

INSPECTION REPORT

CHRIST THE KING RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Burnley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119488

Head teacher: Mr P Whalley

Reporting inspector: Mr C Smith
OIN: 25211

Dates of inspection: 29th April - 2nd May 2002

Inspection number: 230280

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Calderbrook Avenue Burnley Lancashire
Postcode:	BB11 4RB
Telephone number:	01282 429108
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. J J Sheeky
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25211	C Smith	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
			Music	The school results and pupils' achievements.
			Design and technology	How well are pupils taught?
			Physical education	What should the school do to improve further?
14083	A Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23887	P Nettleship	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Geography	
			History	
			Equal opportunities	
			Special educational needs	
18143	B Magson	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	How well is the school led and managed?
			Science	
			Information and communication technology	
			Art and design	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Christ the King RC Primary School is average in size and serves the families who live in a mixture of private and rented accommodation on the outskirts of Burnley. There are 210 pupils on roll; 113 boys and 97 girls. Pupil numbers have fallen by 10 per cent over recent years because there are less children of school age in the area. However, the school remains popular, partly because of its strong Christian Catholic ethos. Nineteen pupils have special educational needs (9 per cent) which is well below average. There is very little movement of families into or out of the area. Only 19 pupils (9 per cent) are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. Almost all of the pupils are white and all are English speaking. Most children enter school with attainment that is typical for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. By the time pupils reach the age of 11 they achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is satisfactory and the experienced team of teachers manages pupils' learning well. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour and attendance are very good. Although a positive climate for learning is provided, the leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory because the work of the school is not monitored and clear direction is lacking. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history and geography are above average by the time that pupils reach the age of 11.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good.
- The school makes good provision made for pupils' social development and very good provision for their moral development.
- A very good range of extra curricular activities and educational visits enriches the curriculum.

What could be improved

- Leadership and management are not sufficiently rigorous to identify and remedy the school's weaknesses.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below the levels expected.
- Parents do not receive enough information about their children's progress or about what they are expected to learn.
- The information obtained from assessing pupils' learning is not consistently used to plan the next learning steps.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvements in several areas but insufficient in others since it was last inspected in 1997. Standards in English and science have improved in line with national trends, although results in mathematics have slipped a little. The quality of teaching is much the same as at the time of the last inspection. After the last inspection, the school was set the task of improving art and design and design and technology. Both have improved and standards in design and technology are now above average. Some improvements have been made in assessing pupils' learning. Pupils are regularly assessed and the results are carefully analysed. However there remains more to do to use this information profitably when lessons are planned. Very little progress has been made in the

management of subjects to improve teaching and learning. The school has the capacity to improve but the rate of improvement could be much better if the weaknesses were identified, action plans were then drawn up to remedy these areas and the outcomes tightly monitored.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	B	B
Mathematics	A	C	B	B
Science	B	A	A	A

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards in English and science have improved in line with national trends since 1997. Standards in mathematics declined but are gradually increasing again now that pupils' learning is assessed more thoroughly. The standards achieved by pupils aged 11 in English and mathematics are above the national average and are higher than in schools with a similar intake of pupils. Standards in science are well above average. The improved procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are leading to the setting of more accurate targets. This is necessary in view of the targets in English being ten per cent short of the actual results when pupils were last tested. Standards achieved by the time pupils reach the age of seven are at the levels expected in reading and above the levels expected in writing, mathematics and science. However, all pupils are English speaking, only a small number of them have special educational needs, very few change schools in their primary years and most parents take an active part in their children's learning. These factors make it easier for pupils to make progress.

Overall, pupils achieve steadily in their time in school. In some classes, such as Year 3 and 6, they achieve well but their learning is more variable in other classes. Progress could be better if the work of the school was carefully monitored and the inconsistencies ironed out. Pupils achieve steadily in mathematics and they achieve well in all aspects of science throughout the school. They make good progress in writing in infant and junior classes but achieve better in reading in Years 3 to 6. Pupils achieve well in history and geography in the junior classes and they achieve well in design and technology in all classes to reach above average standards in these subjects. Standards in ICT have not kept pace with improvements nationally and have fallen behind, largely because computers are not used enough. Pupils achieve steadily in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They respond well to the good support they receive in small groups but their specific needs are not always planned for in class lessons. More able pupils respond well to the challenges set but could achieve more if teachers included extension activities for them when they plan their lessons.

Children enter school with levels of attainment that are typical for their age. They make steady progress in the reception class to reach the standards expected in most areas of learning. However,

they achieve particularly well in their mathematical and in their personal and social development and exceed the levels expected in these areas.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are interested in learning, they listen attentively and concentrate well on their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; pupils are polite and helpful and behave very well in and out of the classroom.
Personal development and relationships	Good; pupils respect and help each other, they work and play together harmoniously, act responsibly and take initiative.
Attendance	Very good; well above the national average and pupils are punctual.

The pupils are a credit to their teachers and parents in their politeness and attitudes to school. This is a significant factor in the standards they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Over half of the teaching observed during the inspection was good but teaching, as seen through pupils' work in their books and teachers' planning, is satisfactory. Pupils are well managed and lessons move along at a good pace. Teachers are good at explaining new ideas and question pupils well to probe their understanding. A general high level of challenge is set. These factors ensure that pupils have to think and work hard and are able to learn effectively. However, pupils' different learning needs are not always catered for. In mathematics, for example, pupils who find learning difficult, make too many mistakes because the work provided is too hard. The basic skills of reading, writing and number work are taught well in literacy and numeracy sessions. Pupils are well equipped to use these skills in the learning of other subjects, although some teachers rely too much on worksheets, which restricts opportunities for pupils to refine their reading and writing skills. In mathematics only a minority of teachers have the balance right between the teaching of skills and applying them to solve mathematical problems. These inconsistencies creep in because teachers' lesson planning varies so much and it is not monitored. Teachers regularly assess pupils' learning in the key subjects and mark their work accurately. However, the information is not always used in setting the next task and only one or two teachers give pointers for improvement or set individual targets for pupils to work towards.

Teaching is satisfactory in the reception class. Children's personal and mathematical development is particularly well provided for. Children learn effectively when teachers and assistants work directly with them but in some areas of learning children do not have enough opportunities to explore and learn for themselves.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; teachers are guided well in what to teach but there is little to explain how to teach the subject well. A very good range of extra curricular activities and school visits enriches the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; good provision is made for them made in withdrawal groups but their learning needs are not always fully met in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good for pupils' social development and very good for their moral development. Satisfactory provision is made for their spiritual development although more opportunities could be planned for in different subjects. Pupils have a good understanding of their own heritage but are less knowledgeable about cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory; pupils are cared for and guided well in their personal development. Their learning is assessed but the information could be better used in the planning of future work.

Parents support the school and try to help their children, although their efforts are limited because they do not receive sufficient information about what their children are expected to learn.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory; the climate for learning is good and high standards are aimed for, but the work of the school is not well monitored and strategic planning is weak. This makes it harder to identify what needs to be done to move the school on.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory; governors work hard for the school and meet regularly to fulfil their duties. However, their work is hampered by lack of information to help them in their strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory; results of assessments are carefully analysed to enable teachers to know where the weaker elements lie but the quality of planning, teaching and learning does not receive enough attention.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; financial control is good but the cost implications of any changes are not included in the school development plan. The school seeks best value by examining and comparing results each year but the consultation process is too narrow to ensure that all of the right priorities are identified.

There are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers, accommodation is satisfactory and resources are adequate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children enjoy school, behave well and act responsibly.• Teaching is good, pupils are expected to work hard and they make good progress.• The school is well managed and parents feel comfortable about approaching staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents would like more information about the children's learning and a closer working partnership.• A few parents would like more homework and more out of school activities.

The inspection team largely agrees with the parents' positive views and acknowledges their concerns. Teachers manage pupils well and ensure that they work hard which helps them to achieve at least satisfactorily. The day to day management is smooth and efficient but more needs to be done to monitor what is happening in different classes and use the information to point the way forward. Parents are right in pointing to the need for more information, one parents' evening a year is not enough. Homework is satisfactory overall but is variable between classes. A very good range of extra curricular activities is provided but, like many schools, these are mainly for the older pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Pupils have fewer barriers to learning to overcome than is the case in many schools. All pupils are English speaking, a well below average number of them have special educational needs, very few change schools in their primary years and almost all parents take an active part in their children's learning. These factors make it easier for pupils to make progress. Overall, pupils achieve steadily in their time in school. They achieve well in some subjects and in some classes but this is not consistent. The inconsistencies arise because the work of the school is not carefully monitored. Differences in the way teachers plan their lessons and assess pupils' learning go unnoticed, which in turn prevents all pupils from achieving consistently well throughout the school.

2 Children begin school with attainment that is typical for the age. They achieve steadily in most areas of learning to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year. However, particularly good provision is made for pupils to learn about numbers and shapes and to enable them to develop self-confidence, self-control and a sense of community. In the mathematical and personal and social areas of learning children achieve well and reach standards that are higher than usually found in children of this age.

3 Pupils enter Year 1 with broadly typical attainment in reading and writing and a good understanding of mathematics. They achieve steadily in Years 1 and 2 to reach the standards expected in reading by the age of seven. The standards they reach in writing and in mathematics are above the national average. Test results, over recent years, show that standards have improved at the national rate in writing and in mathematics but trends in reading peaked in 1999 and then slipped. It is not uncommon for 100 per cent of the pupils to reach the level expected in all three subjects. This reflects the school's determination to identify those pupils who need extra help and to provide effective support in the learning of basic skills. However, the proportion of pupils reaching higher than the expected levels only matches other schools in mathematics and falls short in reading and writing. This is because teachers do not always extend the learning of the more able pupils as much as they should.

