of this age group. Judgements on standards in language, literacy and mathematics are based mainly on the scrutiny of last year's work. As the work related to knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development were timetabled to take place in the afternoons, when the Foundation Stage children had gone home, no observation was possible of the teaching of these areas of learning. Since most of the work in these areas is covered through play, practical activities and discussion and since there were few opportunities for observation, there is insufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement on standards or learning in these areas. Generally the average standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection and the quality of teaching has improved further.

69 Evidence from past work indicates that, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most of the children will reach the early learning goals in language and literacy. This area of learning is taught well, and the children make good progress. In lessons, they respond appropriately to their teacher when asked a question. They enjoy having stories read to them, listening attentively; this was apparent when the playgroup came to visit the class and they all listened to the story of Mrs Honey's Hat. The children are acquiring basic reading skills; they enjoy sharing books, handle them carefully, and realise that the pictures and print convey meaning. Past work indicates that most children make good improvements in forming their letters and progress from making marks on paper to writing their own name correctly and producing short pieces of independent writing. Currently, the imaginative area is 'Dee's DIY Store', which has been set up to encourage the boys to write by using a real-life situation. This is working well and stimulates both boys and girls.

70 Mathematics is well taught, and currently the children are provided with a wide range of opportunities and experiences for matching, counting and ordering numbers to ten and use a variety of apparatus and ways to reinforce their learning. This contributes to the good progress they make. Most children join in with number songs and rhymes and try to count to ten along with the teacher and older children. Past work indicates that more talented children move on to understand the place value of numbers within 100 and confidently add numbers

beyond 20. By the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of children reach the appropriate early learning goals.

71 No teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world was seen, but it is obvious from past work that a range of work is covered in these areas and the children learn about life cycles, their own senses and about simple forces such as pushes and pulls. With the help of an adult, they can use the keys and mouse to manipulate pictures on the computer screen.

72 Scrutiny of previous work shows that the quality of the children's drawing improves while they are in the reception year. They are able to make up simple make-believe stories while playing in 'Dee's DIY Store', enjoy singing and remember the words and actions of simple rhymes and songs.

73 Physical development is taught very well, and the quality of learning is good. A weekly session in the school hall is used very effectively to introduce the children to safety aspects of working with apparatus and to teach specific skills such as balancing and stillness. Most are on course to exceed the early learning goals for children at the end of the reception year. Many of the children are fast developing fine motor skills by using the varied equipment, games and materials available to them. Currently, the children do not have daily access to outdoor activity using large and wheeled apparatus so they can engage in challenging physical activities. Work has begun on providing a secure outdoor area for the children in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 so that better use can be made of the space and outdoor environment.

74 The children's personal development is given great emphasis, and the class routines are arranged to help children adapt confidently to school life. Consequently, they settle happily and quickly. Most children make good progress in personal and social development, are confident and co-operate cheerfully with staff. The children gain self-discipline from responding to the high expectations which staff have of their behaviour and treat the classroom equipment with care and respect. They trust their teachers, take part in all activities and are interested in everything that is going on around them. Children form good relationships with the other children, share resources and, using them, quickly develop an understanding of the difference between right and wrong and learn to care about those around them. They are gaining increased independence in changing for physical activity. They are learning about trust and wonder, families, friendship, celebration and spirituality. They are gaining respect for others because of the good role models of the adults who teach them. Children enjoy being in school, because caring, cheerful and well-informed adults are giving them a gentle, but stimulating, introduction to school life.

75 The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is good overall and at times very good. The teacher has a good understanding of how children learn and of the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Strong emphasis is placed on literacy, numeracy, and personal, social and emotional development. Lessons are clearly structured, and the children are being gently introduced to the literacy and numeracy hours. Class management is very good and the teacher treats all adults helping in the nursery and the children with respect. This promotes good attitudes to learning and respect for others amongst the children. The teacher's consistently high expectations of learning are a significant strength and have a major impact on the good rate of progress the children make. Resources are well matched to the needs of the children and help to extend their vocabulary and understanding so helping them to make good progress. Adult helpers are well deployed and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning. The teachers use baseline assessments completed on entry to school and day-to-day observations of work, to group the children so they have tasks which are well matched to their needs.

ENGLISH

76 Attainment is above the national average at the end of both key stages. This is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection, when attainment was in line with the national average in both key stages, and confirms the improvement shown by the results of the Standardised National Curriculum tests for 2000. Overall, they indicate good progress. This year's national tests and teachers' assessments also showed that the proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 achieving the average Level 2 or above was 88 per cent, and this was above the national average. The percentage of those achieving the higher Level 3 standard was broadly average. At the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the average level 4 standard and above was 82 per cent, and this was above the national average, and well above the school's set target. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 – 29 per cent - was above the national average. Comparisons with similar schools present hard judgements for this school, given the small number of pupils in each year group. Nevertheless they show significant improvement over the very low result in 1999. They are below but close to the average at the end of Key Stage 2 and above average at the end of Key Stage 1. Inspection confirms the high standards and the significant improvements made recently.

