

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. BERNARD'S CATHOLIC (AIDED) PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Burnage, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105541

Headteacher: Mr. T. Fanning

Reporting inspector: C. D. Loizou  
18645

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 June 2002

Inspection number: 230599

Full 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: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Burnage Lane  
Burnage  
Manchester

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Telephone number: 0161 432 7635

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. J. Kane

Date of previous inspection: 8 May 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9189	J. Horwood	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?
17877	C. Ingham	Team inspector	Foundation stage curriculum Music	
31963	M. Padmore	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
24805	A. Cogher	Team inspector	Science History	
31175	A. Allison	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a popular voluntary aided Catholic infant and junior school in the Burnage area of Manchester. The school has 434 pupils on roll between the ages of three and 11 years, which is above average in size. Most pupils live close to the school and there is a strong demand for places. There is a very popular and large nursery class, which is situated in a self-contained unit together with two reception classes. The nursery admits up to 60 full-time three-year-old children every year and all usually transfer into the reception year at the start of the school term in which they become four. The school was last inspected in May 2000 by Her Majesty's Inspectors and was brought out of special measures because of the significant improvements made since it was first inspected in 1998. Since then, there have been many staff changes. Thirty-two per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Twenty per cent are on the special educational needs (SEN) register, which is average and includes one per cent of pupils who have a statement of SEN, which is similar to most schools. Less than two per cent of the pupils are learning English as an additional language. The school admits up to 60 four-year-olds into its reception classes every year. Initial assessments of the children when entering the school show that their attainment is in line with the standards expected of children aged four.

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

This is a good school and has many very good features. The pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. The teaching is good. By the age of 11, standards are well above those expected in English, mathematics and science. Standards have been rising over the last four years at a rate above the national trend. The school has been successful in raising standards and at the same time maintaining its rich and broad curriculum, including its good range of extra-curricular activities. The headteacher and staff set high expectations and, as a result, all the pupils achieve well. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. The teaching is well planned and is effective in supporting those pupils identified with SEN. The children in the nursery and reception years get a very good start to their education. This is a key strength of the school. Relationships are very good and the staff are particularly effective in improving the pupils' personal development. There are strong links with parents and the local community. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The pupils achieve well and standards are well above those expected by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- The children in the nursery and reception years receive a very good education. The teaching and curriculum are strong features of the school's provision in these early years.
- The teaching is good, well planned and organised and meets the needs of all the pupils. The teaching is having a positive impact on the pupils' achievements and rising standards. This is also reflected in the pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes and the high levels of attendance.
- There is very good leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher, senior staff and governors regularly monitor and support the school. They set high expectations.
- The school is successful in improving the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent.
- There are strong links with parents and the local community. Parents think highly of the school.

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

- The assessment and monitoring of art and design, design and technology, geography and history to raise standards further. More time could be given to monitoring teachers' planning, pupils' work and teaching and learning in these subjects.
- Teachers' assessment in science in Years 1 and 2 and more opportunities for the pupils to engage in practical investigations in science to raise standards by the end of Year 2.
- The buildings that accommodate the Year 4 classrooms are in poor condition. They are unsuitable and hazardous. The pupils in these classrooms are taught in a poor learning environment.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 2000 when it underwent a Section 3 inspection, carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), to assess its progress in the issues raised in its first inspection in July 1998. HMI judged that the school had made good progress and, as a result, it was brought out of special measures. The school has made good progress since 2000 in addressing three of the issues but has yet to improve the accommodation for Year 4 pupils. The school has improved its management significantly, so that the governors, headteacher and senior staff monitor and evaluate the performance of the pupils and the school. The school has been successful in raising standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, and this is reflected in the much improved curriculum and the quality of the teaching. The school has also been successful in improving the pupils' personal development, maintaining its excellent ethos and commitment to the needs of all its pupils. The school provides many opportunities for the pupils to reflect on what they learn and to express their ideas and thoughts in a variety of forms such as in writing, role-play, dance, drama, music and sport. The teaching makes effective use of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Significant improvements have been made to the ICT curriculum and resources and this has led to a rapid improvement in standards which are now in line with those expected of seven and 11-year-olds.

## 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	B	C	A	A*
Mathematics	C	B	A	A*
Science	D	C	A*	A*

**Key**

well above average and in the top 5 per cent of schools A\*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

*(The "similar" in the table above refers to the percentage of free school meals and not the size of the school.)*

The children make very good progress in the nursery and reception years because the Foundation Stage curriculum is very well planned and taught. By the end of the reception year most of the children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in all of the areas of learning and the majority exceed the standards expected. Test results in 2001 for seven-year-olds show an improvement in mathematics standards. Standards were well below the national average in reading but inspection evidence indicates that standards have improved. Currently, reading, writing and mathematics standards are above those expected and science standards are average by the age of seven. Standards could be higher in science by the end of Year 2.

By the age of 11, standards in the national tests are very high when compared with similar schools. Standards are also very high when compared with the national average in science and well above the national average in English and mathematics. The 2002 test results for current Year 6 pupils confirm that standards are high in all three subjects. Inspection findings agree with these results as standards are well above those expected in all three subjects by the end of Year 6. Standards are rising faster than the national trend. The pupils with SEN make good progress throughout the school because they receive good support and are well taught. Similarly, the few pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress. The school has an effective policy for teaching higher-attaining pupils and, consequently, a good proportion of pupils who are targeted to achieve higher than expected

standards for their age, do so. Standards in ICT have improved and are now in line with those expected by the age of 11. Standards in most other subjects are in line with those expected and in physical education, they are above average.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to learning, to school and to each other are very good. They apply themselves very well, co-operating with others in groups or with a partner.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are very good, creating an orderly and positive atmosphere. There were two fixed period exclusions in 2001.
Personal development and relationships	These are very good. The pupils show independence and maturity. Relationships are very good across the school. All the pupils grow and flourish, respecting others and sharing ideas.
Attendance	Attendance levels are very good and are well above average. There is very little unauthorised absence.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Good

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

The teaching is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. It has improved very well since the previous inspection. Nearly 40 per cent of the lessons seen were of high quality and, nearly nine out of ten lessons were good or better. The children in the Foundation Stage receive consistent high quality teaching and support and this is a strong feature of the school's provision. The quality of teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. The teaching is very well planned to meet the needs of all the pupils. Teachers use assessment well in English, mathematics, science and ICT so that the teaching can focus on the pupils' learning and take account of the progress made in previous lessons. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very effective, enabling a large proportion of pupils to achieve higher than expected standards for their age. ICT is well taught across the school and good use is made of the school's ICT resources. Pupils have regular access to the computer room and teachers have improved the way new technology is used to support learning in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language receive effective support in lessons and, as a result, make good progress.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good, and very good in the Foundation Stage. Teachers provide a good range of practical and relevant tasks but more attention should be given to improving science in Years 1 and 2. There are good opportunities for the pupils to use ICT.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils receive good support. The pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and make good progress. Higher-attaining pupils with



	particular aptitudes receive good support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good assessments of their needs are made and they are supported well in lessons and are fully involved in all school activities.
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good and is supported by a broad range of activities within and outside school. These include music, singing, sport, dance and drama, which make a significant contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. Excellent provision is made for the pupils' spiritual development. The pupils are also developing a very good understanding of life in a multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a good level of care for all the pupils. The school has good procedures to assess how well the pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science but these now need to be extended more effectively to other subjects.

The school has very good links with parents. The parents are provided with a very good range of information about the topics being covered, and the progress their children are making. Parents are fully involved in before- and after-school care, which include a breakfast club and after school games activities.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good and effective leadership. With the very effective deputy headteacher, he monitors lessons and pupils' work. The management of the school is clearly focused on maintaining high standards and supporting the pupils' personal development. More could now be done to involve subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards and pupils' work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides very good and effective support. They work closely with the school and its staff and have a clear understanding of their role in supporting and improving the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is very good because the governors and staff have established clear priorities in the school development plan. They undertake a thorough audit of school resources and evaluate the school's performance well.
The strategic use of resources	This is good overall. There are clear targets which are matched to spending priorities. The school manages its finances very well, ensuring best value for money. However, the headteacher and governors have still to improve the accommodation in Year 4.