4 Pupils usually enter Year 3 with average attainment in reading and above average attainment in writing, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well to reach standards that are above the national average by the age of 11 in English and well above average in science. Pupils achieve steadily in mathematics and from the above average starting points in Years 1 and 3, they reach standards that are above the national average by the age of 11. In all three subjects, standards are higher than in similar schools, although similar schools are only defined in terms of the number of children eligible for free school meals. Results over recent years have improved at the national rate in both English and science but trends in mathematics have fluctuated considerably and had been declining until 2000 when teachers began to look at the results more carefully. The analysis of test questions that pupils answered revealed some illuminating patterns of strengths and weaknesses. Attention to the weaker elements and the introduction of booster classes to improve the learning of those who found learning difficult, have made a difference and standards in mathematics are beginning to rise again. The teaching in Year 6 is consistently good and this ensures that when pupils are tested they are at their best and able to achieve their potential. Targets to aim for in English and mathematics have been set each year. In mathematics, realistic targets have been set and achieved. However, the targets set in English were exceeded by over 10 per cent when results were published. There is scope to make the targets in English more challenging. However, much effort is put into enabling as many

pupils as possible to reach the levels expected and a lower target does not deter teachers from aiming higher.

5 Standards of speaking and listening are good throughout the school. Pupils listen very carefully to instructions and carry them out precisely. In most lessons, pupils are encouraged discuss their ideas with each other and to answer teachers' questions. However, pupils are not always asked to explain their ideas to the whole class. As a result, some children lack confidence in this area. Pupils acquire the basic skills in reading quickly in Years 1 and 2, although there are insufficient opportunities for the more able ones to extend their reading. As a result, infant pupils have good word blending skills but are not as advanced in their reading for understanding. Pupils achieve well in writing. From an early age pupils learn to spell and punctuate their work correctly and write legibly. In the junior classes, pupils learn to re read and improve their work by experimenting with different words and phrases. This is good preparation for the secondary school. Skills in literacy are developed satisfactorily in other subjects, apart from when teachers use worksheets instead of encouraging pupils to express their own ideas and improve their writing.

6 Pupils achieve steadily in mathematics throughout the school. In almost all classes pupils are working at above average levels. They are very proficient in the basic skills, such as addition and multiplication and have a good grasp of shapes and their properties. Daily mental mathematics sessions equip them with good recall of number facts, such as multiplication tables, and they are quick and accurate workers. However, pupils' knowledge of handling data, such as charts and graphs, is only average and Year 6 pupils are not yet able to plan and carry out their own investigation. This is because these aspects of mathematics are not taught as often or as well in some classes. As a general rule, pupils are given very challenging work in mathematics but in some classes, not enough attention is given to matching the work to pupils' different learning needs. As a result, in some classes, pupils who find the subject difficult are unable to keep up and make too many errors in their learning. Pupils improve their mathematical skills in subjects such as science and design and technology but opportunities are missed.

7 Pupils achieve well in all aspects of science. Their knowledge and understanding of topics such as living things, materials and forces is well above average. For example, pupils explain scientific ideas, such as food chains and gravity, lucidly and draw on their good knowledge of evaporation and condensation to explain the water cycle. Pupils' learning is helped by good opportunities for them to investigate and experiment. They learn to make accurate predictions of what is likely to happen and carry out systematic observations to determine the results. Most pupils understand that scientific tests must be fair.

8 Developments in ICT have not kept pace with the rate of change nationally and pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills have fallen behind. Standards are at the levels expected at the age of seven but lower than they should be by the age of 11. Teachers are improving their skills and there are plans to provide a suite of computers in the near future but currently, computers are not used enough in the teaching of other subjects.

9 Despite the emphasis on the core subjects, the school has endeavoured to provide a broad education. In particular, improvements have been made since the last inspection in art and design and standards are now as they should be at the ages of seven and 11. Even better improvements have been made in design and technology. Pupils now achieve well in this subject to reach standards that are higher than expected throughout the school. Pupils also achieve well in history and geography to reach higher than expected standards by the age of eleven. Good standards are also achieved in the games aspect of physical education. Standards are at the levels expected in music and pupils' singing is good.

10 Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress. The school's assessment procedures are effective in identifying which pupils need help. No time is wasted in organising

additional literacy and numeracy classes. These measures result in pupils making good gains in their learning in these sessions. However, when planning lessons, teachers do not always specify what these pupils should learn and their progress in general lessons is more variable.

11 Boys have made better progress than girls have in the past but this is not evident now and in the 2001 national assessments there was little difference in their scores. Pupils with higher ability achieve steadily but could achieve more if all teachers specifically planned to cater for their learning needs. The school has not yet identified its gifted and talented pupils, apart from music where good recorder players move on to learning the violin.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 The school has successfully maintained the high standards in pupils' behaviour, in their attitudes to work and in their high levels of attendance. These aspects are real strengths of the school, and have a positive impact on the standards achieved.

13 Pupils' attitudes to the school and to learning are very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and eagerly take part in the wide range of activities offered to them. The vast majority of parents agree that their children like school and demonstrate very positive attitudes to their work. They are confident, motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They quickly settle down in registrations, assemblies and in class. Children are attentive to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and opinions. Most pupils are capable of sustaining high levels of concentration, persevering with difficulties, and staying on task.

14 Standards of behaviour are very good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the pupils themselves have very high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The majority of parents agree that behaviour in the school is good. Pupils almost always behave very well. They show maturity in their responses to teachers and other pupils, and develop a sense of responsibility towards the school. Their behaviour in classrooms, at breaks and at lunchtime is very good, and they move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner. There are no signs of any bullying or isolation of individual pupils. There were two exclusions in the year prior to the inspection. These were isolated instances involving pupils with identified behavioural difficulties. However, there have been no exclusions this year. The school's good reputation for having well motivated and very well behaved pupils is fully deserved.

15 The relationships in the school are very good. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults and also to one another. Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. Children of all ages work very well together in the classrooms. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. The vast majority of pupils consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies, pupils are respectful of the occasion and willingly join in hymn singing and responses.

16 The pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are learning a very good range of social skills that is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. In the classrooms, the majority of pupils willingly take responsibility for their own work, and in lessons many children were observed working independently. Although there are few opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility around the school, where these are offered, pupils respond in a mature and responsible manner. Some of the older pupils help supervise the infants during breaks and lunchtimes, for example, Year 5 and 6 pupils ask teachers to find them jobs to do during wet playtimes. Pupils benefit from the good range of social and educational visits, including a residential experience for the older ones. The school supports local, national and international charities and the pupils are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves. The vast majority of parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection over half of the teaching in the lessons seen was good and occasionally very good. However, teaching is not quite as good when evaluated through pupils' work completed earlier in the year. Teaching has remained much the same since the last inspection, except that the teaching of art and design and design and technology has improved. However, the teaching of ICT has not improved and is unsatisfactory, largely because computers are not used enough. There is scope to improve the quality of teaching by senior staff and subject leaders observing lessons, identifying strengths and weaknesses and planning for improvement.

18 Teaching of children in the reception class, who are in the foundation stage of their learning, is satisfactory. The teaching of number skills is particularly good because the teacher asks probing questions to make the children think and asks them to explain how they worked out the answer which improves their spoken language. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is extended well by channelling their observations of plants, for example, and improving their vocabulary. Pupils' personal and social development is well catered for because teachers and assistants encourage pupils to talk about how well they are learning and to be responsible for their actions. In other areas of learning, teaching is satisfactory but opportunities for children to explore and learn for themselves are too limited.

19 Teaching in infant and junior classes has a number of good features. Teachers maintain good relationships with their pupils, manage them well and provide a purposeful working atmosphere. This ensures that pupils work hard, give of their best and show pride in achievement. Lessons get off to a quick start and move along swiftly. Pupils are swept along with the good pace of learning and have no time to become bored. Teachers sometimes set time targets for pupils to work towards and give them 5 or 10 minutes to complete a task before reviewing their answers. This is effective in raising pupils' rate of work and output.

20 Teachers have a sound understanding of the subjects they teach and good expertise in English, design and technology and science. Teachers draw on their subject knowledge effectively when introducing new topics and find interesting ways to help pupils to understand. In design and technology for example, the Year 6 teacher encouraged pupils to use a 'J cloth' to practise making a slipper because she knew that the material would stretch around the foot to simulate fabric. Tasks are often given to pairs of pupils or small groups because teachers recognise that pupils understand better when they are able to discuss and compare their ideas. Teachers' expertise in ICT is improving but there is some way to go before teachers know exactly which programs to use to support learning in other subjects.

21 Basic skills are usually taught well and this is a significant factor in the above average standards in English, mathematics and science. In literacy, good attention is given to teaching word building skills and correct spelling and punctuation. In mathematics, number skills, such as multiplying and converting fractions into decimals, are taught well and regularly practised. However, pupils are not taught often enough how to apply these skills to solve mathematical problems. In science, pupils are taught well how to predict, observe and record the results of their experiments.

22 Teachers set a high level of challenge for most pupils and expect them to work hard and achieve success. The work provided extends the learning of pupils with average ability well and it is not too easy for more able pupils either. This ensures that most pupils have frequent opportunities to work at higher levels and the standards they achieve reflect this. However, there are several weaknesses in the way that teachers plan their lessons. In over half of the classes, the planning of lessons does not take into account how the work provided will be matched to the pupils' different learning needs. On some occasions, all pupils are given the same work to do irrespective of their

different starting points. This shows that some teachers do not use the information they have gained from assessing how well pupils are learning, to help them in their planning of the next learning steps. By setting a demanding level for all pupils and individually supporting them in their written tasks, teachers ensure that most pupils make progress. However, pupils who find learning difficult do not fare as well, particularly when there is no additional adult help available. These pupils are inclined to make 30 per cent of errors in their work in some classes. This slows their learning down. There is no agreed system for teachers' plans to be monitored, therefore these weaknesses go undetected.