77 The attainment of girls in the national tests is significantly above that of boys, but inspection shows that consistently good teaching is now challenging all pupils equally and the difference in the attainment of boys compared to girls is being reduced. In the past, pupils have joined the school with writing standards which were below average, and with speaking and listening, and reading skills which were broadly in line with the national average. They now leave the school with average writing skills, and with speaking, listening and reading skills which are above the national average. Standards of spelling and handwriting are satisfactory in both key stages. Across the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress, and satisfactory provision is made for higher attaining pupils.

78 Attainment in speaking and listening is good in both key stages. Pupils of all ages show good listening skills with their teachers, in assemblies, recorded music, and with one another. In both key stages, pupils are articulate speakers with considerable vocabularies. One Year 1 pupil was observed to comment "We could do that individually". Pupils in the same year join two sentences using 'because' correctly. Older pupils in both formal discussion and in casual lunchtime conversation with visitors speak easily, expressively and with confidence. Teachers encourage the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, using effective open-ended questions requiring full and considered answers, for example "What do *you* think about....?" , and "What do we mean by punctuation?"

79 At the end of both key stages, attainment in reading is above the national expectation. Those pupils from Years 2 and 6 who read individually to inspectors confirm the high standards shown in the National Curriculum tests. Teachers and other adults such as classroom assistants and parents hear pupils read regularly, and time is set aside daily, for example, before registration and after lunch, for pupils to read silently to themselves. Whole-class and small-group reading within the literacy hour helps to raise standards further. There is strong focus on reading around the school, with reading areas in all classrooms, and good daily use made of the school's library. A variety of reading schemes is used, with graded texts, colour-coded and easily accessible to pupils. Teachers maintain records of reading progress, and the recently introduced optional tests in Years 3, 4, and 5 enable staff to monitor progress and reading levels, track pupils, and set targets. Pupils enjoy reading, and those heard individually read with enthusiasm and fluency, breaking words down into syllables (though few know the term), understanding the plot and characters in their stories,

and being able to access information from the school library. A high proportion of pupils belong to local libraries, and this enriches their learning. There is good support from parents in hearing reading at home, though use of the home-school diary for monitoring reading progress is under-developed.

80 Generally the pupils' attainment in writing is in line with the national average overall. Most pupils make satisfactory progress over time, but in response to good teaching an increasing proportion of pupils are making good progress in lessons, indicating rising standards. Pupils with special educational needs, who, on the whole, have joined the school with below average standards, generally build effectively on previous learning and make satisfactory progress. Writing standards now show a significant improvement from the well-below average scores in the Key Stage 1 National tests of 1999. However, in writing, in the Key Stage 1 nationally standardised tests for 2000, although the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above was well above the national average, only six per cent of pupils achieved Level 3. This was owing to a large percentage of the class being boys. This under-achievement by the boys is a problem recognised by the school, and is common across the country. Writing has been made a special focus across the school, and the recently introduced progress books, where a sample of writing is taken monthly, assessed, matched against National Curriculum levels of attainment and marked with constructive comments for improvement, have had a considerable impact on raising standards. All pupils are introduced to a wide variety of writing opportunities, though insufficient emphasis is given to poetry. Year 1 pupils, in their first writing lesson of the year, construct two sentences about the seasons. A Year 3 pupil writes imaginatively, using rhyming alliteration 'hair, there, scare' when writing a horror story independently. Years 4 and 5 write appropriate instructional texts using imperative verbs to describe a recipe for an American dip with French crudities, and Year 6 pupils write the script of a play, aware of the need to use the present tense and to avoid speech marks, and employing devices such as brackets and stage directions.

81 Standards of handwriting and spelling are satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils follow a commercial course and are taught to use a cursive hand and to move on to ink appropriately. However, not all pupils are still using a joined-up hand by Year 6, and the teaching of handwriting is inconsistent. Pupils' work is well presented across the school, with due attention paid to heading and dating work, and underlining headings. Appropriate spelling lists are given, some linked with their topics, and these are learned and tested. Pupils are good at fetching and using dictionaries on a regular basis to look up the spelling of words. This helps to increase their vocabularies. A computer spelling program is used on a weekly basis across the school to reinforce spellings listed specifically for literacy hour lessons, and is of considerable benefit to lower attaining pupils.