The school has made good improvements to other parts of the school, for example the establishment of a dedicated room for ICT and the self-contained accommodation for the children in the nursery and reception classes. Classroom learning assistants and SEN support staff make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. The administrative staff are very efficient and make themselves available to parents and visitors as well as managing the smooth running of the school and finances. Lunchtime supervision is well managed.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children make good progress.</li><li>• The teaching is good and sets high expectations.</li><li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school and are kept well informed.</li><li>• The school works closely with parents.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• There is a good range of activities outside lessons.</li></ul>	

Parents think highly of the school and are pleased with the way the headteacher and staff are approachable and supportive. Inspectors agree with all the views expressed by parents. Many parents are delighted with the quality of the teaching and the impact this is having on their children's achievements.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The attainment of most children when they enter the nursery is below the level usually expected for children of this age. The children make very good progress in the nursery and on entry to the reception year they achieve the levels expected for their age. By the end of the reception year the children's attainment is above the level expected nationally in all the areas of learning. Many children are working within Level 1 in the subjects of the National Curriculum. This represents very good achievement and an improvement from the previous inspection to reflect the high quality teaching and the well-planned programme of activities in the nursery and reception classes. The children from ethnic minority groups, higher-attaining children and those with special educational needs make progress in line with the other children because of the high quality support they receive from adults. All the children are challenged at an appropriate level because the staff are vigilant in checking the children's progress and using the outcomes to plan new work.
2. The standards achieved by the majority of seven-year-olds in the 2001 National Curriculum tests and assessments were average in writing and mathematics and science. However, reading standards by the end of Year 2 were well below average. Inspection findings show much improved standards, which are now above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. Science standards are lower and are only average because too few pupils are exceeding the levels expected by the end of Year 2. In this respect, science standards should be higher given that the pupils do much better in reading, writing and mathematics. In the science work seen, the pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to engage in investigative tasks and this reduces the pupils' progress.
3. Infant pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics but satisfactory progress in science. Inspection findings indicate that standards are rising in Years 1 and 2 but less so in science. In other subjects, standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2, except in physical education, where they are above expectation.
4. Test results for 11-year-olds in the 2001 national tests continue to show very good improvement and standards are rising at a rate above the national trend. In all three subjects (English, mathematics and science) a significant proportion of pupils exceeded the standards expected for their age, reflecting the strong focus that the school has placed on improving standards. Current standards for Year 6 pupils reflect this trend of improvement. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above those expected by the end of Year 6. The pupils are making very good progress in mathematics and good progress in English and science. Using the school's accurate targets, standards are rising as more focused and targeted work is provided to ensure that a significant proportion of more able pupils achieve levels higher than expected for their age. Standards are improving well because of the effective teaching and the accurate monitoring of pupils' performance in these core subjects as well as the targeting of individual pupils so that teachers are best able to support and improve their performance. In all three subjects, teachers and subject co-ordinators set challenging targets for all the pupils. The targets agreed with the Local Education Authority were exceeded in 2001, reflecting the school's determination to achieve high standards in the national tests. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and

girls. The pupils of black heritage achieve just as well as other pupils in the school and make good progress.

5. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6. The pupils make good progress in ICT because opportunities are provided for them to learn basic computer skills now that the school has improved its resources. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because new resources have kept up with the demands of new technology, for example the establishment of a designated ICT room. As a result, the pupils now have good access to computers, digital cameras, tape recorders and robotic devices. Early indications are that standards will improve further and are likely to be above those expected when the impact of current good practice takes effect.
6. Infant and junior pupils make good progress in music and physical education. They make satisfactory progress in other subjects. Standards by the ages of seven and 11 are in line with those expected in other subjects and are above average in physical education by the end of Year 6. Although the pupils reach the standards expected in other subjects, they could be higher. The school has rightly focused on raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but the same standards could be achieved in other subjects. The senior staff and teachers are not monitoring and assessing pupils' progress, teaching and learning to the same extent in other subjects compared with that done in the core subjects. Furthermore, teachers' assessments in science for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are too low. As a result, there is variation between the attainment of pupils in the core subjects compared with other subjects. Given that the pupils do so well in the core subjects and basic skills, they ought to be achieving higher standards in other subjects.
7. The pupils with special educational needs, at all stages of the Code of Practice for special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their abilities. They achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and against the targets set for them in their individual education programmes. Pupils' progress is monitored rigorously and measured against the targets detailed in their individual education plans each term. Good support from the specialist support teacher and teaching assistants enables the pupils to complete tasks successfully and ensures that they make good progress. The few pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress. None are in the early stages of English language acquisition. They are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants and are fully integrated into the work of the school.

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

8. The very good attitudes, relationships and behaviour have been maintained since the last inspection and attendance has significantly increased. The majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to the school and to learning. They arrive at school, mostly accompanied by parents, in a very orderly manner and are clearly keen to come to school. The pupils are polite and well mannered, showing courtesy to staff, visitors and to each other when moving around the school and this results in a very disciplined and orderly community. Their attitudes throughout the school are very good, for example in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where there were very high levels of concentration and pupils were very keen to be involved. In a very small number of lessons, such as during a design technology lesson near the end of the school day, a few pupils lost interest and concentration. A strength of the school is that the very good attitudes exist all the way through the school. However, the cramped and unsuitable accommodation in the Year 4 classes affects the quality of teaching and learning. For example, in a Year 4

English lesson in one of the 'temporary' buildings, the congestion and acoustic properties of the room affects how well the pupils can hear and respond during class discussions. The pupils have learned to cope with the problems associated with the poor condition of the buildings and their attitudes to learning remain good. Throughout the school, the pupils' interest and involvement in activities is excellent with large numbers attending the opportunities available before and after school as well as on Saturday mornings.