23 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and there are signs that it is improving with help from the local education authority and the co-ordinator's dedicated leadership. When pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn or taught in small groups in the classroom by support staff, the teaching is good and pupils learn the important skills of reading, writing and mathematics successfully. The success of the early intervention is notable in Year 1 and by the age of seven almost all of these pupils reach the standards expected. Additional support is not so plentiful in junior classes and these pupils have to manage on their own for longer periods. Teachers do not always plan activities specifically for them and on these occasions they do not learn as well as they might.

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

24 Taken as a whole, the curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory as it was at the time of the last inspection. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education and places due emphasis on developing the skills of literacy and numeracy. The high level of challenge considerably extends the learning of pupils with average ability and caters adequately for the more able. Pupils throughout the school benefit from a strong emphasis on the development of skills in most subjects. This enables them to master the basics of reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, the skills developed in some subjects, such as mathematics, are not sufficiently used in practical tasks. Lesson plans do not always include specific work for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and classroom assistants support them well but sometimes, in mathematics for example, they find the work too difficult. The school has not yet identified its gifted and talented pupils. Consequently, few extra challenges are specifically set for these pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the curriculum.

25 There is a better balance to the curriculum than since the school was last inspected. Sufficient time is now given to teaching art and design and design and technology. However, since the last inspection, there has not been sufficient progress made in raising standards in ICT. Pupils are not developing their computer skills sufficiently and are having too few opportunities to practice them in other lessons of the curriculum.

26 There are satisfactory plans to guide teachers in their work for all subjects. These ensure that teachers know what to teach but the policies and notes do not offer much help on how to teach the subject well. Consequently, there are inconsistencies between classes. For example, there are differences in how thoroughly teachers plan, mark and assess pupils' work, maintain records, promote homework, develop computer work in their subjects and meet the needs of the gifted or pupils with special educational needs in their classes. Senior staff maintain that because the teachers are experienced and have worked together for several years, there is no need to provide these structures. However, there are many inconsistencies in pupils' learning, which hinders their progress. These are attributable to the lack of systems for planning and monitoring the work of the school.

27 The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. There is no specific programme of work; instead the subject is incorporated in the science and the religious education schemes. Pupils are made aware of the dangers of drugs and tobacco, and healthy eating is well promoted. They are also made aware of changes that will occur to them at puberty. The school nurse leads this programme sensitively. Although pupils are strongly aware of their place in the school community, they are not sufficiently enabled to develop a strong feeling for citizenship in the wider world.

28 Teachers offer a very good range of activities outside lesson time, particularly to those pupils wanting to develop their sporting and musical skills further. High proportions of the junior-aged pupils participate in a wide range of sports including cricket, rounders, cross-country and orienteering. The quality of these activities is high. Individuals and teams greatly enhance the sporting reputation of the school by achieving many successes.

29 Sound provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and this is continuing to improve. Following a very useful review of the school's practice, many changes have been implemented and these have led to improvements. The guidance for teachers is now good and helps teachers to know what is expected. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early, through the close analysis of test results. Each pupil is provided with a well-written individual education plan. However, the targets established in the plans are not always systematically developed in lessons. Classroom support assistants work well with teachers to ensure that these pupils receive regular one-to-one support, especially in the early years.

30 Visits into the locality and beyond offer pupils good opportunities for first hand experiences that extend their work in the classroom. The residential trip for pupils in Year 6 also helps to develop their self-confidence and willingness to accept responsibility. Good links now exist with other local schools. Teams represent the school in a wide range of sports. As well as improving their skills and fostering co-operative teamwork, pupils also benefit from forging links with pupils of other ethnic backgrounds. The horizons of the teachers are also extended by links with the staff of 20 local cluster primary schools. This is particularly the case in literacy, for which Christ the King RC Primary School is the host school for many meetings. Lunchtime supervisory assistants have also benefited from visiting local schools to see how they organise and operate their lunchtime activities.

31 The school makes good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is broadly in line with the judgements made at the last inspection. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. However, there is a lack of whole school planning for this aspect. Consequently, opportunities are missed to raise pupils' spiritual awareness. Daily acts of worship provide a time for prayer and offering worship. Pupils are aware of the sense of occasion and respond well by entering quietly and listening attentively. Assemblies are firmly based on the liturgical calendar and tend to restrict the introduction of other themes that could offer more opportunity for reflection. There are some opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual matters in some lessons, such as English, art and music. For example, some pupils are developing a love of music. There are very good links with the church and the community through which pupils can learn to appreciate the needs of others, for example, raising funds for local, national and international charities.

32 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Teachers encourage them to consider the rights and wrongs of life in the school and at home. Moral conclusions are drawn from learning, for example, in discussions about equal rights for women during a history lesson about Florence Nightingale. Pupils are made aware of what is expected of them and why. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are helped to understand right from wrong. Teachers and

support staff set a very good example of positive relationships and have a major influence on the high standards of behaviour consistently achieved throughout the school.

33 Provision for pupils' social development is good. The school provides a good range of opportunities for children to work and play together. Boys and girls are encouraged to work together in pairs and groups in, for example, physical education lessons. Teamwork is strongly promoted in a very good range of sporting activities. Older children are offered some formal responsibilities around the school, for example, senior pupils looking after the younger children during breaks. These factors are important in enabling pupils to understand and care for others.

34 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The steps taken to help pupils to learn about their own culture are more pronounced than those to raise their awareness of cultural diversity. Pupils' understanding of historical and geographical heritage is enhanced through a broad range of visits. There are strong links with the local church. The curriculum makes some provision for multicultural development; for example, in the past pupils have visited a Jewish museum. However, there is still more that could be done to make children fully aware of and develop respect for cultures other than their own.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35 The school continues to make sound provision for the support and guidance of its pupils as it did at the time of the last inspection. However there are weaknesses in some areas. For example, arrival arrangements are poor and can appear uncaring. On two consecutive days during the inspection, pupils were made to wait outside in the pouring rain and were not allowed to enter the school premises until exactly 9 o'clock. In all other respects, members of staff place a high priority on pastoral care, and are very approachable. The teaching and support assistants are very caring, and committed to providing good support for pupils. All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have a good understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, and implement them consistently and conscientiously. Child protection procedures are securely in place and staff are well aware of them. All the required health and safety inspections and checks are systematically carried out and formally recorded. However formal risk assessments have not yet been carried out. A few minor health and safety risks were found during the inspection, for example, chairs stacked in the hall during physical education lessons. Conscientious teachers and teaching assistants, who are alert and vigilant, supervise pupils very well at breaks. Lunchtime supervision is undertaken conscientiously, and the standard of care is high.

36 The school has effective procedures for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour, based on a positive behaviour management policy. All members of staff have high expectations of what constitutes acceptable behaviour, and discipline is administered consistently and well. This all has a positive effect on the high standards of behaviour throughout the school. The school is very effective in discouraging bullying and consequently pupils work and play in an environment free from oppression. Good attendance is actively encouraged and absence is conscientiously monitored and followed up. Class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils very well and have a good understanding of their individual personal needs. Pupils' personal development is fostered in lessons and carefully monitored.

37 Improvements have been made in the way teachers assess pupils' learning since the last inspection. The well-established cycle of annual tests in English, mathematics and science, allows pupils' progress to be monitored throughout the school. Results of the national tests in English and mathematics, for pupils aged seven and 11, are also carefully checked. Subject leaders look for patterns to identify the types of questions that pupils have found most difficult. Through this close

analysis, teachers have a good idea of where common strengths and weaknesses lie. They make efforts to tackle the weaker areas and receive some training to support this. However, there is scope to improve two aspects of this process. Firstly, teachers' planning is not monitored to ensure those areas, identified as weaknesses, are being tackled in a systematic way. Secondly, no routine checks are made to find out if pupils are actually improving in these identified areas.

38 The progress made by individual pupils is tracked well from one year to the next but the school does not use the information to compare the progress made by one group with another. There is, therefore potential for any variations in progress between groups, such as boys and girls, or higher and lower attaining pupils to be missed. Similarly, links between pupils' rates of progress and differences in the effectiveness of teaching may also go unrecognised. The school does identify those pupils who need extra help to reach the expected standards by the age of seven. They are provided with good programmes that help most of them to reach the levels expected. Targets are not set for other pupils. There are no systems to ensure pupils know what level they are working at and precisely what they have to do to move up to the next level. Consequently, pupils do not take as much responsibility as they could for their progress and improvement.

39 Teachers make good assessments during lessons, both by asking pupils searching questions and by checking their work to provide instant support where it is required. However, there are no guidelines to enable teachers to be consistent in their marking of pupils' work. Encouraging comments are often written and some teachers use marking well to reinforce their high expectations of pupils. However, only in one or two classes is marking used to show pupils what they need to do to improve or to extend their reasoning. Marking of pupils' work is not used to guide future planning as often as it should be. As a result, pupils who do not find learning easy, in mathematics for example, make too many mistakes in their books.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40 Relationships between the school and parents are satisfactory. The partnership between the school and parents is not as strong as reported in the last inspection. Although the school enjoys the support of most parents, only a few are actively involved in the work of the school. For example, there are currently only three or four parents who regularly help in the classrooms. However, most parents are involved in their children's work at home, for example, they support homework and home reading. There is a very active, parents' association, that organises successful social and fund raising events for the school. A considerable amount of money has been raised for the school and many useful resources purchased. Although the majority of parents expressed positive views on most aspects of the school, some disagreed that their children got the right amount of work to do at home or that the school provided an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team judged the use of homework to be satisfactory and the provision for extra-curricular activities to be very good, although mainly for older pupils.