82 The pupils' attitudes to learning are good in Key stage 2, and very good in Key Stage 1. Pupils are very good listeners and pay close attention to teachers' directions. They work well together in small groups in the literacy hour, and most have learned that independent work means that you try not to disturb the teacher and the group she is working with. The pupils listen politely to one another in discussion and in the plenary session at the end of the lesson. They show good application to written tasks when working independently. No unsatisfactory behaviour was observed in any English lesson and, overall, behaviour and relationships are good. Almost all pupils take pride in the presentation of their work.

83 The quality of teaching is good overall. It has a strong impact on the pupils' learning which is also good. Teaching is never less than good, and, on one occasion in a Key Stage 1 class, it is very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and, together with the full implementation of the literacy hour, has done much to contribute to the improved standards across the school. Teachers plan very well, with appropriate tasks set for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. This enables all

pupils to learn equally successfully in lessons. All teachers have received training for the literacy hour and are confident with the subject content. Almost all have high expectations of pupils' tasks and conduct, and they make appropriate provision for the two age groups within their classes. They are effective questioners and good managers of pupils. As a result the pupils listen carefully and respond constructively and this enriches their learning. Pupils' work is well marked, with constructive and supportive comments encouraging further improvement. Learning objectives are clearly displayed and explained at the beginning of lessons and, in the best lessons seen, reinforced in the final plenary session, so that pupils are clear about what they have learned. Appropriate homework is set in reading, writing and spelling.

84 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is effective. They play a full and active part in all lessons and generally make appropriate progress in speaking and listening. However, occasionally the targets for improvement set in their individual educational plans are not specific enough, and this restricts progress.

85 Leadership of the subject is in process of changing hands and has recently been overseen by the headteacher, who has given very clear direction. Literacy has been a central, and a successful, focus for the school, and there has been considerable supportive input from the local education authority. The literacy co-ordinator and headteacher have formally monitored lessons and supported teachers, and this has helped to improve practice. Procedures for assessing the pupils' work and progress are good and are well used to identify areas for improvement, such as boys' writing and reading material. ICT is used satisfactorily to enhance the subject, and pupils develop appropriate word processing skills, but this is an area for further development. There is little emphasis on drama, either within the classroom or in school productions. Few visits are arranged to places of educational interest, and few visitors, such as poets or authors, are invited to the school to address the pupils and enhance the quality of their learning, which is a weakness.

MATHEMATICS

86 Standards in mathematics are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This judgement reflects the continuing improvement shown by the results of this year's National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments and indicates a significant improvement on the 1999 test results and an improvement since the last inspection. The school's intake is broadly average, and pupils now achieve well during both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well supported and are achieving appropriately in relation to their prior attainment. Although girls significantly out-performed boys in the 2000 National Curriculum tests, no significant difference was observed in the performance of boys and girls in lessons, and this is due to teachers being aware of the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Comparisons with similar schools for 2000 showed that results at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below average, a creditable improvement over the very low results in 1999.

87 Work seen during the inspection indicates that, by the end of both key stages, the majority of pupils use and apply their mathematical knowledge well and can use number, measures and data handling skills effectively in other areas of the curriculum. In science, for example, Year 2 pupils quickly realised that they needed a metre ruler to help them measure the distance their cars travelled during an experiment. The previous report indicated that the pupils' mental arithmetic was not as sharp as it might be and that pupils had limited opportunities to use and apply their understanding of number and of data handling skills. Since the last inspection, and particularly over the last year, there has been a significant improvement in standards throughout the school, particularly in number and mental calculation. Year 6 pupils, for example, use a wide range of strategies, such as doubling and

halving, to solve problems, using both large numbers and decimals. No work involving space, shape and measures was observed during the inspection, but scrutiny of past work indicates that standards in this aspect are at least average. Standards in data handling by the end of Key Stage 2 are good. In one lesson, higher attaining and able Year 6 pupils demonstrated well-above average knowledge of, and understanding in, the use of databases for mathematical modelling involving a 'spreadsheet' computer program.

88 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. After the last inspection it was reported that pupils' progress in many lessons was unsatisfactory and that this was mainly due to teachers having insufficient subject knowledge to challenge talented pupils. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection; teachers now have good knowledge and understanding of the mathematics they are teaching, and this understanding enables them to explain mathematical concepts well and provide higher attaining pupils with challenging tasks, so promoting good gains in learning. Teachers plan their lessons well, making effective use of the numeracy strategy, which is implemented well throughout the school. Lessons have a clear focus which is clearly communicated to the class. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, successfully build on what they already know and progress well because work is planned to take good account of pupils' prior learning and their level of understanding. There is, however, further scope to make more specific use of pupils' individual educational plans.

89 Most pupils have good attitudes to their work, enjoy mathematics and concentrate on the task in hand. Teachers generally keep pupils on task and manage them well by keeping their interest and providing a challenge for them. It was particularly noticeable how well pupils responded to the challenging work set, how well they behaved and how readily they took responsibility for their own work.