9. The behaviour of the pupils in the school is very good. In most lessons it is good and frequently very good. There are examples of excellent behaviour such as during the school's 'mission assembly'. Where occurrences of behaviour not consistent with school expectations do occur, the teachers' good classroom management skills successfully deal with these. Around the school, including break-times and lunch-times, the behaviour is very good with no evidence of any bullying or other type of oppressive behaviour. There is adequate supervision at all times during the day. There have been three fixed term exclusions this year, which is unusual, with every effort made to avoid them. These exclusions involved three different pupils and were necessary to ensure the safety of other pupils and staff. The school supported the pupils and their families well and managed to reintegrate the pupils back into school with lunchtime exclusion continuing when the school considered this would avoid potential issues arising. The school has some very good initiatives to provide support for any pupil who may feel they are being 'picked on' or who are experiencing any problems, for example, the friendship area in the playground and the volunteer special friends.
10. Relationships throughout the school are very good and often excellent, and are fundamental to the ethos of the school. The relationships in the nursery and reception classes, for example, are well above expected levels. There is a friendly and family type environment within the school where there is mutual respect and trust. Staff and pupils communicate very well and relationships between them are very good, allowing the pupils to talk to teachers about individual problems. The pupils show very good personal development and are mature and sensible as well as confident, polite and trustworthy. This was demonstrated during the mission assembly when the pupils related the theme of friendship to their own experience. They showed respect throughout the assembly and they develop a sense of being part of a community. An example of the very good attitudes was in a Year 6 music lesson where the pupils showed respect for the opinions of other pupils. The support given to other pupils through initiatives such as the 'special friends' clearly demonstrates their ability to understand the impact of actions on others and to respect others' feelings. They are keen to take on responsibilities such as membership of the recently introduced and very successful school council or in the classroom carrying out duties such as taking registers to the office, handing out equipment and acting as 'marshals' on the staircase after break-time. Many pupils voluntarily take on roles around the school to support others, for example junior pupils supporting the children in the nursery.
11. Attendance levels are well above the national average, with unauthorised absence slightly below. The school sets challenging targets to improve its attendance figures and the monthly attendance figures are monitored closely. Punctuality of the majority of pupils is very good. Registration takes place at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and the procedures are followed well. Registers are returned to the office where they are scanned into the database. An analysis of attendance data is carried out regularly. Most parents notify the school about absence immediately and the school follows up any unexpected absence on the first morning of absence.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The teaching is good overall. Thirty-nine per cent of the lessons seen were of high quality, either very good or excellent. Eighty-six per cent of lessons were good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed. Since the last inspection, the teaching has made good improvements, especially its impact on raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Lessons are managed and organised well. Support teachers and learning assistants are deployed to best fit the pupils' needs as they arise in lessons. Good quality and culturally relevant displays, resources and visual aids are well used throughout school. Many resources are tailor-made by the staff according to the topic focus or individual learning needs of the pupils.
13. As a result of very good leadership with very clear policies, teaching and learning are improving, expectations are high and the work planned for the pupils is well matched to their capabilities. However, closer monitoring of teaching and teachers' planning could be applied more diligently in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. More now needs to be done to extend the assessment procedures used in English, mathematics and science to other subjects so that teachers use consistent assessments across the school to inform their planning further. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, which enables them to have a clear idea of the learning outcomes of the lessons taught. These are shared with the pupils so that it is clear to the pupils what is going to be learned and what comes next.
14. The teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good overall with many excellent features. This high standard is a strong feature of the school's provision. Nearly nine out of ten lessons in the Foundation Stage were very good or excellent. The children learn to settle quickly to routines and make rapid progress in their personal and social development because adults respond very well to the children, providing them with an excellent and structured curriculum with rich and stimulating activities. The adults work very hard to provide resources and plan activities for all the children that challenge, stimulate and evoke language. The nursery nurses and classroom assistants provide excellent support. The teachers and support staff ensure that the children make rapid progress in the acquisition of early language and numeracy skills. The children sing rhymes and count, follow shapes and choose to match shapes with numbers or pictures to letter sounds. During water play, they communicate with each other, sharing tasks, and talk about emptying, filling, splashing and building together. Very effective learning is taking place because adults are continually monitoring, assessing and supporting the children. The children learning English as an additional language and those identified with special educational needs are fully integrated and well provided for.
15. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. Thirty per cent of the lessons observed were very good or excellent and 90 per cent were good or better. The teachers plan their lessons carefully so that pupils in all year groups have work that is matched to their capabilities. The pupils respond very well to the teaching. They listen carefully to instructions and during class discussions they offer thoughtful answers and responses. They persevere with tasks, for example when investigating numbers up to 100 and beyond in a very good mathematics lessons in Year 2 where the pupils count in tens to 100 and then order numbers up to 500. The teaching is having a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour. There are clear rules and classroom routines which provide a secure learning environment for the pupils. The introductions to lessons make it clear what is expected and the learning objectives are always shared with the pupils. In English lessons the pupils' reading skills are reinforced using very good techniques to teach letter sounds so that the pupils soon learn to self-correct

when attempting unfamiliar words. However, the pupils' science work shows that they insufficient opportunities to investigate and plan their own experiments or to draw conclusions from what they have observed. This affects science standards, which could be higher. In some practical science lessons, teachers miss good opportunities to extend the pupils thinking further because the activities are too prescribed. The most effective lessons in the infant classes set more challenge in the middle part of the lesson with demanding writing or mathematical tasks. Good use is made of computers to support the pupils' learning, especially when pupils are timetabled to work in the ICT room.

16. In the junior classes, the teaching is good overall. Eighty per cent of the lessons observed were good or better, including nearly 30 per cent which were very good or excellent. The teachers prepare challenging and interesting tasks that motivate and sustain the pupils' concentration, enabling them to work hard and persevere with the tasks set. In all of the lessons seen, there was a good structure so that time was provided for the pupils to ask questions and explain their methods. As in an excellent English lesson in Year 5 where the teacher built on previous work to organise opportunities for the pupils to construct persuasive arguments about the rights and wrongs of using circus animals for entertainment. Very effective use was made of a tape recorder to provide the pupils with the task of preparing a radio interview. Year 6 pupils were successfully using algebra to construct and solve linear equations to work out the size of angles within shapes. The teacher demonstrated excellent subject knowledge and set high expectations, resulting in a high standard of work from all the pupils who were grouped by ability. In other mathematics and science lessons the pupils are expected to solve real-life problems by studying a piece of text so that the pupils search for key words to help them to identify the function and solve the problem. The very effective teaching of problem solving in mathematics is helping the pupils to make very good progress in their science work and the effective use of language and the support provided by specialised staff is helping all pupils to improve their language skills. Overall, the effective teaching of basic literacy, numeracy and scientific skills is having a positive impact on pupils' learning in other subjects. However, more could now be done to raise standards further in other subjects through closer monitoring of teachers' planning and sharper assessments of pupils' progress.
17. The teachers use good assessments to monitor the pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, although in science in Years 1 and 2 these could be improved further. Effective marking of pupils' work with helpful comments to help the pupils improve or correct their work supports the teachers' assessments in the core subjects but less so in other subjects. Work is usually marked up to date and is clear so that the pupils know what they have to do to improve further. However, there is a lack of consistency in the assessment procedures applied to other subjects, for example in art and design, design and technology, geography and history. Teachers keep good records, having tested what the pupils know in English, mathematics, and science and, to some extent, in ICT. This information is used to prepare coherent annual reports to parents about their children's progress. Individual learning targets are set for all pupils and these help to predict what levels the pupils will reach at each stage. Nevertheless, this does not apply to other subjects where there is inconsistency across the school. In this respect the teaching is not informed by assessment in subjects other than the core subjects listed above.
18. The school has done well since the last inspection in improving the effectiveness of the teaching. Most of the high quality teaching is found in English, mathematics, science and in physical education. The key features which set this standard of teaching apart from the rest, are the pace, challenge and enthusiasm for the subjects taught. In these

lessons, resources are very well used to support and enhance the pupils' experiences. For example, in a very good English lesson, Year 6 pupils were inspired by the enthusiasm of their teacher as they read and investigated the work of a South African author who visited the school. In the nursery and reception classes, teachers assess how the children are doing with their reading and from these assessments they evoke thoughtful discussion about characterisation in the stories. In other good and very good lessons, the pupils investigated how characters in stories are presented and described and their learning was enhanced by a thorough investigation of the text by scanning the words to determine which words and phrases expressed how the characters felt at the time. This led to some very good empathetic and descriptive writing.

19. Teachers meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs by providing them with good support in lessons and tasks that are well matched to their age and ability. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and the support for individual learning teacher (SIL) liaise regularly with teachers and support staff. Teaching assistants work well with teachers because they are informed of the lesson content, and contribute fully to the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress. Pupils are provided with the appropriate blend of help and challenge. Support for pupils with statements of special educational need is good and pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the school community.

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

20. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Planning incorporates national guidelines in full and prepares the older children in this age range very well for their transition to the curriculum for the infant years. The curriculum for pupils aged five to 11 is good. It is broad and balanced and is enriched by the provision of a good range of extra-curricular activities. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place and matches the requirements of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met.
21. The time allocated to teaching is appropriate and is broadly average compared to national figures. The time allocated to the teaching of some foundation subjects is, however, low and this has an adverse effect on standards in history, geography, art and design and design and technology. The school provides the minimum in these subjects in terms of time and coverage and so little of depth is achieved and there is a lack of opportunity for the pupils to excel and achieve the same high standards achieved in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
22. Teachers' planning is good. All subjects have policies and schemes of work that clearly guide the planning of teaching and learning and which incorporate national guidelines where appropriate. The planning is well monitored by subject co-ordinators who have a good overview of their subjects and who make sure that all requirements of the National Curriculum are met.
23. The school works hard to give pupils equality of access and opportunity. It is an inclusive school. The pupils who demonstrate a gift or special talent are quickly identified and catered for. The school offers a number of activities to extend and develop their potential. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal, social and creative development. There are a good number of activities that cater for a wide range of interests. The school choir meets at least once a week. The school employs a professional musician to promote



good standards. At the time of the inspection the school had a professional dance teacher as part of a special series of lessons for older pupils. There is a drama club that is popular and promotes the development of speaking and listening skills through role-play. The pupils are involved in a good number of sports clubs and are successful in a number of competitions including football and netball matches. There is an annual residential visit for older pupils that offers a good range of activities including canoeing and walking. Trips are made to museums, art galleries and other places of educational interest. The school also provides breakfast and homework clubs.

24. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively and these are well established and successful. However, there is still a need to guide teachers' planning to make the most of opportunities to promote literacy across all subjects, particularly for the development of speaking and listening through activities such as drama.
25. The personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) is well planned and comprehensive. The school deals with some PSHE issues through the promotion of circle time, a forum in which pupils are gathered in a circle to give their personal responses, for example to questions of feelings or to considerations of their responsibilities in school and in the community. The school makes good use of visitors such as the school nurse to teach health and sex education and the local police and other emergency service personnel who visit the school to promote, for example drugs education. Some of these matters are also taught, where appropriate, through other subjects such as science.
26. The school has established good links with its local partners. The local Catholic High School and its primary partners meet regularly to promote good practice in the transition from primary to secondary education. The high school runs a summer school that a number of pupils from St Bernard's attend. There are 'taster' days for Year 6 pupils so that the big school is not too daunting a prospect. Relationships with the high school extend to good exchange of information to ensure that the pupils from St. Bernard's get a good start in their new school. The school deals with a number of schools, including independent schools, and maintains good relations with them all for the benefit of its pupils. The school also links with other institutions such as Stockport College, which has provided in-service training for teachers.
27. Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good. A detailed and comprehensive register of special educational needs (SEN) is kept by the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO), and appropriate individual education plans are provided for pupils on the register. These plans are written by class teachers and the SENCO. The provision of additional support for pupils with statements of special educational need is good. Although there is some withdrawal of pupils for additional support, this is appropriate and teachers ensure that pupils do not miss out on the content of the lesson from which they are withdrawn. When pupils are withdrawn from literacy or numeracy lessons they are involved in lessons in the same subject. The positive atmosphere of the school and the very good relationships promote the effective inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in every aspect of school life.

28. The school very successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a range of activities that reflect the Christian values expressed in the mission statement. The school has further improved the good quality of provision identified in the previous report. The quality of provision for spiritual development is excellent. Regular opportunities to attend mass, daily prayers and collective worship have a significant impact on pupils' lives. Opportunities to pray and reflect for sick friends or relatives are given due importance and handled with sensitivity by the staff. Class altars provide a focus for worship and display contributions by pupils. This gives them a sense of ownership and pride. The efforts made by the school in putting whole-class discussion (circle time) formally into the timetable, the special friends scheme and the successful school council uphold the aims of the school and fulfil the planned development of the emotional curriculum well. This extends opportunities for the pupils' spiritual and emotional well-being. A good example was a lesson on meditation based on a 'Journey through the Rainforest' that pupils imagined whilst relaxing on the floor. As a consequence, highly sensitive and touching comments about the sense of peace, tranquillity and inner love the pupils felt during this session were shared with the class. Junior pupils take part in a parish mass with older people from the congregation who are known and linked to the pupils in a prayer scheme and show sincerity, reverence and respect throughout the service. Their behaviour is exemplary throughout the service.
29. Moral education is very good. The pupils know right from wrong. From their first days in the nursery, they learn to take turns and to be fair in their dealings with others. School rules, rewards and sanctions are clearly understood and displayed in corridors, library areas and classrooms. This is reinforced by rules drawn up by the pupils for their own classrooms and posters that inspire good citizenship, making good choices and caring for others. Teachers are good role models. They also promote positive behaviour by praise, encouragement and reminders about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. The pupils also learn the rules of fair play through sport and extra-curricular activities. The Christian values taught through collective worship, religious education, taking part in mass and circle times, help the pupils to learn respect for the values and beliefs of others.
30. Provision for the pupils' social development is good. It is effectively promoted through daily opportunities to work alone and in smaller or larger groups. The pupils relate well to each other and move around school with good self-discipline. They are caring and sensitive to those with special educational needs. Social development is also promoted through a wide range of visits, for example the Whitworth gallery, science museum and marine world exhibition. The annual residential visit to Wales for the pupils in their last year also helps to foster their social skills outside the school environment. Infants and juniors are given a good range of responsibilities including taking registers, distributing milk, tidying up and the Special Friends Scheme that is a strength of the school.
31. The promotion of pupils' awareness of other cultures is very good. The pupils learn about the Catholic faith and about other faiths and cultures in their lessons. This is successful in promoting tolerance and understanding. Year 6 pupils, in their 'refugee week', had opportunities to talk to pupils from a local secondary school who had fled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and an author, Beverley Naidoo, whose experiences as a supporter of the anti-apartheid group in South Africa caused her to seek refuge in Britain. These high quality opportunities for pupils result in a greater awareness and understanding of other cultures and beliefs. Knowledge of other cultures past and present are successfully promoted in history, geography, art and design, music and dance.

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

32. The school provides good care for its pupils and has good procedures in place for child protection. Care for pupils was good at the time of the last inspection and this has been maintained. The special educational needs co-ordinator is the child protection officer. She is well trained but her role is not named in the school's policy. All staff within the school receive good training in child protection issues and are well aware of what to do. The school has a sound approach to health and safety but records do not always reflect the checks that have been carried out; for example, there is not always a formal risk assessment record even though the risks have been assessed. Governors carry out regular health and safety inspections but they should review the adequacy of the annual risk assessment return to the Local Education Authority. The site and activities throughout the day are adequately supervised. The school carries out fire drills and alarm tests on a regular basis and good records are kept. The school has satisfactory provision of medical facilities including qualified first aid staff but to improve its care for pupils further, the school should review its accommodation to provide a dedicated medical area in close proximity to first aid staff. External medical specialist staff visit the school. Accident reports are completed and external agencies are involved as required.
33. The welfare of the pupils is underpinned by the close relationships within school, ensuring that pupils are well known to staff and that the pupils know who to contact about any problems. There is very good personal guidance of the pupils as they move through the school but monitoring of this is not formalised. Any pupils who experience problems at home and require extra 'understanding and support' are identified to staff at the morning briefings.
34. The school monitors attendance very closely and analyses data to enable issues to be addressed. The attendance figures are well above average, demonstrating that the procedures are effective. The school receives good support from the education welfare officer if issues arise. Procedures for monitoring attendance and lateness are secure and include first day contact with parents over unexpected absence.
35. The behaviour policy has been specifically designed to meet the needs of pupils at the school. The recently revised policy has been introduced following consultations with the staff and the involvement of the pupils. The policy is designed to provide better opportunities for the pupils to be responsible for their own actions and is based on the concept that good behaviour is normal. The school has moved away from 'stickers' as rewards and now gives a printed 'e-mail' to identify good behaviour (or other achievement), praise books and class honours chosen by the pupils for individual achievement. Whilst there are sanctions identified within the policy, the emphasis is on pupils managing their own behaviour and supporting others. An example of the school's approach to pupils' ownership of their behaviour is that if a pupil is given a detention, the punishment is often not extra work but to sit and reflect on their actions. The policy addresses the issues associated with bullying well.
36. The school has effective practices to identify how well pupils are progressing in the core subjects and information and communication technology. Outcomes of assessments in these subjects, including baseline assessments, are recorded carefully and analysed rigorously to guide the priorities for school development and the work of teachers and teaching assistants. A practical result of this analysis is the well-targeted provision of extra support for the pupils through the early and additional literacy support programmes. Analysis of data confirms that there are no significant differences between the progress made by different groups of pupils. Assessment procedures are

satisfactory in all subjects, apart from those in art and design, design and technology, geography and history, but require improvements if they are to be used as a tool for raising standards further in those subjects.