41 General day-to-day communication between the school and home is satisfactory. However, information to parents about how their children are getting on is unsatisfactory and about one-fifth of the returned questionnaires illustrate this. The school sends out frequent newsletters and letters about specific events and activities and publishes a comprehensive, informative prospectus. These publications keep parents well informed about what is happening in school. Governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish an annual report. However, the most recent governors' report does not contain all the statutory required information, for example, the provision for pupils with physical disabilities and notes on the professional development of the teaching staff are not included. There is only one parents' consultation evening each year and this is held early in the autumn term. Parents have expressed the view that they would prefer a consultation evening each term. Parents are given

an annual progress report and offered the opportunity to discuss their children's work with their teachers. With the exception of the reception children's reports, which are very good, annual reports on pupils' progress are barely satisfactory. They provide only brief and sometimes superficial information about what their children understand, know and can do and they do not contain targets for improvement. This aspect has not improved since the last inspection when similar findings were reported. Currently parents are not given any information about the curriculum or topics that their children will study during the forthcoming terms. This makes it harder for parents to help their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42 The leadership of the school is unsatisfactory overall. Although the school has several notable strengths, the identified weaknesses of the last inspection have not been fully addressed. As at the time of the last inspection, the school is an orderly community in which pupils can learn. Throughout school there are good relationships between teachers and pupils. This ensures that pupils behave well and have very good attitudes to learning. High standards are promoted in English, mathematics, and science and additionally the head teacher is effective in providing good pastoral care in the school. However, there are very few agreed procedures by which the head teacher, staff and governors can measure the school's success. Strengths and weaknesses are not systematically identified and the aims and objectives of the school have evolved without negotiation. As a result, there are inconsistencies, for example in teachers' planning and in the use of assessment, and the roles and responsibilities of key personnel are not clear.

43 The School Development Plan is not helpful. It is fragmented and fails to map out what needs to be done to make improvements. Each year individual teachers are asked to suggest what they think the priorities are. In English this system works well because the subject leader has a good grasp of the issues but not all subject leaders have the evidence on which to base their judgements. There is little evidence of the diocese or the local education authority being involved and parents and pupils are seldom consulted. Some priorities have emerged from a careful analysis of assessment results. This is valuable and helps the school to select some relevant priorities. However, even when the right priorities are identified, they are not converted into actions and it is not clear who is responsible for achieving them, how much it will cost or how success will be measured. This makes it difficult for governors to monitor and evaluate school improvements and to ensure that the school obtains best value in its work. These weaknesses were identified at the time of the last inspection.

44 Governors endeavour to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. There is an appropriate structure of committees to oversee the work of the school, but systems of monitoring are in the very early stages of development, there is little opportunity to identify any strengths and address weaknesses associated with the impact of any change. The finance committee benefits from good expertise and monitors expenditure effectively. Financial control is tight. Finances are fully accounted for and contingencies are planned with due care and attention. There is a small deficit budget. The falling birth rate in the area and the associated decline in pupil numbers resulted in some overstaffing. Governors managed the situation very well to ensure stability through a difficult period. However governors have not had enough training to give them confidence to challenge decisions knowledgeably, or become fully involved in the decision-making. For example, while they review and ratify policies presented to them, there is no rolling programme of review, or clear understanding of what needs to happen next.

45 Although subject leaders spend time and energy trying to improve their subjects, their roles and responsibilities are insufficiently defined. They do not have first hand knowledge of what is happening in classrooms. There is no co-ordinated timetable of activities to ensure that teaching is observed and pupils' work is examined. There are isolated examples of this happening but some subject leaders are not sure what to do with the information they gather. The process is not rigorous and fails to root out and remedy the weaknesses. As a result, there are inconsistencies in the way lessons are planned, pupils are assessed and records are maintained. While the school makes effective use of local and national guidance on what to teach, many of the school policies do not explain how the subject should be taught. For example there is no policy for the teaching and learning in the foundation stage.

46 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The co-ordinator provides very determined, caring and dedicated leadership. Over her many years in the school, she has developed very close working relationships with the parents. She involves them fully in all decisions that are made about their children. She also works very closely with outside specialists and organisations to ensure the best possible advice is received, should it be needed. Her commitment is remarkable in fulfilling her duties. For example, following a recent review into the provision the school makes for pupils with special educational needs, she has responded with speed and energy to implement its recommendations. However, her work is hindered by the lack of monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that her hard work and good ideas are fully implemented.

47 The teaching staff are very experienced. Teachers know each other well and this helps to counter the lack of monitoring to some extent. For example, teachers and classroom assistants treat pupils in the same way and ensure that pupils' learning experiences are not too dissimilar. Since the last inspection the majority of staff have undertaken ICT training, which is still on going. Several staff indicate that they are now much more confident in using ICT to support teaching and learning, although computers are seldom used in the teaching of other subjects. Classroom assistants work well alongside teachers to enhance pupils' learning. The school secretary, cleaning and caretaking staff are all highly committed, and make a good contribution to the smooth running of daily routines and the provision of a clean environment. Efficient computerised systems of financial management and pupil records have been introduced since the last inspection and there are good arrangements in place to regularly update and maintain data.

48 The school has embarked on the initial cycle for performance management in line with legal requirements and a review of agreed targets is to be undertaken at the end of this school year. In a verification of teachers' threshold assessments it was confirmed that the school had introduced the policy and procedures in a good atmosphere of shared openness, which will be of benefit to the school as the initial process comes to an end. All teachers have set targets for improvement and professional development training has been identified. The school has satisfactory induction procedures for new staff and for students on initial teacher training. However the lack of a staff handbook means that explanations about arrangements in school rely on the Key Stage 1 and 2 leaders, and could be open to misinterpretation.

49 Accommodation is satisfactory, apart from the lack of a secure outdoor play area for reception children. Detailed plans are in place to increase the machines and resources for ICT, and a start has been made to address this provision urgently, as the governing body recognises that pupils need increased access to machines to raise standards of performance. The resourcing of the National Curriculum is satisfactory in all year groups. Good attention is given to ensuring that sufficient funds are available to allow for the many worthwhile additional activities, which enrich and enhance the curriculum. In relation to the average income the school receives and the standards the pupils achieve, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50 The head teacher, staff and governors should now:

(1) Improve leadership and management by:

- ensuring that senior staff and subject leaders observe lessons regularly to evaluate the quality of teaching, and use the findings to help teachers to reflect on and improve their performance;
- establishing a system of monitoring teachers' lesson planning and scrutinising pupils' work to build up picture of what pupils are expected to learn and how well they achieve it;
- sharing the information gathered from monitoring the school's performance with staff and governors to help them to identify the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement;
- using the information from reviewing the work of the school to agree on the priorities for development and presenting these in a clear and fully costed school development plan, against which improvements can be measured.
(Paragraphs 1, 22, 26, 37, 42, 43, 44, 45, 65, 69, 85)

(2) Improve standards in ICT by:

- continuing with the task of providing guidance for teachers on what and how to teach and the subject and assess pupils' learning;
- ensuring that ICT is used to improve pupils' learning in other subjects.
(Paragraphs 8, 17, 20, 25, 68, 80, 87, 93, 96, 97)

(3) Improve the information provided for parents by:

- notifying parents, in advance, of what their children are expected to learn so that they can help them;
- ensuring that parents have sufficient opportunities to find out how well their children are progressing;
- ensuring that pupils' written reports convey a clear picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and the targets for improvement.
(Paragraph 41)

(4) Improve the use of the information obtained from assessing pupils' learning by:

- ensuring that the outcomes of assessing what pupils know and can do are used as a basis for planning future lessons;
- agreeing on a pattern of marking pupils' work which includes pointers for improvement;
- using the information gained from marking pupils' work and testing their knowledge and understanding to set targets to help them to know how they can improve.
(Paragraphs 22, 38, 39, 65, 69, 75)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	-	6	24	19	2	-	-
Percentage	-	12	47	37	4	-	-

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	210
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19

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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	17	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	17	16	17
	Total	30	29	30
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	100% (100%)	97% (88%)	100% (97%)
	National	84% (83%)	86% (84%)	91% (90%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	30	30	30
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	100% (100%)	100% (97%)	100% (100%)
	National	85% (84%)	89% (88%)	89% (88%)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	15	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	16
	Girls	14	11	15
	Total	28	24	31
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	88% (89%)	75% (83%)	97% (91%)
	National	75% (75%)	71% (72%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	13
	Girls	15	14	13
	Total	28	28	26
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	88% (74%)	88% (80%)	81% (91%)
	National	72% (70%)	74% (72%)	82% (79%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	182
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	2	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)	9.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.8
Average class size	29.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	68

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	396,667
Total expenditure	398,223
Expenditure per pupil	1,853
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1,556

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	210
Number of questionnaires returned	91

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	26	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	31	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	34	6	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	45	8	7	3
The teaching is good.	65	32	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	45	17	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	35	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	20	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	26	53	14	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	35	4	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	32	1	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	36	10	4	9

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

51 When children enter the reception class, their personal, social and emotional development is well developed because most children have experienced some pre-school education at nursery or playgroup. In other respects, they arrive with knowledge and skills that is typical for their age. Their learning and development is suitably provided for in the reception class in most areas of learning, although opportunities to play on large toys are restricted by lack of space. The picture was very similar at the time of the last inspection. In most lessons the teaching is satisfactory, although in number work it is good because the teacher sets clear targets for the children to aim for. Children benefit from a good range of activities, which are planned to take account of their different learning needs. Activities are set out in two separate classrooms and often led by the teacher or a classroom assistant. Whilst these are valuable in developing children's interests and their spoken language, there are not enough opportunities for children to explore and learn for themselves.