90 The use of correct vocabulary such as digit, doubling and halving, lays good foundations for the future and contributes well to the pupils' development in language and literacy. There is limited use of ICT to support and enhance mathematics, although in one lesson it was used to great effect to extend the pupils' understanding of number. The headteacher and classroom assistants are well deployed to support pupils in numeracy lessons.

91 Good assessment procedures are in place and teachers successfully highlight or re-write areas that the individual pupils' need extra help in understanding. This good quality assessment of pupils' work and progress helps teachers to plan lessons, group pupils, and to write meaningful reports which give parents a clear understanding of what their child knows, understands and can do, as well as giving guidance and setting targets which identify where improvements might need to be made.

92 The school has focused strongly on improving numeracy during the last year, and the co-ordinator has been very successful in identifying weaknesses in attainment, teaching and the curriculum. Positive steps have been taken to pinpoint exactly where improvements need to be made, by analysing test results, monitoring pupils' work, improving teachers' knowledge and understanding through good quality training and making the best use of the numeracy strategy to ensure the pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum. This has resulted in significant improvements in standards, teaching, planning and assessment, all of which were less than satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Development in mathematics is continuing and new, appropriate, priorities have been identified. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory and are used productively to help pupils to achieve.

SCIENCE

93 Most pupils are on course to attain standards which are above the national average by the end of both key stages. Overall, this judgement shows that, taken together, standards in the subject have been improved since the last inspection. However, following that inspection, standards in the subject fell, particularly the performance of potentially higher attaining pupils and it is only over the past twelve months that, under the guidance of a new headteacher, standards have been improved. During this time, the school has placed a strong and increasing emphasis on teaching pupils how to plan, conduct and learn from practical investigations. As a result, inspection now shows that there has been a significant improvement in this strand of the subject, and an increasing proportion of pupils are now acquiring greater skills in investigative techniques. Standards as a whole reflect the continuing improvement in standards indicated in this year's National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 and show that, over time, the majority of pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Observations of lessons show that, in response to challenging teaching across the full breadth of the curriculum, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and potentially higher attainers, are now making good progress, particularly in their investigative skills.

94 The quality of teaching is good overall. The teachers plan very carefully and ensure that there is a plentiful supply of resources and adult support so that the pupils can be advised and stimulated by the learning activities presented. For example, in a lesson in Year 1, substantial collections of artefacts including objects of different shape, size, purpose and construction were used to offer wide-ranging opportunities for the pupils to experience. This raised the pupils' interest, encouraged observation and promoted learning well. Teachers establish clear links with previous work at the beginning of lessons and share learning objectives with the pupils. This has a very beneficial effect on the pupils' attitudes; consequently pupils show interest, co-operate and learn effectively. This was the case in a lesson with pupils in Year 4, where pupils were studying friction. A series of experiments was set up whereby the pupils could investigate the force needed to drag a plimsoll across different surfaces. This form of practical activity supported by teachers and classroom assistants enables the pupils to find out facts for themselves, and this contributes well to developing the pupils' understanding.

95 Generally, the current approach to teaching the subject in the school is much improved in comparison with that reported at the previous inspection; the pupils' work and learning are enriched and there is air of excitement when conducting experiments. The teachers promote the use of specialist vocabulary, such as prediction and hypothesising, and plan and identify useful links with other subjects, and these strategies extend the pupils' learning even more successfully. For example in a lesson with Year 6 pupils, the teacher reinforced the pupils' observations about gravity acting as an 'up-thrusting force'.

96 Pupils with special educational needs are also supported and interested by the practical work, and potentially higher attaining pupils are equally well-challenged by the frequent opportunities to predict outcomes and to explore ideas at their own level. Consequently, they make good progress in understanding investigative techniques and satisfactory progress overall. In response to this good teaching, pupils in Year 6 know how to predict and explain outcomes when studying changes caused by burning or dissolving, pupils in Years 4 and 5 write knowledgeably about condensation, and pupils in Years 2 and 3 measure the rate at which ice melts and understand how sound travels. Younger pupils develop a sound awareness of magnetism and recognise smooth and rough surfaces effectively. The teachers base their work most successfully on detailed planning, and this ensures that the pupils are taught all strands of the subject. Occasionally, teaching is less effective when the teachers do not insist on high enough standards of behaviour and effort during practical work. Teachers who are new to the school are not supported sufficiently by recorded assessments of what the pupils know and can do and have difficulty, particularly at

this early stage of the school year, in pitching their expectations at an appropriate level. The teachers are aware of this and are working hard to assess the pupils in practical situations. Nevertheless, the recording and assessment of the pupils' skills across the breadth of the subject are aspects which have weaknesses which limit their effective use to inform future planning and teaching.