37. The school accurately tracks pupils' progress in English and mathematics at both key stages and science in Years 3 to 6, through the results of a wide range of standardised national tests. The rate of progress made by pupils is monitored regularly and compared with forecast levels of achievement. Targets are set for pupils, and these targets are regularly discussed and reviewed with pupils and their parents. Inspection findings confirm that teachers' assessments of science in Years 1 and 2 are not accurate in identifying more able pupils.
38. Teachers and teaching assistants, through the marking of pupils' work, pupils' responses to questions and observations made of pupils in lessons, gather useful assessment information on a daily basis. This information is used to inform teachers' planning of future lessons and monitor pupils' progress towards their targets. The school has rightly focused attention on the core subjects and now has good models on which to base future developments in assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress in other subjects. The school's work in assessment has played a significant role in bringing about much needed improvement.
39. Since the last inspection the use of assessment information to identify and provide targeted support for pupils with special educational needs has improved significantly, and is now good. The school meets the requirements outlined in pupils' statements of special educational need. The school has a good relationship with external agencies who provide valuable additional support for pupils. Teaching assistants are well deployed and focused additional teaching is provided by a teacher from the 'Support for Individual Learning' service. Parents are, from the outset, encouraged to be involved in the development of strategies to support these pupils and in the reviews of progress made each term. Similarly, the few pupils in the school who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because they are monitored by class teachers and teaching assistants provide good support.

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

40. There is a very good partnership between parents and the school. The partnership was good at the time of the last inspection and has now improved. There is an effective home/school agreement and the school welcomes parents into school. Parents' views of the school, expressed through the questionnaires and the pre-inspection parents' meeting, are very supportive and raise no significant concerns. Approximately 30 per cent of parents returned the questionnaires and attendance at the parents' meeting was average for this type of school. The most pleasing aspects for parents are the high expectations set by the teachers, good teaching, the good progress made by the pupils and the help the school gives in making the pupils mature and responsible. The only area in which a few parents would like to see an improvement is the amount of homework. The pleasing aspects were confirmed during the inspection and the concerns about homework were investigated. The inspectors judge that the school's homework policy is appropriate and is consistent across the school.
41. The school sends out its own questionnaire once a year to ensure that it knows parents' views and can take account of them. Direct communication with the school is available to parents through the school's open-door policy or through the headteacher who is available every day before and after school.

42. The information provided for parents is very good. The school produces regular newsletters, which are well presented and informative. Newsletters are kept simple to ensure clarity. In addition, there are letters and leaflets on specific matters of interest to groups of parents as well as an informative school brochure. The reporting system to parents on their children's progress is very good and comprises parents' meetings and an annual report, which provides personalised comments about their child and the progress made. The governors' annual report to parents contains good information and fully meets statutory requirements. The school holds meetings for parents at the beginning of both the nursery and reception years. There is a parents' week held every term to allow parents to discuss their children's progress either during the day or the evening.
43. Although there is no formal parent-teacher association, there are a good number of parents who support the school as requested, organising events for both the pupils and other parents. Parents raise funds for the school by running a 'tuck shop' and 'Friday toast'. Many are involved with the school through good parish links and partnership with the church. Parents support their children's education by encouraging homework and by attending parents' meetings. Many parents provide direct support to the school as governors or by supporting pupils in lessons. Several help on a regular basis in each class and many provide occasional support. Parents are invited into school to observe lessons in literacy and numeracy as well as for 'briefing' afternoons on curricular matters. In mathematics both parents and pupils are involved in the target setting process.
44. The school works closely with parents at an early stage where there are concerns about their children's academic progress. Good information is provided for parents of pupils with special educational needs. They contribute fully to the termly review of their child's progress, and are given useful information about how they can support their child's learning at home.

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

45. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team provide very good leadership. The deputy headteacher works closely with the headteacher and staff and she leads by her very good example in the classroom. The headteacher and staff are much respected by the pupils, parents, staff and governors. The senior management team focus and steer the work of the school to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has been the main focus for development. With good improvements to the teaching and the curriculum, the impact of these has had a direct bearing on the sustained improvement in standards by the end of Year 6 since the last inspection. The personal commitment of the headteacher and his staff to the needs of the pupils is very good. All the staff and adults who have day-to-day contact with the pupils reflect the school's stated aims extremely well, ensuring that they support and are committed to maintaining strong working relationships and include all pupils in all activities. This commitment to an education that promotes achievement, racial and social harmony is clearly reflected in all the work done in the school.
46. The headteacher and senior staff have a thorough grasp and understanding of how to measure and improve standards. They assess how well the pupils are doing in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This enables them to measure the impact that the curriculum, planning and teaching have on standards in the national tests. Co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning as well as pupils' work to assess how well they are doing in their respective subjects but this has been largely limited to the

core subjects. During the difficult period when the school was designated as requiring special measures, the senior management team has directed all its efforts to raising standards in the core subjects. More could now be done to extend this to other subjects. Curriculum co-ordinators prepare good action plans for their own subjects. These feed into a thorough audit of resources and staff training needs which informs the school development plan. The governors and senior staff have very good performance targets to help them to monitor how well the school is doing and to take direct action. There are good and effective procedures to help and support new staff. Very good use is made of specific grants; for example, the school has recently been awarded a grant along with other neighbouring schools to provide an indoor sports facility on the school's site.

47. Resources have improved considerably since the development and extension of the nursery building but there is an urgent need to improve the Year 4 classrooms which are in poor condition. Year 4 pupils are taught in demountable buildings away from the main school. The buildings are old and in urgent need of repair and improvement. The classrooms are too small for the number of pupils currently in Year 4 and inspectors have pointed out some hazardous and damaged areas. The staff and pupils cope in a challenging and poor learning environment and this is not acceptable. In addition, the headteacher and governors do not use systematic procedures to assess health and safety risks.
48. The governors are knowledgeable and experienced and very committed to the needs of the school and its pupils. They provide very good support and help the headteacher to manage the school. Formal and effective monitoring procedures ensure that governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and senior staff and, as a result, have a very good understanding of the school's needs, strengths and weaknesses. The governors visit the school and receive regular reports from senior staff. The personal dedication of the Chair of Governors is excellent. She regularly visits the school and works closely with the headteacher and staff. The governors' annual report to parents is thorough and well presented. The school development plan is used very effectively to steer the work of the school. The process leading to the production of the school development plan involves all the staff and governors and the plan is put together by the senior management team when deciding priorities for school improvement. The senior management team, together with subject co-ordinators, prepare audits and action plans so that it is clear what is needed and what priorities need to be established. However, subject co-ordinators have little time during the school day to undertake lesson observations or to support other staff. This is an area for further development. The school makes good use of ICT to manage and support the school's organisation and administration. The governors have a good understanding of cost effectiveness and apply sound principles when determining value for money when committing the school's funds.
49. The school has a good number of well-qualified teaching and support staff. There is an appropriate balance of experience and expertise and all staff are encouraged to develop their own skills through ongoing training. Support staff are valued as key players in the school's work. There is a well-developed commitment on the part of all members of staff to improvement. Administrative staff are very efficient and ensure that the school runs smoothly. They are available to parents and ensure that visitors are made welcome. The day-to-day financial management of the school is very efficient.

50. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is effective and has succeeded in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection. The pupils' individual education plans reflect their needs in the appropriate and specific targets that are set. The support for the individual learning teacher has provided additional valuable expertise in the setting of learning targets for the pupils. The pupils' progress towards their targets is monitored carefully and shared with them and their parents. Success in the area of special educational needs is achieved because the systems are effective, and there is a high level of commitment from teachers and the team of skilled support staff.