52 The teacher keeps good records of children's progress in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development and parents are kept informed. Most children achieve the expected learning goals in communication, language and literacy by the time they enter Year 1. However, some children still have difficulty with writing. Children make steady progress and reach the levels expected in creative and physical development and in knowledge and understanding about the world. In mathematical and personal and social development, children achieve well to reach standards that are higher than expected for their age.

Personal social and emotional development

53 Teaching is good in this area of learning. The school caters well for children's personal social and emotional development and most children achieve the early learning goals well before the end of the reception year. The teacher builds very good relationships with children. Praise and encouragement is instrumental in their learning and helps them to behave well and develop self-confidence. Good relationships between parents and reception staff help children to feel at home and parents respond enthusiastically to the shared learning activities in school or at home.

54 Children enjoy coming to school and happily leave their parents and carers at the school door. Well-planned activities and clear explanations help them to understand the need for rules and routines. Children are eager to learn and work hard to improve their skills in reading, writing and number work. They work with considerable concentration either alone or with a teacher. When they are directed to work without adult help they strive to be successful and understand the need to take turns and become self-reliant. They enjoy taking messages around the school and are polite and well mannered.

Communication language and literacy

55 Children achieve well in developing speaking and listening skills in the reception class. Each day they have good opportunities to talk together, and in story time they make quick progress in developing their listening skills. They listen intently to stories and are curious and often enthralled by the mystery and surprise which stories offer. They have good recall of their own experiences, which they share with others in the classroom. They recite nursery rhymes knowledgeably and talk enthusiastically about their favourite fairy tales. Children have good phonic knowledge for their age as a result of good daily teaching of sounds and letter symbols. Most recognise letters of the alphabet,

write their name, and recognise initial and final sounds in words. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Children have regular practice in school to develop their reading skills and progress is steady. Some parents participate in reading practice but are given insufficient advice from the school on how to make the shared reading times at home more productive. There is an attractive book corner set out in the classroom but during the inspection there was limited evidence of it being used. Similarly, progress in writing is steady. The teacher shows children how to write but there are not enough opportunities for children to try to write on their own. By the end of the reception year, more able children write simple sentences unaided with some words spelt correctly but for many children, writing is a difficult task and letters are often jumbled.

Mathematical development

56 As a result of good teaching the children achieve well in this area of learning. They undertake a good range of daily tasks where learning is fun and where they are continually challenged. Many children correctly count and add numbers mentally and explain to others how they completed the task. The language of mathematics is carefully introduced. As a result, children confidently use terms such as taller and shorter or heavier and lighter. They are stimulated by the practical activities. For example they enjoyed finding a pattern in a bedspread and noticed that the pattern repeated vertically, horizontally and diagonally. The teacher helps pupils to see how mathematics is needed in everyday life. During the inspection, for example, children successfully created a wallpaper border pattern for the class baby clinic and the more able children mathematically named the semi-circles, rectangles, triangles and squares as they worked. Most children have a good understanding of shape, space and measure. In sand and water play, children learn ideas such as half full and half empty and transfer this knowledge well to other situations. In the baby clinic they have good opportunities to improve their understanding of size and weight as they compare the weight and height of different dolls.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57 Children develop a good understanding of the world around them. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Staff encourage children to observe closely and talk about their discoveries. For example, children looked at a range of plants and described their similarities and differences. They had opportunities to look, feel and describe the plants and with feeling they announced, “It hurts when I touch it,” and decided “when they grow old, they’ll grow bigger and bigger”. They acquire a clear understanding of the passage of time, through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and noting changing seasons and variations in the weather. Staff ensure that children are taught the practical skills of cutting, folding and sticking, although there are not enough opportunities for them to practise and refine these skills and work creatively. A computer is available in the classroom at all times but is seldom used as a free choice activity. When they choose to play the language and number games, they show enjoyment and are developing confidence in using the mouse. However, the teacher’s lesson planning does not always identify opportunities for designing and making and staff are not always available to talk with children about their experiences.

Creative development

58 Children achieve steadily in their creative development to reach the levels expected by the end of the reception year. They benefit from a suitable range of experiences in art, music and imaginative play. For example, they sing and chant rhymes from memory and particularly enjoy adding the actions. The teacher is effective in helping them to listen to and copy different patterns of sound. Many children recognise high and low sounds. Teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning. Well-planned activities, led by the teacher, develop children’s understanding of colour, shape and pattern. However, not enough time is put aside for children to explore and find out for themselves. Imaginative

play is good overall. The children enjoy the home corner and baby clinic and use their own experiences in these situations to role-play a variety of situations. However, there are few occasions when the teacher and classroom assistants plan to work with the children in these areas, and opportunities to develop learning experiences and improve personal and social skills are sometimes missed.

Physical development

59 Children enjoy this aspect of the curriculum and work hard in lessons to improve their performance. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Provision for children's development is adequately made through physical activity sessions in the school hall, but there is no outdoor area designated for imaginative play, and indoors the small play area is a thoroughfare for other classes. As a result, there are not enough occasions for children to play freely, as there is no secure area available for their use. However at playtimes and lunchtimes children play happily alongside the older pupils and they join in many playground games with enthusiasm. They particularly enjoy the additional support many of the older Year 6 pupils give to them at these times, and are developing good relations with these older children as they play together. In lessons the children listen to the teacher's instructions carefully, and most respond immediately to given signals to stop and start. All can run, jump, jog and many can skip. They can maintain a small sequence of these actions in a repeat pattern. They develop good skills of balance as they hop or maintain a statue shape when directed by the teacher. Most control their movements well, and display suppleness and agility, as they become more aware of their bodies. They have less understanding of spatial awareness and still show surprise when collisions occur. In the classroom, children build towers with small and big bricks and are confident to work alone or join happily with others when the occasion arises. The teacher encourages them to use toys and tools safely, and they are becoming more competent as they handle equipment and materials with greater care.

ENGLISH

60 Infant pupils achieve steadily to reach above average standards in writing and average standards in reading. Almost all pupils reach the levels expected by the age of seven, though relatively few attain higher than average scores. This is because teachers do not plan sufficiently to extend those pupils capable of reaching higher standards at this age. Pupils achieve well in the juniors and by the age of 11, standards in English are above average. Standards at 11 are similar to those at the last inspection and have risen in line with national trends.

61 The main strengths in English are the high expectations that teachers have of most of their pupils, the accurate analysis of annual tests that point teachers to those areas in need of improvement and the fluency of the writing, which enables pupils to express their ideas quickly and accurately. Central to the rising standards in pupils' learning is the very good direction provided by the subject leader. As a 'leading teacher of English' his impact extends well beyond the school through lesson demonstrations and delivering English courses. However, his expertise in the subject is not sufficiently exploited by the school. His role is mainly limited to making recommendations, based on test results and checking pupils' work. He is not given the opportunity to examine and improve the quality of teaching in the school. As a result, weaknesses, such as in planning and marking, have not been identified and resolved. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress in the withdrawal groups, enabling the majority of them to reach the levels expected by the ages of seven. However, work is not sufficiently planned to match to their needs and, in some classes, there is not enough regular classroom support to enable them to progress well.

62 Standards of speaking and listening are good throughout the school. A feature of most English lessons is the high quality of the questioning that enables pupils to gain new knowledge and to develop their own ideas further. For example, when Year 2 pupils were discussing a text on dinosaurs, the teacher asked, "How do they know what colour dinosaurs were?" After a silence, one boy suddenly realised, "They must have been guessing!" There are also opportunities for the mature analysis of difficult texts. The poetry appreciation of Alfred Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott', was greatly enjoyed by pupils in Year 4. Pupils listen very well to instructions, though not all are regular

contributors to class discussions. In some lessons, teachers tend to accept answers from the same pupils rather than encourage all pupils to answer. As a consequence, standards in listening are slightly higher than those in speaking and a minority of pupils lack the confidence to express themselves clearly when addressing the class.

63 Standards in reading are average at seven and above average at 11. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on helping pupils to read those words they find difficult by splitting them into smaller, manageable parts. These are then blended together to identify the whole word. These 'phonic' skills are taught well. They help pupils improve their standards in spelling as well as reading. Many younger pupils read regularly to their parents. This also helps them to improve. They also have good opportunities for extra help, provided by staff in Years 2 and 4, in what the school calls 'The Code-cracker Club'. However, in many classes, there are not planned, daily sessions for the whole class to read together, or for the teacher to take a group for reading. Consequently, opportunities are missed to probe and extend pupils' reading comprehension skills. This is why relatively few pupils reach higher standards in the infant classes. Reading skills are well developed in the junior classes. Good links exist with the local library to encourage pupils to develop an appreciation of literature through regular reading. By the age of 11, very good routines are established for pupils to read and evaluate books through reviews. They enjoy this challenge and often win local as well as regional library awards. Pupils read aloud with confidence, fluency and expression. However, books are not sufficiently used to find information, for example in history and geography. Worksheets are used too often and this limits opportunities for pupils to improve their research skills.

64 Writing standards are above average throughout the school. Good foundations are laid in infant classes where pupils have regular opportunities to undertake exercises that improve their spelling and grammar, as well as their handwriting. By the end of Year 2, the better writers express themselves freely. One story ends, "Claire cried with happiness. She had won a trophy and best of all, she had become a singer!" (This is the pupil's own punctuation). Most develop neat writing styles, though posture is often incorrect, with pupils resting their heads on their arms, even in the upper classes. Precise targets are set for each class to improve the pupils' ability to write independently. As a result, they structure their work better and are beginning to proof read and improve their own work more successfully. Drafting books are well used to plan, develop ideas or make notes. For example, two Year 5 pupils, writing from the viewpoint of a soldier in the English Civil War, crafted original ideas when they wrote "Suddenly, my courage came flooding back to me. My first instinct was to grasp my pike firmly and to embed it into the first person I saw. But I didn't know it was going to be my younger brother!" Large workbooks encourage extended writing, though this is insufficiently developed beyond Year 3. Using the good writing skills that they have acquired, pupils work flexibly and confidently in other subjects. Younger pupils create good stories in history, such as those on Florence Nightingale; older pupils take notes, create diaries and write letters. They are well prepared for their secondary education.