97 A newly appointed part-time teacher has brought expertise to the school and, with the headteacher, is promoting the successful emphasis on investigation. There is an effective team approach to the management of the subject that is helping to raise standards. The teachers assess the pupils' work satisfactorily in lessons and complete detailed annual reports which show that over time they know their pupils well. However, recorded assessments were not used to best effect in identifying learning targets for individual pupils in a few lessons, and this slowed learning.

98 The curriculum is well planned and is enriched by a careful consideration of the QCA scheme of work and the new guidance concerning the new 'Curriculum 2000'. Statutory requirements are met in full. Literacy skills are promoted effectively when pupils are required to discuss and write about their findings. The emphasis on technical language is supporting the pupils' literacy skills well. Numeracy skills are utilised and developed effectively when measuring forces, and plans are in place to employ ICT more productively by using sensors to aid measurement of investigations. Resources are good overall, and a good range of science books and encyclopaedia in the school library significantly enrich work in the subject.

ART

99 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards similar to those expected of pupils of this age. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Year 2 pupils show good observational skills in the drawing of portraits and self-portraits, looking closely for artistic detail, such as eye lashes and smiling mouths, and using tone and shading effectively. The more able pupils produce reasonably recognisable likenesses of themselves or their partner 'model'. There was no teaching of art in Key Stage 2 during the inspection, and insufficient evidence on which to base any judgements. Those pupils observed, including those with special educational needs, were all making good progress, working within three different groups formed on the basis of prior attainment.

100 The pupils show good attitudes to the subject. Behaviour is good, and they share time sensibly with their partners, taking turns to 'pose' and sketch. They work carefully, trying not to make mistakes, aware that rubbers are not allowed. They comment on each other's work and suggest ways for improvement. Pupils watched very closely when the teacher was demonstrating examples of good and poor practice in drawing skills, making good observations, for example, when drawing eyes, "You can close that up at the end".

101 The teaching observed was good, with appropriate tasks set for pupils of differing prior attainment, high expectations of task and conduct, and very good use made of other adult support in the lesson. The teacher visited each group, assessing performance and suggesting ways for improvement.

102 Planning is satisfactory, following closely the scheme of work suggested by the QCA. Sketch books are used effectively across the school, but pupils are provided with insufficient opportunities to paint, or work with clay. Some use is made of ICT, for example in the design of patterns for 'Joseph's Technicolour Dream Coat', but this is an under-developed area. Pupils have a good knowledge of the work of Clarice Cliff, and have copied the works of Van Gogh and Henri Matisse, but discussion with Year 6 pupils revealed that knowledge of artists generally is limited. The procedures for, and use of, assessment to further develop the

curriculum are unsatisfactory. The headteacher, who is currently co-ordinating the subject, owing to recent staff changes, is aware of the need to develop the subject further, and art features appropriately in the school's improvement plan.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103 The school's approach to the teaching of the subject has been much improved since the last inspection. Consequently, standards have risen and most pupils are now on course to achieve levels of attainment which broadly match the national expectations at the end of both key stages. Although only a limited amount of work was available for scrutiny, evaluations of planned work, discussions with teachers and pupils and observations of two lessons show that the majority of pupils are developing a sound knowledge and awareness of the design process. From an early age pupils learn to plan their work and ideas effectively; for example, the pupils in reception and Key Stage 1 examine toys and machines and use their observations to create new designs prior to making them out of constructional apparatus, card or play-dough.

104 Pupils in Key Stage 2 are now taught an appropriate curriculum and steadily build and extend their design skills. By the end of Year 6, most achieve standards similar to those expected of pupils of this age, especially in the design elements of the curriculum. Their learning of skills in model making is less well-developed, and several of the end products available for inspection were of a quality which is below that expected of pupils of this age. Increasingly, in response to the systematic teaching of a purposefully planned curriculum, more pupils are learning new skills such as cutting, gluing and construction effectively and make satisfactory progress.

105 Observations of lessons in Year 1 and in Years 4 and 5 show that pupils are responding positively to the teachers' clear learning objectives and careful questioning. Pupils readily offer ideas and share these productively with their peers. They enjoy the subject and there is evidence of their collaborating together effectively to improve their finished products, for example, when cutting and pasting card to make houses in a Year 1 lesson.

106 Having decided what they want to make, pupils draw a picture of it and make plans showing measurements and choice of materials and decide which tools to use. For example, they have produced operational models using a cam to make a moving part. Original plans are amended where necessary, and the final artefact is made, decorated and displayed. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and potentially higher attainers, are supported effectively by a careful emphasis on planning and make satisfactory progress. This is an improvement from the previous inspection, where pupils' achievements in designing were unsatisfactory overall.