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

51. In order to build on the very good education provided by the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

(1) Improve the way art and design, design and technology, geography and history are assessed and monitored to raise standards in these subjects by:

- establishing systematic and effective procedures to assess how well the pupils are doing;
- providing time for subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure that work builds on previous learning and becomes more demanding for all the pupils.  
(Paragraphs: 6; 16-17; 21; 36; 38; 46; 48; 93; 97; 99; 103-104; 108; 110; 115-116)

(2) Improve science standards in Years 1 and 2 by:

- applying more accurate teacher assessments of the pupils' progress;
- providing more opportunities in science lessons for the pupils to engage in practical and investigative tasks.  
(Paragraphs: 2-3; 15; 37; 87-88; 90-91)

(3) Improve the accommodation for pupils in Year 4 by:

- providing classrooms that have sufficient space and a suitable teaching and learning environment for all the pupils and staff.  
(Paragraphs: 8; 47; 92)

## **OTHER LESS SERIOUS AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Establish more effective and systematic procedures to assess health and safety risks.  
(Paragraphs: 32; 47)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	84
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	28	39	12	0	0	0
Percentage	6	33	46	14	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	59	377
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	137

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	85

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

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	26	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	22	25
	Girls	28	32	32
	Total	48	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (75)	93 (88)	98 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	25	25
	Girls	31	30	32
	Total	52	55	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (81)	95 (84)	98 (84)
	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	37	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	32	33	36
	Girls	27	25	27
	Total	59	58	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (81)	89 (78)	97 (85)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	35	37
	Girls	28	27	27
	Total	61	62	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (83)	95 (81)	98 (88)
	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	14
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	359
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	25

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

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	382

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	57
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	88
Number of pupils per FTE adult	14

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	1,026,030
Total expenditure	1,010,326
Expenditure per pupil	2,286
Balance brought forward from previous year	44,818
Balance carried forward to next year	60,522

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	434
Number of questionnaires returned	165

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	33	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	37	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	45	4	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	39	10	3	2
The teaching is good.	59	39	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	45	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	26	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	44	8	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	61	34	3	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	41	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	38	7	1	6

### Other issues raised by parents

Some parents have also commented on how much they respect the school and the staff. They indicated that the school has a good reputation in the area for achieving high standards and this, together with the school's spiritual and Catholic ethos, are the reasons why they choose to send their children to the school. Many have commented on the commitment of the staff to support their children and those who have children in the nursery and reception classes are particularly pleased with the start their children are making in school.

## **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**

52. The nursery is large with 59 children in full-time attendance. All the children are admitted in the September following their third birthday, with the younger children attending on a part-time basis for the first term. The children move into the reception classes in the following September when all the children have reached their fourth birthday. Although full-time attendance is demanding for such young children, the very good provision in the nursery ensures the children are happy to participate in the afternoon activity sessions. As a result of the very good management and extensive range of activities provided in the nursery, the participation of such a large group of pupils is extremely well organised.
53. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Of the lessons seen, 20 per cent were excellent, 60 per cent were very good, 15 per cent were good and five per cent satisfactory. This is a very strong profile and underpins the children's very good levels of achievement. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants make a significant contribution to the high quality teaching. They work successfully as a team with the teachers to plan, prepare and teach the curriculum. The staff expect a lot from the children, who respond with enthusiasm and are eager to please. As a result, the children grow in confidence and know their contributions are valued.
54. Since the previous inspection the nursery has been extended to provide much improved space for activities. The extension was only opened two weeks prior to the inspection. The staff have planned the use of this additional space effectively. The good accommodation for the nursery is not, however, replicated in the reception classes. The new extension has enclosed the windows in one reception class so that the windows do not open into the outdoor area but into the nursery.

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

55. The children in the nursery and reception years achieve well because of the high priority the staff give to this area of learning and because the staff encourage the children to be independent and to try to do things for themselves before asking for help. The children are very well behaved and are busy and involved in learning throughout the day because of the high level of careful planning and the very good management by the staff. The children enter the nursery with their parents and separate confidently as they engage in one of the many interesting activities available. The children can readily make their own decisions when choosing activities and make full use of the available range. In an excellent circle time session in a reception class the children developed confidence to share their thoughts with others and, in their responses, showed a mature understanding of what is required to form good friendships, for example by inviting a lonely child to join in their play. Good relationships exist in all classes because the staff are patient and provide consistently good examples for the children, enabling them to develop social awareness.
56. The children frequently and spontaneously respond to the needs of others such as helping to find the correct digit card in a number game and fixing a difficult construction piece when making a model aeroplane. The children work extremely well together and show much pleasure in sharing an activity with their chosen friends. When playing with the doll's house, three children co-operated and negotiated as they developed a story

using the contents and play people in the house. In the nursery activity sessions, there is much scope for the children to concentrate, develop and explore their own ideas. For example, as two boys played with bricks they decided to make a repeating pattern and then introduced smaller bricks to improve the pattern. Enjoyment and confidence as learners are evident as the children immerse themselves as characters in the 'Old School Room' in the nursery and search for 'treasure' in the sand tray in a reception class. The children develop high levels of self-esteem and confidence because the staff give the children many opportunities to contribute their experiences and ideas, for example in response to stories such as 'The Rainbow Fish' when the children explain why he has no friends. There is much excitement and enthusiasm in learning because the staff work extremely hard to plan an extensive range of imaginative challenges for the children such as an inspiring eye-catching sensory display of colours and materials attracting the children to use their senses as they explored the materials. There has been good improvement in this area of learning since the last inspection.

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

57. The children's attainment in communication, language and literacy is above that expected by the end of the reception year with most children achieving the early learning goals in all the areas of learning. Many children are confidently working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum. This represents very good progress and achievement. The nursery places high emphasis on helping the children to become readers and writers. As a result, the children enter the reception year familiar with books and an understanding of the reasons for writing.
58. The majority of children listen very attentively and respond with relevant comments, questions or actions. Teachers skilfully encourage conversation when they share activities with the children, for example as they make shells with clay and discuss the best way to manipulate the materials. The children also readily engage in conversation when they work with each other to talk about what they are doing, for example as they describe the materials they use to make the 'shimmering boat' sail. Children in the reception year initiate their own conversations with other children and adults. A boy making a picture of the clothes worn on cold days talked about how he had made a similar picture about hot weather and explained the differences. The older children very capably use language to explain their thoughts and make deductions such as explaining the reason water smelt of lemon because a lemon ice cube was added.
59. The ability of the staff to make stories come alive through very good storytelling techniques encourages the children's interest and enthusiasm in reading. The nursery children learn how to handle books through daily story sharing sessions and the literacy lessons in the reception classes. Many children choose books during self-selected activity times and a very good selection of books is available. Teachers place relevant books, both fiction and non-fiction, in each area of learning and as an integral part of table-top activities, which results in developing the children's understanding that books are also sources of information. Extensive use is made of clear labels, descriptions and pictures which are prominently displayed and the children in the reception classes enjoy reading the captions attached to their work on display. Because much emphasis is placed on letter recognition in the nursery, most children, by the end of the reception year, recognise all the letters of the alphabet. Some more able children can also recognise the sounds made by two letter combinations such as 'ch'.



60. The children make very good progress in the development of early writing skills because writing is an integral part of the daily activities. The children have extensive opportunities and delight in being 'authors', making their own books. The nursery children are very proud and talk with animation about the books they have made such as those relating to the 'Seashore'. They talk about sending letters to friends to tell them things and reception children make shopping lists for the supermarket. Good improvement is made in writing as children progress from making marks in the nursery to writing simple sentences by the end of the reception year. This is often unaided for more able children who make very good attempts to spell their own words with much success. There has been good progress since the last inspection in this area of learning.

### **Mathematical development**

61. In mathematical development the children achieve well and make good progress. Most children have achieved the expected levels for the Foundation Stage and by the end of the reception year most children are working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum in mathematics. This good progress is achieved because of the good teaching and excellent opportunities for participation in practical activities, for example using coins in the shop in the reception area and using repeating patterns to make a beach mat in the nursery. The staff further maximise the potential of daily routines, for example during tidying sessions when children are encouraged to count the teddy bears as they are returned to the bag. As the children sing counting songs, listen to stories and observe patterns on the fish, play with sand and use shapes to make pictures, mathematical ideas are reinforced.
62. In the nursery, mathematical activities are always available in the group activity sessions to systematically develop the children's abilities to recognise and use numbers. The high quality of sensitive intervention by staff is a significant factor, which contributes to the children's good mathematical progress. Games such as matching the spots on the dice with the spots on the ladybirds are enjoyed by the nursery children and used successfully to practise number skills. In the reception classes the children use cubes to demonstrate their understanding of adding and subtracting by one.
63. In the reception classes the Numeracy Strategy is used successfully in group activity sessions to extend learning. The lower-attaining pupils practise number recognition skills by completing inset puzzles whilst more able children make number lines to sequence numbers to 20. The nursery children learn about shape and size through practical experiences. They learn to name shapes, for example as they make paper mobiles using a variety of shapes and sizes and they describe the number of corners and sides as they choose a shape in the 'feely-bag'. In a session well led by a classroom assistant in a reception class, three children very capably used the correct coins to pay for their purchases including £1 coins as they played in the role-play supermarket. There has been good progress since the last inspection in this area of learning.