65 The quality of teaching is, on balance, satisfactory but there are some strong features. These were seen in most lessons. Teaching in Year 3 is particularly strong. In all classes, there is good development of basic skills by an experienced staff and this is allied to good work habits that are instilled in the pupils. Through their caring and sensitive manner, teachers and support staff create a happy and positive atmosphere in the classrooms. Teachers who support other classes and support assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of those pupils who find English difficult. Their good teaching of the basic skills enables many of these pupils to reach the levels expected. However, there are a number of areas in which there is scope for improvement. More than in most schools, classes at Christ the King RC Primary School tend to work in isolation. For example, some classes have adopted the National Literacy Strategy and teach to it, some have adopted it in part, whilst others continue to work to schemes which have proved successful over many years. As a result, it makes it

harder to achieve a consistent approach to the teaching of literacy. This results in inconsistencies in planning, marking and record keeping between different classes. Work is generally pitched at a high level. This enables most pupils to achieve well. However, separate challenges are not regularly provided for pupils at the two ends of the ability range. Marking is used well to establish the teacher's high expectations of work standards. However, opportunities are missed to use marking to extend pupils' understanding or to set new challenges. In the same way, teachers do not consistently record what pupils learn and what they find difficult so that planning can be adapted for future lessons. This can cause problems for those pupils with special educational needs and can also limit the progress of more able pupils. The good practice that exists in different classes is not sufficiently shared. For example, each pupil in Year 3 has a small 'Literacy Log'. This folder accumulates as each new area of learning in English is introduced. It is a very good, practical reminder of work covered for future use. It also includes targets of the skills each pupil needs to develop further. A little folder like this would benefit pupils of all ages but they are not used in other classes. There is scope to improve teaching and pupils' learning further if such good practice was recognised, evaluated and shared.

MATHEMATICS

66 Pupils enter Year 1 with above average attainment in mathematics after making good progress in the reception class. Standards, since the last inspection, have improved at the national rate in the infant classes and are above average by the age of seven, which has been the pattern over recent years.

67 Pupils enter Year 3 with above average attainment. Standards by the age of 11 are above average. Over recent years, results have fluctuated and there had been a decline until 2000. Pupils are now tested at the end of each school year and the subject leader analyses the results and informs other teachers of what to concentrate on to remedy the weaker areas. This is having a positive impact and standards are beginning to creep up again.

68 Most pupils achieve steadily in Years 1 and 2, although by not dating and sequencing pupils' work it is difficult for teachers to gauge pupils' progress accurately. The level of challenge in the work provided is generally high. For example, Year 1 pupils are expected to calculate with numbers to 20, increasing to 50 and then 100 in Year 2. By the age of seven most pupils know their numbers to 1000, add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers correctly to 20 and recognise the common two and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils continue to achieve steadily in junior classes and they achieve well in Year 6 in response to the teacher's demands. By the age of 11, most pupils have a good grasp of decimals, percentages and fractions and convert comfortably from one to another. Their understanding of handling data, such as drawing and reading graphs, is typical for their age and there is scope to improve this by making much more use of ICT.

69 Although pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics, as they move from one class to another, there is scope to improve pupils' learning. A commercial scheme of work is followed in all classes, apart from Year 6. Pupils complete pages in workbooks in the infant classes and work their way through textbooks in junior classes. However, there are inconsistencies in the way the workbooks and textbooks are used. Most teachers set the work at a reasonably high level of challenge and use the workbooks and textbooks to provide the examples for pupils to complete. This generally suits pupils with average ability and moves the more able ones on in their learning. Although pupils are tested at the end of each unit of work to measure their progress, not all teachers take sufficient account of pupils' learning from one day to the next. Their work is marked accurately, although in some classes there are few pointers to show pupils how to improve and very limited use is made of target setting to provide goals to aim for. As a result, the work in the textbook is not always at the right level. In particular, pupils who do not find learning easy make too many mistakes, which slows

down their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are in a better position because in some classes they receive extra adult help. This enables them to make steady progress but when extra help is not available, their learning slows down. These weaknesses arise because most teachers do not specify how different pupils will be catered for when they plan their work. In addition, teachers' planning is not checked and their lessons are not observed so the weaknesses are not identified. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The subject leader sets a good example of how numeracy should be taught and works hard to influence teachers in their work. However, the school does not value what can be gained by monitoring teaching and learning and there is no encouragement to pursue these tasks.

70 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The National Numeracy Strategy has been suitably implemented and some elements of teaching are good. Lessons get off to a brisk start with a sharp mental mathematics session. Teachers hand out number cards and pupils have to be 'on their toes' to recognise the correct answer to a stream of questions. This improves pupils' speed and accuracy of calculation. Teachers often use games to stimulate pupils' interests. In Year 6 for example, the teacher sets the clock ticking to encourage pupils to beat their own record calculation times. As a result, most pupils enjoy mathematics and have positive attitudes towards learning. Lessons have a clear purpose and pupils know what they have to do. New learning is explained well and teachers use resources imaginatively to illustrate difficult ideas. Good use is made of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to make them think. For example, the Year 5 teacher demonstrated the size of angles by opening and closing two wooden sticks. This helped pupils to measure acute, obtuse and reflex angles correctly. Teachers manage their lessons well, move the pupils on at a good rate and ensure that they work hard. As a result, pupils develop confidence and accuracy in the basic skills of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. In the best lessons, pupils are asked to work out answers to problems involving numbers, shape or graphs and explain how they arrived at their answers. In Year 1, for example, the teacher teased the pupils by making deliberate mistakes and asked pupils to explain what was wrong. When pupils gave the correct answer the teacher asked, "How did you work that out?" and encouraged pupils to explain their reasoning. Such methods work well because other pupils begin to realise that there are several ways to solve a problem and the more different methods they know, the better they understand. However, this is not done consistently and is not applied to all aspects of mathematics. As a result, pupils reach good standards calculating but their capacity to apply these skills to investigate and solve numerical problem is only average.

SCIENCE

71 Standards are above the national average by the age of seven and well above average and similar schools by the age of 11. Since the last inspection standards have continued to improve. The subject is well led. The subject leader has addressed the recommendations of the previous inspection report well. Science is a popular subject in school and most pupils enjoy investigative work. Pupils of all ability levels achieve well and make good progress over time. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well towards their individual educational targets, as they are well supported in lessons by teachers and classroom assistants.

72 By the age of seven, pupils have good knowledge about growth and describe the changes in the life cycle of plants, animals and humans correctly. They talk knowledgeably about healthy foods and the value of exercise. They improve their observation skills and scientific reasoning well through practical work, such as testing materials for absorbency. By observing the push and pull movements of toys, they develop a clear understanding of forces. Pupils soon learn to label and sequence diagrams, draw block graphs, and complete a chart of test results. By Year 2, more able pupils use good descriptive vocabulary to write up their experiments, for example saying that plants are "pining for the light" or that roots of plants look like "wiry hair". Pupils acquire a good understanding of their

environment, both through undertaking scientific experiments and also through good links to work in geography. For example, pupils in Year 1 disproved their earlier belief that “flowers aren’t alive, because they can’t walk”. They then looked at their playground environment to consider the best place to plant flowers to be decorative but remain unharmed in a busy children’s games area. During the inspection many exclamations of surprise occurred, as pupils unravelled the roots of a plant from its pot, noting the enormous length of some roots, and then discovering that the length of roots has a direct relationship to the height of plants above the ground.

73 Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6. Their knowledge and understanding is developed systematically through carefully selected topics. Pupils make rapid progress in developing their understanding of electricity, magnetism, and gravity. They make regular visits out of school, which enriches their understanding. For example, Year 5 pupils' good knowledge of filtration and of the water cycle is attributable to their visit to a water treatment centre. Visitors into school contribute effectively to the development of pupils' interest in science through scientific workshops. For example, pupils in Year 6 gained good knowledge and understanding of habitats and food chains, following a visit from the "Bug Box Man". They learnt through observation, examination, and discussion about a range of insects. Moreover, pupils' interest in the natural world was aroused, as they sat spell bound to watch the second biggest spider in the world, and they discussed, in amazement, the 17 skins discarded by an 18 year old spider. By the age of 11, pupils are confident and have good levels of independence to conduct their own investigations. They have good recall and can transfer learning effectively from previous activities to enable them to solve new problems. Year 6 pupils study scientific theories with fascination, for example, most pupils have a very good understanding for their age about the atom. More able pupils explain lucidly about a positive and a negative force and describe a balanced atom successfully.

74 The quality of teaching is good in most lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for the subject. The oldest pupils in school benefit from very good specialist teaching by the subject leader. In other classes, the subject leader works alongside class teachers to good effect. The curriculum has good breadth and balance. Teachers are well supported by written guidelines, which ensure that pupils are able to build on their earlier learning. Teachers make effective use of investigations and encourage pupils to learn through experiments, which provides a good foundation for understanding. Lessons are well planned and activities are organised thoroughly so that the pupils can learn without interruption at a quick pace. They use technical vocabulary correctly because teachers are careful to use the correct terms when they explain new learning. Teachers have high expectations and set challenging tasks for pupils to achieve. Since the last inspection more attention is given to providing tasks, which are appropriate to different ability levels. The subject is well led. The subject leader examines pupils' test results and identifies strengths and weaknesses in learning so that the teaching can be more focused.