107 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Two good lessons were observed, and there is evidence in the teachers' plans of an improved approach to the teaching of the subject. However, the pupils' making skills are under-developed, and the teachers' and pupils' expectations of the quality of finished work are too low. The teachers provide a range of interesting resources, including designing using ICT. They emphasise correct vocabulary, which benefits the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills by showing the need for accurate measurement. Class teachers promote pupils' social development well by providing opportunities to share and collaborate. The teachers use well-developed skills of questioning to assess and extend pupils' thinking and ideas and this has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Teachers' planning of individual lessons is generally satisfactory and aided by the use of the QCA scheme and the longer-term planning of the new Curriculum 2000. This is providing teachers with a consistent reference point and is helping them to maintain a steady progression in pupils' learning.

108 The subject is planned effectively, and the curriculum has appropriate breadth and balance and now complies fully with the requirements of the National Curriculum, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' experiences are enriched across the school by satisfactory opportunities to learn by studying food technology. The subject is managed effectively by the headteacher, who has encouraged staff to plan together. She is aware of the needs of this subject, particularly to develop more effective ways to use assessments of pupils' work to inform planning, provides good support to staff and gives a clear lead. The subject is satisfactorily resourced, although there is not a kiln.

GEOGRAPHY

109 Only a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection as not all classes are studying this subject this half term. On the limited inspection evidence available, mainly scrutiny of pupils' past work, pupils achieve standards expected for their age by the end of both key stages. When taking into consideration the pupils' prior attainment, standards have been improved since the last inspection, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, build steadily on their skills, knowledge and understanding. The pupils' knowledge is enhanced and successfully enriched through a programme of educational visits to places of interest, contact with a school in France and effective use of ICT by using the Internet to find out about the weather reports for other parts of the world.

110 It was not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning overall, as only one lesson was observed. However, in the lesson seen the teaching and learning were good. Positive aspects include the teacher's obvious understanding of what she is teaching, clear objectives for the lesson and high levels of challenge which promote good gains in learning, so that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and talented pupils, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils respond well to the stimulating lessons and, as a result, are well behaved and have good attitudes to work.

111 The teacher introduces and uses specific technical vocabulary purposefully, and this makes a good contribution to literacy and speaking skills as pupils go on to use these words correctly in their written work and discussions. In a Year 2 and 3 lesson, pupils correctly used the words equator, tropical regions and the names of various countries. Effective use is made of atlases as sources of evidence. Some use is made of tallies and graphs to support numeracy.

112 The school had adopted the QCA scheme of work, so the planning is sound, but it would benefit from updating and expanding so it takes account of recent changes to the curriculum. Assessment procedures are informal but sound and enable teachers to write good quality reports, which clearly state what individuals need to know, understand and can do, as well as indicating where improvements might be made. However, the use of these assessments to inform future planning is unsatisfactory.

113 Over the last year, the school has concentrated on improving standards in literacy and numeracy and, as a result, the subject has not had a co-ordinator. Therefore, little development has taken place, and this is a weakness. Standards and teaching have not been monitored, but the long-term planning has been reviewed to ensure that pupils have their full entitlement. The school improvement plan indicates that this subject will be a priority in the future.

HISTORY

114 Only a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection, as not all classes are studying this subject this half term. On the limited inspection evidence available, mainly scrutiny of pupils' past work, pupils achieve standards expected for their age by the end of Key Stage 2. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards by the end of Key Stage 1. When taking into consideration the pupils' prior attainment, standards have been maintained since the last inspection, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, build appropriately on their skills, knowledge and understanding. A programme of educational visits to places of interest, such as museums, enhances and successfully enriches the pupils' knowledge and understanding. ICT is used effectively to find out about other times. By using the Internet and CD ROMs to research information about the ancient Greeks, the Olympic games and invaders and settlers, the pupils extend their range of evidence and enrich their learning.

115 It was not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1, as only one lesson was observed. However, in the individual lesson seen the teaching and learning were good. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is good, and this is similar to the time of the last inspection. Positive aspects of all lessons include the teachers' obvious understanding of what they are teaching, clear objectives for the lesson and high levels of challenge which promote good gains in learning.

116 Pupils respond well to the stimulating lessons and, as a result, have good attitudes to work. On one occasion, teamwork in Years 5 and 6 was particularly successful when the members of groups, formed on the basis of prior linguistic attainment, were given the task of delegating responsibilities, discussing what they had found out and making corporate decisions.

117 This subject makes a good contribution to literacy, as teachers introduce and use specific vocabulary well. This enables pupils to use these words correctly in their written work and discussions. The teachers make effective use of reference books as secondary sources of evidence. Examples of this were noted in Years 4 and 5 when pupils used dictionaries to find out the meaning of 'invade' and 'settle'. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrated good research skills to find out information for themselves and check whether statements they had been given about the ancient Olympic Games were true or false. The teacher made effective use of tallies and graphs in this study to support the development of the pupils' numeracy skills.