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

64. The children make good progress because of the provision of a continuous programme of practical experiences where effective use is also made of the outdoor facilities. Teaching is very good and the staff promote the children's natural curiosity and interest. In the nursery, through exploration and investigation with sand, water and a range of textiles and natural objects, the children become more aware of the texture and other

properties of materials. By moving toy cars in the wet sand they observe the patterns left by the tyre tracks and make sand sculptures. Reception children explore lemon-scented play dough and see how easily the shape can be changed. Easy access to a natural area within the school grounds is used effectively to allow the children to explore the natural world. They explore the wooded area and have opportunities to observe growth and examine small creatures.

65. A strength in the provision is the focus on making and doing, particularly in the nursery. The extensive use of construction and waste materials ensures that the children find out the skills required to join materials. They also acquire the ability to apply their skills and solve simple problems, for example when finding how to attach a sail when making a boat. The children develop a sense of time, place and change from the routines of the day as well as visits in the local area, looking at photographs and from celebrating significant events, such as festivals and birthdays. The staff made good use of the building of the nursery extension as a resource for learning. The children observed progress over time and the extensive use of materials and the daily changes on the site. In an excellent session in a reception class, the return visit by baby Sophie, ten months after her initial visit, was an imaginative strategy to develop the children's awareness of the changes in a baby as it grows. The quality of the children's learning was good because prior to the visit the children had formulated the questions required to enable comparisons to be made.
66. The children's skills in information and communication technology (ICT) develop well as they regularly use computers in the classrooms and in the ICT suite to support literacy and numeracy. They practise using the mouse to point the arrow, drag images across the screen and choose colours to paint pictures with good results such as a picture by a reception child of a mouse playing with a ball. There has been good progress since the last inspection in this area of learning.

### **Physical development**

67. Children make good progress in the development of their physical skills. In all aspects, the children will achieve and many will exceed the standards expected by the end of the reception year. The children learn quickly and achieve well because of the structured good teaching and the well-planned and resourced indoor and outdoor activities. The very well-organised outdoor play areas enable the children to climb, crawl, jump, run and ride so that they get plenty of exercise. They also extend their imaginative skills as they hide and dodge around the trees acting out their own adventures. The nursery children use the outdoor facilities twice daily, weather permitting, and the reception children have access for two lessons weekly. Reception children also have weekly dance lessons, games and movement lessons. The children work hard during physical activity sessions as a result of staff encouragement and demonstration. In the nursery outdoor sessions, the presence of adults, their comments and demonstrations heighten the children's involvement and willingness to improve what they do. For example, Nursery children improved their ability to jump from a standing position when they watched how the adult did this when playing hopscotch. The children participate energetically as they travel around the outdoor natural area running at speed around the woodland and showing agility as they avoid obstacles. They confidently swing from the lower branches of trees and find different ways to travel over objects. The children use space well because the staff give attention to promoting the children's awareness of others as they move around the area. Marked boundaries for wheeled toys help the children to regulate their movements. Nursery children have much confidence when using the large climbing frame. They can climb with one foot leading and use their arms to assist climbing and balancing. In addition to the development of their physical skills,

the children greatly benefit from the fun and friendship generated through playing together.

68. The children become increasingly able to handle drawing, painting and modelling materials. In creative activities the children have many opportunities to practise cutting, sticking and using pencils and crayons. The children's skills develop well from when they start in the nursery. They roll out play dough and use a range of tools to make shapes and patterns. By the time they enter the reception year they use small tools and materials with much confidence and dexterity. There has been good progress since the last inspection in this area of learning.

### **Creative development**

69. The children make very good progress in all aspects of creative development and this is a real strength in the quality of the provision. Their attainment exceeds the standards expected by the end of the reception year. This is the result of the excellent range of imaginative and stimulating activities provided and the support from the staff to encourage children to improve their work. The nursery provides an excellent range of activities to develop the children's sensory skills, including access to stimulating resources such as sparkling materials to make a 'Rainbow Fish Puppet' and natural resources to make collage pictures. The children in the reception class have much experience in mixing colours; for example, they know how to make orange and pink and shades of colours. The many opportunities to draw from observation result in pictures of a high quality with the children taking much care as they draw. For example, they had access to a range of scented plants which they smelt, touched and felt and made good attempts to draw using pastels. Nursery children delight in using thick brushes and brightly coloured paints to produce recognisable pictures of the seaside. Many carefully prepared activities allow the children to explore textures, for example when they used clay to make shells. The staff introduce vocabulary to help the children to talk about their observations. The children enjoy imaginative play because they are provided with good resources such as those in the 'Old School Room' and they are well supported by the intervention of adults. The staff plan activities to ensure all groups are included and additional support is always available to help children when needed, for example by supporting less confident children to improve their work. The children develop an interest in making music through the opportunities provided during small group sessions when they participate. They make different sounds with instruments by banging and shaking and to accompany their singing. In the reception classes the instruments are linked to stories such as 'We're all going on a bear hunt'. The children use the instruments to represent the movements in the story and also link instruments to changes in the weather conditions. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

### **ENGLISH**

70. National Curriculum test results in 2001 for the pupils aged seven showed attainment in line with national averages in writing but showed a weakness in reading, where standards were below average. This deficiency has since been addressed by teachers and current reading levels for Year 2 pupils are broadly average. Standards in speaking and listening and in writing are above national expectations and so overall standards are judged to be above those expected by the end of Year 2.
71. In the 2001 national tests for 11-year-olds, the pupils achieved standards that were well above the national average. Inspection findings also reflect this. The pupils are attaining very high standards in all aspects of English by the end of Year 6. All the pupils,

including those with special educational needs and the few who are learning English as an additional language, are making good progress and are achieving the standards of which they are capable. Standards in the school are a good improvement on those referred to in the last inspection report when standards were satisfactory.

72. By the age of seven, pupils are attaining standards in speaking and listening that are above those expected for their age. They are presented with a good range of opportunities for discussion with teachers and others and they respond very well to these. Teachers handle question and answer sessions well and are successful in drawing out extended thoughtful responses from the pupils such as when pupils were asked in a Year 2 class to talk about what they had found in their information books. In a series of well-conducted dialogues they were able to describe in detail and at length what they knew about whales and sharks. During circle time, a forum for discussion to give pupils the confidence to talk in public about issues that matter to them, they talk with assurance about their feelings towards others, and the value they find in friendship. In geography, they are given the opportunity to develop good speaking skills when they read out and discuss their accounts of a trip to the seaside.
73. The pupils' reading is satisfactory overall in both Year 2 classes, though standards are higher in one than in the other. This is due, in part, to differing levels of attainment in the two classes, but also, to a higher degree of challenge in one class than in the other. The higher-attaining readers in both classes are reading a range of texts fluently and accurately. They are using a good range of clues to reach meaning including spelling out, splitting up words and using clues from the context. They are confident readers, drawing on a good background oral vocabulary to interpret unusual spellings. They can describe characters using terms such as 'a happy person' and will locate passages in the text to back up their views. In one class, the pupils use their knowledge of the alphabet well to locate information using an index. The pupils in the other class need a lot of prompting and this adversely affects their research skills in other subjects.
74. Writing standards are above those expected. The pupils write using a range of forms and the diary form is well used to give pupils the confidence to write at length. For example, one pupil writes at great length about her weekend, retelling the events in great detail, and is then able to make the short leap to using the same approach to write as 'Red Riding Hood' about what happens to her. Writing confidence is thus successfully promoted by teachers using forms that are familiar to the pupils, such as using well-known fairy tales as starting points for their writing. The pupils produce a good volume of work that is varied and stimulating. For example, the pupils achieve well, writing instructions about how to make a coat or a sandwich. Though poetry is taught and the school sometimes invites a local poet to work with pupils on occasion, more use could be made of poetry to help develop the creative use of words and structure.
75. By the end of Year 6, the pupils are attaining standards that are well above national expectations in writing and reading and are also above the standards expected for their age in speaking and listening. The pupils are gaining confidence in speaking and listening in a variety of contexts including class discussions and in assemblies, where they are given the opportunity to participate through readings and short dramas. There is some disparity between the opportunities offered in the different Year 6 classes. While drama is used well in one class, it is less frequently used in the other. Therefore, where characterisation in novels is discussed in effective question and answer sessions in one class, in the other the teacher becomes a character answering questions in role. The character comes alive in the eyes of the pupils and the experience offers greater depth and insight. The pupils also have the opportunity to

explore characters in this way and dialogues are set up between two or more pupils. This is good practice that can be shared more widely in the school.