75 Pupils with special educational needs are supported sensitively but discreetly so that they can operate in conjunction with all other members of their class. Support staff have good specialist knowledge and make effective contributions to direct pupils to observe accurately and contribute thoughtfully in their discussions. Although in some classes there is some high quality recording of experiments in scientific reports and charts, some teachers rely too much on worksheets as a means of recording. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 write up their scientific experiences clearly, which include predictions and accurate guesses of what might happen. However, in Years 5 and 6, pupils often fill in a worksheet to record their findings. As a result, their skills of report writing are not extended as well as they might be and the worksheet does not show the depth and quality of their investigations. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but on most occasions teachers' comments provide only limited advice. Additionally, although frequent assessments of pupils' understanding take place, few targets for improvement are shared with pupils. Only in Year 3 do pupils become part of the process of assessment and undertake a good self-review of their learning.

ART AND DESIGN

76 Standards in art and design have improved since the last inspection and are now at the levels expected at the age of seven and 11. Pupils have experience in painting, collage, printing, textiles and clay, and overtime they gain a satisfactory understanding of colour, line, tone, and texture. Gradually

they develop an appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of the work of some famous artists. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress in acquiring knowledge and skills.

77 Pupils are proud of their work and concentrate well in lessons. They listen to the teacher's instructions and ideas carefully, and participate in general discussions with many good ideas of their own. For example in response to a picture by the Impressionist Samuel Palmer entitled "A cornfield by moonlight with the morning star," pupils commented on the good choice of colour, and then compared the eerie feelings in the picture with remembered emotions at the time of the eclipse. As a result, a greater depth of understanding was developed about the art of the Impressionists and pupils appreciated the quality in this particular work. Year 1 pupils worked well together to create large murals of happy and sad faces from wood, plastic, fabric or metal. The pupils are proud that each face they have made has a different character created by the varied materials, and they have shown satisfactory skills in cutting and shaping materials to achieve this effect. Older pupils generally work individually and have completed some good work on portraits as part of a history project on the Tudors and as a study of the work of Pablo Picasso.

78 In all classes, pupils develop an appreciation of Western art, but have limited knowledge and understanding of the art from other cultures and communities. For instance, although they have created some effective ethnic patterns in Year 6, pupils have little knowledge of the African art they represent. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject manager recognises that a better balance is needed in the curriculum to give pupils a better understanding of art from around the world.

79 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge, and offer pupils a suitable range of experiences, but have a varied approach to the teaching of art. Subject leadership is satisfactory. There is no agreed system of monitoring teaching and learning, therefore the subject leader gathers evidence from observing displays of pupils' work in classrooms to assess their progress. In some classes pupils have sketchbooks, which provide a useful source of evidence to show progression of skills. For example, the sketchbooks in Year 2 show that some good work has been achieved over a series of activities in a project planned to improve pupils' understanding of colour. Initially the pupils looked at the work of Jackson Pollock, then undertook some work to learn how to apply colour, and compared the differences in a picture when art is created by random selection or as a result of a planned design. They compared the work of Pollock with that of Mondrian, and finally produced some good quality work of their own in the style of both artists. By the age of 11, most pupils have developed good techniques in painting, printing and pattern work, and satisfactory skills in the use of textiles and malleable materials. They choose tools appropriately to create the best result and evaluate their work successfully.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80 Standards in design and technology are above the levels expected at the ages of seven and 11. This is a big improvement since the last inspection when standards were too low. The subject leader has been very effective in providing guidance and support for teachers, and in setting a good example of how the subject should be taught. In particular, she has monitored standards well by collecting samples of pupils' work from each class. This enables her to know which aspects of the subject are taught well and where extra support is needed. For example, she knows that ICT is not used enough and has planned to improve this next term.

81 Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 1 are already drawing sketches of their intended products and writing comments such as, "I can make it better by putting the axle inside a tube." to show just how well they evaluate the quality of their work. By inviting a good number of parent helpers into lessons, the Year 2 teacher ensures that pupils' skills in cutting and fastening are successfully learned and this makes a difference to the quality of the finished work. For example, pupils have designed a coat of many colours for Joseph and with parents' help they skilfully hemmed the material with neat little stitches.

82 Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6. In Year 3, pupils show much imagination in their work. They design and make an impressive range of products such as photo frames, vases and gift tags and some excellent ‘zig-zag’ style story booklets. The care and attention that goes into the designing stage is fostered well through the use of design sheets which encourage pupils to think ahead about the materials needed, the method of making and the design options. Pupils have good opportunities to work with different materials, such as food, textiles, wood and card as they move through the junior classes. Learning in design and technology strengthens pupils’ understanding in other subjects, for example, Year 5 pupils investigated how the shape of a cymbal influenced the vibration as preparation for designing a musical instrument. Some valuable whole school projects are organised, such as the preparation of an impressive wall hanging for 2001 to celebrate a new century.

83 Teaching is consistently good. Lessons are safely managed, well organised and challenging. Teachers bring in interesting collections of items to widen pupils’ ideas and to stimulate their curiosity. For example, Year 6 pupils spent a few minutes examining and discussing different types of commercial slippers before designing their own. As a result, their designs were both varied and practical. One of the reasons why standards are high is the effective teaching of specific skills. In Year 1, for example, the teacher took small groups of pupils for intensive practice in sawing and drilling wood. This enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to shape the wood accurately to make a wind up toy. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and frequently ask pupils to examine their work as they go along and try to improve it. In Year 2, for example, pupils were asked to place their coats onto a cardboard model. The teacher asked, “How could we improve it?” One pupil answered, “Turn it inside out so we can’t see the stitches and then iron it!”

GEOGRAPHY

84 Standards in geography are similar to those in most schools at the end of Year 2 and are higher than usual by the end of Year 6. This mirrors the findings of the previous inspection. The subject is now better developed, and more time is devoted to it especially in Years 3, 4 and 6.

85 The main strengths are the studies made of the local environment, the development of map reading skills and the quality of the pupils’ responses to environmental issues. Areas in need of development include completing the guidance for teachers on *what* should be taught, as well as on *how* it is to be taught through the school. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Currently the subject leader’s role is too constrained. Opportunities to check how well the pupils are achieving are limited and there are weaknesses, in teachers’ lesson plans because pupils’ different learning needs are not always taken into account. The subject leader has no responsibilities for planning the changes needed to raise standards in geography. However, she makes a significant contribution to developing mapping skills, in both the infants and the juniors. She has developed a great enthusiasm for orienteering; to such an extent that pupils regularly compete in and win local and county events. They even participate in the Junior National Championships with success.

86 Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of their environment and its facilities. Good quality maps are used to help them study the locality and to identify specific places known to them. They learn about further afield and foreign countries by following the travels of Barnaby Bear, a soft toy, who is taken by pupils on their holidays. The Year 3 class has begun a valuable email link with pupils in a French school. As a result, details of land use in the locality of the two schools have been exchanged. Pupils in Year 4 have benefited from dispatches from the daughter of a teacher, during her time spent working in Nepal. Pupils’ learning is also greatly enhanced by various educational visits. These begin in the reception class, with visits close to the school. Pupils gradually develop a good awareness of their environment. They are then able to compare and contrast their surroundings and experiences with those of others. By Year 6, pupils speak with reflection and maturity about

problems in the town caused by vandalism and violence, litter and pollution. Equally, they appreciate the many efforts made to develop and care for its amenities. Through studying 'Great Rivers of the World', they also identify similarities and differences well between geographical conditions found on the different continents.

87 On balance, the quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory in the infant classes and good in the juniors. The development of basic skills increases markedly from Year 3, but even here there is some mis-match between the abilities of the pupils and the work that is set for them. Resources are well used, such as videos, laminated maps and a digital camera. These provide good evidence and the pupils use them well in their work. However, pupils have too few opportunities to research for information in books. Computer skills are extended in some classes. For example, in Year 3 they are used to produce graphs based on questionnaires about the locality. CD-ROMs are also used for additional research, such as the 'Water-Cycle' program used in Class 5. However, in some classes there is much less evidence of computer skills being used in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs achieve steadily. They often benefit from extra adult help but in some lessons the work provided is not adapted for them and their progress slows.

HISTORY

88 By the age of seven, pupils achieve steadily to reach standards expected. Pupils achieve well in the junior classes to reach standards above the expected levels by the age of 11. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and receive adequate support. These are similar to the findings of the previous inspection.

89 Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources imaginatively. Videos, maps, pictures and objects from the Museum Loans Service raise interest levels in the subject. Visits in the locality give pupils good insights into the past, such as the life and conditions that existed in the weaving trade. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons. One girl in Year 5 was so interested in her studies on Tudor times that she typed out two pages of text at home about 'The Mary Rose', despite having a broken wrist! Her hard work proved invaluable when a group of pupils used her research to learn from. However, the high quality of the class teaching section of the lesson is not always matched by the quality of the work set for the pupils. Occasionally, tasks lack variety, historical skills are not sufficiently developed and pupils have too few opportunities to express their own ideas.

90 Year 2 pupils have a good awareness that history is about events and people from the past. Their awareness of the passage of time enables them to sequence correctly a list of personalities from the past. They also know that photographs were taken at the time of Florence Nightingale, but not when Guy Fawkes was alive. They make accurate connections across different periods. For example, when they heard about rats in Crimean hospitals that were found on her arrival by Florence Nightingale, they recalled the rats described in Samuel Pepys' accounts of plague-infested London. The danger of rats spreading diseases was then discussed.