118 The school had adopted the QCA scheme of work, so the planning is sound, but it would benefit from updating and expanding in order to take account of recent changes to the curriculum. Assessment procedures are informal but satisfactory and enable teachers to write good quality reports, which clearly state what individuals need to know, understand and can do, as well as indicating where improvements might be made. However, the use of these assessments to inform future planning is unsatisfactory.

119 Little development has taken place, as the subject has not had a co-ordinator, and this is a weakness. The long-term planning has been reviewed to ensure that pupils have their full entitlement, but standards and teaching have not been monitored. The school improvement plan indicates that this subject will be a priority in the future.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

120 The planned curriculum and the range of resources available have been improved since the last inspection, and plans are now in place for the pupils to experience the full range of activities, including using computers to control mechanisms. As a consequence, the pupils' attainments are on course to meet national expectations in all the required strands of

the subject by the end of Key Stage 1. To support the work in Key Stage 2, the school has also increased the software available and has recently established an Internet connection. The teachers have focused strongly on developing the pupils' skills in word processing, and, as a result, the pupils' attainments in this aspect are also on course to meet the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2 by the end the school year. At the time of the inspection, however, there was little recorded evidence to show that an appropriate number of pupils currently in Year 6 have developed sufficient experience or skill in the control and modelling strands of the subject. Consequently, despite planned teaching later in the year, a significant proportion of pupils in this year group are not on course to reach expected levels of attainment in these strands by the end of the key stage. Observations of lessons and pupils working with computers, in subjects such as history and mathematics show that an increasing proportion of pupils are attaining higher standards in the subject, particularly in word processing and data handling. The subject is now given greater emphasis across the school. Its use to support work in literacy and numeracy is appropriate, and there has been a satisfactory improvement in attainment since the last inspection. Generally, overall standards are now rising across the school in response to increasingly effective teaching.

121 From an early age, pupils are systematically introduced to the notion of using computers to locate information, to explore words and text, to paint and sketch and to store and record written work. Pupils in reception and Year 1 play word games, explore numbers and learn basic keyboard skills effectively. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 develop their skills in using the 'mouse' to move the cursor on the screen and to choose appropriate tools. They continue to investigate number sequences and spellings and begin to store or print their stories and poems successfully. In response to satisfactory teaching most pupils continue to make steady progress through Key Stage 1.

122 The improved expertise of teachers in Key Stage 2 is enabling them to challenge pupils increasingly effectively, particularly higher attainers. In order to study the patterns achieved by doubling numbers, a small group of Year 6 pupils used data handling software imaginatively. Given sufficient opportunities to use computers to present, save or print their written work and investigations, most pupils learn word processing skills effectively. Most pupils have insufficient time and opportunities, however, to develop appropriate skills in controlling mechanisms or in using computers to model their ideas, and learning in these strands is unsatisfactory. The school's new curriculum plan is intended to rectify this situation in the near future. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are supported well by regular opportunities to learn words and spellings by using the computer, and increasingly many other pupils are using computer software productively to learn their spellings.

123 A few teachers were observed teaching directly during the inspection but as there was little evidence of recorded work, evidence is also based on observations of individuals and groups of pupils working either with computers independently or with support from classroom assistants and helpers. Overall, these show that teaching is now satisfactory. Most teachers possess a good level of skill, and in one lesson in the Years 4 and 5 class, clear guidance from the teacher and from a student helper enabled the pupils to 'log on' to the Internet Website and to develop appropriate skills in retrieving and processing information, for example, when studying the Anglo-Saxons in a history lesson. Older pupils were observed using computers effectively to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum, to support data handling for example, and in most classes the pupils showed developing skills when using the computer to word process their work. When they are able to use computers, the pupils do so enthusiastically and show positive attitudes to learning. They co-operate and share ideas well. The teachers use questioning effectively, promote warm relationships, and this has a beneficial effect on the pupils who, in turn, learn well from each other.

124 Increasingly, ICT is used effectively to enrich learning in other subjects. The pupils use computers to present their 'Haiku Poems' and to print out samples of text from CD ROMs to support their studies in history and geography. Generally, however, the teachers make insufficient use of rotas to maximise the use of the computers and to ensure that the pupils have appropriate time to learn by using them. Consequently, over time the oldest pupils make unsatisfactory progress across the subject as a whole.