91 Year 5 pupils develop a good range of historical skills during their studies of Tudor times. For instance, well-reasoned guesses were made about the possible uses of various objects excavated from the wreck of 'The Mary Rose'. More able pupils reach above average levels, for example, when accurately identifying factors that led to the Spanish Armada. However, pupils rarely create stories, produce newspaper accounts or role-play interviews to imagine themselves alive in the periods they are studying.

92 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the infant classes and good in the juniors. Pupils in all classes gain a good knowledge of the periods or personalities they are studying, in some classes

through being set imaginative challenges, in others through more formal teaching methods. They are taught skills well, but in some classes they have more opportunities to practice them. In Year 3, pupils learn about villas by becoming a Roman estate agent. They draw up a sales brochure containing features that might help to sell the villa. One pupil showed a real talent for the job, advertising, “Bloodthirsty sports and the Basilica close by”. A villa with potential! In Year 4, superb engravings from the Crimean War are well used, to develop skills of interpretation. However, pupils are often set the same level of work irrespective of their different starting points. Opportunities are missed, especially to give more able pupils responsibility to plan and undertake their own research. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader has produced good guidance on *what* should be taught. However, the school’s policy for history is not specific about *how* lessons are to be planned and taught. Consequently, weaknesses are not identified. For example, in some classes plans are not sufficiently linked to other subjects, such as ICT. In other classes, because pupils mainly answer questions on worksheets, their writing skills are not extended.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

93 Standards in ICT are at the levels expected nationally for pupils at the age of seven but below the levels expected for pupils at 11. Although the school has introduced a programme of work to be covered for ICT, as recommended in the last inspection report, there has been little improvement in standards. This is because computers are not used enough and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn and practise new skills. The school is aware of the need to improve the access to machines and has embarked on a programme of improvements in provision. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress. They are supported when they use computers but limited use is made of special programs, tailored to their individual needs.

94 By the age of seven most pupils use a simple word processing program with only occasional help from the teacher. However, they are still hesitant about the position of keys on the keyboard and many are unsuccessful in their use of the shift key to make small letters into capitals. Pupils enjoy using the graphic programs to create and colour pictures, but they find it difficult to describe how to print or save their pictures. A popular activity in Year 2 has been to design ‘Joseph’s coat of many colours’, and pupils are developing sound control of the mouse through this activity. Most of these younger pupils are aware of some of the varied uses of computers, such as to collect data on favourite pets, or to find out information about the Great Fire of London. There is some specialist teaching planned each half-term to improve pupils’ knowledge and skills, but with limited access to machines many pupils have quickly forgotten how to undertake these tasks, and cannot apply the new learning independently.

95 Some good work is being undertaken in Year 3, where pupils are encouraged to develop their interest in ICT through an email link established with the Marie Curie School in Bourgneuf in France. Through this high quality work pupils have taken photographs of key features in their own town and with the help of their teacher have sent these images, with word processed captions attached, to their new friends in another European country. Pupils have been enthralled by the possibilities this work has created, especially when they received, by return, scanned photographs from France of a very different classroom, the church, and playground, and even a picture of the class on a picnic in the French countryside. There is some good self-assessment of progress by the pupils in this class, as they keep an ICT log in which they evaluate their own work.

96 Pupils’ achievements in Key Stage 2 are slow, but steady. Pupils use machines sensibly and work on computers at break times and lunchtimes in order to increase opportunities to progress at a greater rate. By the age of 11, pupils have had some opportunities to work on each element of the ICT curriculum. For example, in Year 4, they are working on control technology to direct a

programmable toy through a series of moves. With the help of a classroom assistant, they are achieving well in this project. More able pupils, without help from the teacher, plot a series of moves for a programmable toy to move forwards and turn 90 degrees on command. Others in the class need more adult assistance to move the machine through a planned route, or walk the route and record the series of moves as they step or turn. From Key Stage 1 word processing skills develop only slowly. However, by Year 4 pupils are able to write a headline for a newspaper article about the Crimean War for work in history and by Year 6 they change the layout and create borders around their work independently. They change the font, size, colour and layout of their writing in response to the needs of their audience, but many pupils remain hesitant about the sequence of actions they need to use. By Year 5, pupils have had experience of completing a spreadsheet and are realising that electronic calculations give a quicker response than sums on paper. Pupils in Year 6 have had some additional experience while on a residential visit, where they used the Internet, sent emails, and did some musical compositions, but overall standards remain below nationally expected levels because of insufficient access to machines to allow for continual practice.

97 ICT was used in very few lessons during the inspection. Teaching varied from being good to unsatisfactory. A scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' records shows that overall teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching builds insufficiently on pupils' prior knowledge and offers too few opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills. All teachers have undertaken specialist training and have satisfactory subject knowledge. When lessons are taught, pupils are made aware of what they are expected to learn. There is satisfactory teaching of basic skills, such as the use of the keyboard, menus and the mouse. A means of assessing pupils' learning is being trialled but this is not in place in all classes yet. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership particularly in response to teacher training needs, but has not undertaken any monitoring of pupils' work in other classes. It is recognised that observation of pupils at work is necessary by either the teacher, classroom assistant or subject leader to give advice or monitor progress in this practical subject, but only in Year 4 are observations of pupils' learning evident in teachers' planning.

MUSIC

98 Standards in music are at the levels expected at the ages of seven and 11, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader works effectively with large groups of pupils to improve their singing but does not monitor how well music is taught throughout the school. By the age of 11, pupils' singing is good. They sing with feeling and expression but this is not matched by their skills in composing.

99 Pupils achieve steadily in Years 1 and 2. They sing with enthusiasm and particularly enjoy adding actions. Although they do not know all the names of the instruments, they scrape, tap and shake them creatively to make, for example, the sound of a buzzing insect. Year 1 pupils are gaining a good understanding of rhythms. For example, they can identify the syllable pattern of a word, such as 'cat-er-pill-ar', after hearing its rhythm tapped on a drum. This is improving their listening skills and by arranging different words, they are exploring patterns of sound and making a start in composing. This is developed well in Year 2 when pupils compose the accompaniment to a story.

100 Pupils achieve steadily in Years 3 to 6. A teacher who is confident in most aspects of music takes all junior classes. This has advantages. The teacher has a good singing voice and demonstrates changes in pitch and tempo very effectively. Pupils are often reminded to adopt the correct singing posture and to breathe correctly. As a result, pupils' singing skills develop at a good rate and the speed with which pupils pick up tunes and learn new songs is impressive. Parents attending end of year concerts appreciate pupils' good performance skills. Pupils have suitable opportunities to listen to different pieces of music and they make perceptive comments about the mood. For example, Year 6

pupils explained how crescendos, in Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, create the atmosphere of a battle. All Year 4 pupils benefit from very good teaching of recorder playing. Pupils with talent and interest have good opportunities to continue with recorders or go on to learn to play the violin. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Teachers ensure that they understand what is being taught and encourage them to join in but not all teachers include comments in their plans to show how the work is adapted for them.

101 Teaching is satisfactory. There is good teaching of singing and playing. There is some very good teaching of composing and creative music making when visiting musicians provide the lessons. However, opportunities are often missed, in regular weekly music lessons, for pupils to explore and write down their own arrangements and ICT is seldom used, even though it lends itself to this. Teaching has some good features. Lessons are interesting and lively. Recorded music broadcasts are selected very well to stimulate pupils' interests and widen their experience of music for different cultures and past times. The broadcasts are taped. This enables the teacher to stop the tape and teach new skills carefully. Pupils then perform well. Many pupils are acquiring a love of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102 Standards are at the levels expected at the ages of seven and 11 as they were at the time of the last inspection. However, the subject leader and other members of staff put much energy and time into extra curricular sporting activities and the coaching of games skills is good. These factors raise pupils' attainment in competitive sports to high levels, evident in the many trophies and winners certificates displayed in school. Standards in swimming are satisfactory. Year 3 pupils benefit from weekly lessons during which almost all pupils achieve the 25 metres distance award. The subject is soundly and enthusiastically led. The subject leader ensures that teachers have sufficient guidance and a good level of resources to meet the pupils' needs. However, there are no opportunities to observe lessons or to check teachers' planning. As a result, some weaknesses are missed. These are mainly in the lack of opportunities for pupils' to evaluate and improve their learning and assess their progress.

103 Pupils achieve well in Year 1 and steadily in Year 2. In Year 1, pupils explore and experiment creatively, for example to find suitable movement to represent different kinds of insects. They respond sensitively to the music played and reflect the mood well in their movements. In Year 2, pupils learn dance steps quickly and sequence them correctly when performing a Scottish dance. However, their knowledge of how to evaluate and improve their learning is not developed as well.

104 Pupils achieve steadily in junior classes but they achieve well in learning rules, tactics and skills in competitive games in Year 6 and in some aspects of dance. In Year 3, for example, pupils worked well in small groups to prepare and perform a dance to portray aspects of the Roman invasion of Britain. By Year 6 pupils have a good awareness of safe working practices and are mature in the way they organise the equipment. They have acquired good ball skills and an acute awareness of attack and defence strategies, which they apply well to a range of team games. Pupils enjoy their lessons, show competitive spirit but temper this well with a good understanding of sportsmanship.

105 Teaching is satisfactory. There are many good features but there is scope to improve the planning of lessons and the quality of teaching. For example, most but not all teachers dress properly when taking physical education lessons. In some lessons teachers ask pupils to watch each other and comment on what was good and what could be better. In these good lessons, pupils have a clearer understanding of how to improve their work, but these opportunities are not always provided. In all lessons pupils are well managed and their behaviour is good. Pupils with special educational needs are usually supported well, although teachers' plans do not always explain the provision made for them. More often than not, new skills are coached effectively and teachers point out specific aspects to

concentrate on, such as watching the ball carefully before striking it with a bat. The importance of practice is frequently emphasised. The good opportunities pupils have to apply their skills in team games, accounts for the successes.