125 The curriculum has been strengthened significantly over the past twelve months. Positive actions include developing the expertise of staff through training, new appointments and the school's access to the Internet. However, opportunities for the pupils to learn how to control mechanisms such as 'floor robots', to learn through research using CD ROMs and to acquire skills such as 'data-logging' and using spreadsheets to record information, remain insufficient. Resources are much improved and are now satisfactory overall. The headteacher as co-ordinator is working effectively to raise provision and standards and is purposefully seeking to develop each strand of the subject systematically across the school. She has been successful in raising the teachers' confidence in updating the scheme of work and in supporting teachers' planning, and these are having a beneficial impact on the pupils' progress. At the present time, however, assessments of pupils' work are not used satisfactorily to inform future teaching and planning, and this is a weakness.

MUSIC

126 Standards identified in the previous inspection have been maintained, and at the end of both key stages are broadly satisfactory. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2, and good progress in Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 1, they sing songs relating to the weather, such as 'It's raining, it's pouring', unaccompanied, tunefully and expressively, with appropriate moods identified, for example cheerfully and aggressively. They are able to follow closely and accurately the teacher's directions to raise and lower the volume and pitch of their humming, and acquire appropriate vocabulary such as 'posture', 'dynamics', 'pitch'. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 identify how music reflects different intentions through varied levels of movement, tone, pitch and tempo. After the earlier listening to 'Carnival of the Animals', they identify music appropriate for a swan and a cat. Pupils across the school are very good listeners, and standards of singing, in class and assembly, are high.

127 Pupils bring good attitudes to their music lessons and generally behave well. Year 2 pupils worked well together in their small choral groups, amicably electing a leader, and pupils in Year 6 were enthusiastic and responsive, listening attentively to recorded music.

128 The teaching observed was satisfactory in Key Stage 2, and very good in Key Stage 1. The very good teaching included high expectations of task and conduct, the setting of challenging tasks, and moving the lesson along at a good pace, with firm class management, thereby maintaining the interest of all pupils. Literacy skills of Year 2 pupils were enhanced through the acquisition of new vocabulary and through the opportunities to evaluate each other's performance – "It was superb; they were all smiling!"

129 A small number of pupils individually learn a variety of instruments, mostly the clarinet, but insufficient use is made of these pupils, and their greater musical knowledge, within the wider school situation. This remains a weakness which was identified during the previous inspection. Satisfactory extra-curricular provision is made through two lunchtime recorder groups, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection, but there is no choir. The use of assessment of pupils' responses to inform future planning is under-developed, as is pupils' knowledge of composers. Opportunities to monitor and evaluate pupils' performance are insufficient. There are few musical displays around the school. There was evidence of

one class recording written work and compositions in a music exercise book. This is good practice, but such use is not consistent. Music features in the school improvement plan as a subject for future development. The subject supports pupils' spiritual and social development well, and develops their knowledge of other cultures satisfactorily through the study of music from other countries, such as India.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130 The previous inspection judged that in both key stages pupils were attaining standards in line with those expected nationally for their age in the subject as a whole. These standards have been maintained, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress. In gymnastics in Year 1, pupils move with control and co-ordination, developing good spatial awareness and movement, balance and stillness. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils explore simple balancing skills with control and co-ordination. They understand the importance of warm-up exercises and assess each other's performance appropriately. At Key Stage 2, pupils move around the hall athletically, keeping three parts of the body on the floor in a series of complicated movements, which they can identify effectively. Year 6 pupils create and structure exciting motifs, phrases and whole dance routines, motivated by the music from 'West Side Story'. They assess their performances and comment constructively, recognising good practice. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.

131 The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are satisfactory in Key Stage 2, and good in Key Stage 1. Younger pupils work well together in groups and handle small equipment such as mats with due regard for the safety and space of others. Older pupils work well together in pairs, but the behaviour of a small minority of boys can be distracting when they are not fully occupied. Pupils generally work hard, building up good stamina through well-planned energetic activities.

132 In the four lessons observed, teaching is good in Key Stage 1, and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and are generally confident with the subject, but they do not always consider the needs of pupils of all ability levels and of the different age groups in their classes. The best teaching ensures that pupils have opportunities to evaluate their performance, challenges them, and gives due attention to warm-up and cool-down activities. All teachers emphasise the importance of health and safety issues effectively.

133 The school makes good provision for swimming, at the nearby local pool, and standards of attainment of Year 6 pupils in swimming are above those found nationally. All Year 6 pupils were able to swim 25 metres unaided by the end of the year. Sports days are held on the school's athletics field, and matches are played against other schools in soccer and netball. Parents contribute much to school sport, helping with coaching and transport to matches and with swimming. The school hall provides suitable accommodation for the subject to be taught effectively. In the mixed age classes, younger pupils benefit from watching the performance and example of older pupils.

134 At present there is no record keeping of pupils' progress, and the co-ordinator does not have opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in other classes which restricts her ability to monitor standards. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but they are not used sufficiently to improve future planning, and this is a weakness. The school is aware of this, and provision to develop the subject has been made in the school's improvement plan.