76. Standards in reading are well above those expected by the end of Year 6. Most pupils are independent readers who choose a wide variety of books. Though the school library offers a modest selection of books, good use is made of classroom libraries and the local lending library. Currently all the pupils are reading a novel by Beverly Naidoo that concerns events in South Africa during the latter period of apartheid. This is a novel that makes a very significant contribution to the social, moral and cultural development of the pupils as part of a project that considers a very wide range of aspects of the geography, history, politics and the literature of South Africa. The pupils have really engaged with the project and this is evident in their reading and writing. All read with enthusiasm, expression and understanding using a highly challenging text. They understand the text on several levels and make very good comments on the effects the author achieves with choice of words, with sentence construction and other devices such as repetition and delayed disclosure. They know the characters well and talk about things, such as political and religious intolerances, that have shaped them. They reach a depth in their studies that prepares them very well for the next stage of their education.
77. Writing is well above national expectations by the end of Year 6. The pupils tackle a good range of tasks such as biography, short stories and book blurbs, as well as producing creative responses to important issues such as bullying. These they construct well, offering a balance of points in debate or a well-argued side in a piece to set out an opinion. They attain very good standards in writing, describing how to make a chicken curry or advertising the delights to be found for tourists in a mountain village. Most pupils are lively, imaginative and confident writers. Due to the highly competent and effective teaching, the pupils achieve a broad range of effects in their writing and use short sentences to describe action, build up questions to create suspense and add alliteration to make sentences more memorable and effective.
78. The quality of teaching is consistently good and is often very good. All the teaching features good subject knowledge. This is evident in good planning and in the high quality feedback given to the pupils both in class and in the full and informative marking. Teachers have introduced the National Literacy Strategy well and are confident enough to begin adapting it to the needs of their pupils. These factors explain the significant rise in standards in English over the last few years. Lessons are purposeful and build on what has been achieved. Teachers use assessment well to track the progress of their pupils and to plan future work. There is good pace and challenge to lessons and this keeps pupils interested and involved. Teachers and teaching assistants manage behaviour well, rewarding good behaviour. Lessons are well structured and this results in a clear and positive learning experience for pupils. They begin with an introduction that sets the lesson in its context of previous learning and the ways in which progress will be made over the lesson. This gives the pupils a degree of responsibility for their own learning. They are aware of the targets for the lesson and are expected to work hard to achieve them. At the end of lessons teachers match what has been done with what was intended by reminding the pupils of the key learning objectives. Teachers have developed good questioning skills. They know pupils well and their questions are adapted to the abilities of children. They make sure that all pupils are given the opportunity to offer responses and make sure that these are valued. This builds confidence and encourages further learning. Teachers are confident enough to develop projects that build beyond the National Literacy Strategy. The planning is well informed and extensive. It includes aspects of English, art and design and geography, as well as contributing to learning in dance, music, design and technology and the school's

programme for the personal, social and health education of the pupils. It touches on human rights and basic strengths of societies such as tolerance and the celebration of difference and is taught primarily through the study of literature. It has touched all Year 6 pupils and through assemblies, display and general talk it has brought a very special sense to the school. The visit by the celebrated author of the books at the heart of the project underlines the importance of the project and the relevance and value of literature to the pupils.

79. The subject is well co-ordinated by its two co-ordinators who take responsibility separately for infant and junior classes. They have oversight of planning in the subject and make sure that lessons build on what has gone before. The analysis of assessment information is good and helps them to plan ahead. Thus they have identified weaknesses in aspects of the subject such as reading in the infant years and have successfully tackled them. They promote a good range of visits and visitors that help to deepen the study of English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. Standards of attainment are well above those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards in mathematics were judged to be satisfactory overall. Standards have risen above the national trend because the teaching ensures that pupils have confidence with numbers, whilst their ability to handle data and interpret their findings and to apply mathematical investigation skills to solve problems have been enhanced. Standards in mathematics are a strength of the school.
81. By the end of Year 2, mental skills are well above average. All the pupils recognise and order numbers to 100 and know their two and five times tables. Also, they understand how to round numbers, such as 263 up or down to the nearest ten, and understand simple fractions and draw a matching half to complete symmetrical patterns. All the pupils recognise and name simple two- and three-dimensional shapes and know their properties. They record money accurately, and average and higher-attaining pupils add money mentally with confidence. They solve problems, for example using attendance figures, drawing bar charts to help them interpret the data.
82. By the age of 11, mental skills are well above average. All pupils know their multiplication tables and recall the facts quickly and confidently. Average and more able pupils use effective strategies for multiplying and dividing numbers, including decimal numbers, by ten and 100 quickly. Skills, knowledge and understanding in written work in number, space shape and measure and data handling are very secure, including problem solving. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of shapes is extended as they get older. They know that angles can be described as acute or obtuse and use a protractor to measure and draw angles accurately. They use their knowledge and understanding of geometry to construct and solve simple linear equations to find the value of an unknown angle. Good progress is made in data handling, for example when drawing bar graphs and pie charts about temperatures to record and interpret the data. They investigate probability and use their knowledge of co-ordinates to draw enlarged examples of shapes on a grid. This work with co-ordinates supports their learning in geography.
83. The quality of teaching is good overall and enables the pupils to attain well above average standards. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there was a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching was very good in 46 per cent of the lessons seen. It was good

in 39 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 15 per cent. The teaching is consistently very good in Year 6 and is largely responsible for a higher than average proportion of pupils exceeding the levels expected for their age in the national tests. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy very successfully and all teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Features of the very good teaching are the way it is made clear to the pupils at the beginning of the lesson what they are expected to do and understand by the end of the lesson. Lessons are usually brisk with challenge. Good use is made of time and resources, including classroom assistants or other adults, and there is consistent use of mathematical language. In a Year 6 lesson, the pupils used dictionaries to find what the terms 'linear', 'algebra' and 'equation' meant prior to a lesson on simple linear equations. In another lesson the pupils were challenged to beat their record by taking less time than the previous day to complete the 'loop' game in the mental and oral part of the lesson. This motivated the pupils to think hard and they responded to the teacher's high expectations by completing the activity more than two minutes quicker. In the main part of lessons teachers frequently question pupils closely to check that they understand what they are doing and this, together with praise and encouragement, gives them the confidence to complete the activities accurately. In a very good Year 2 lesson, the teaching assistant was employed very effectively to support a group of average and below average pupils so that they made the same very good progress in the lesson as the other pupils. In all lessons, behaviour is never less than good and is very good, partly because of the expectations of all teachers and the interesting tasks set matched to pupils' capabilities. In the small percentage of lessons where teaching is only satisfactory there are good features in the mental and oral part of the lesson. In the main part of some satisfactory lessons, however, the pace drops or the tasks are not as well matched to the prior learning of the pupils. Marking, whilst up to date and with many encouraging comments for accuracy or effort, rarely gives the pupils guidance on how to improve. All teachers set homework regularly and this is effective in consolidating their learning.

84. The school fosters the use of information and communication technology satisfactorily to support learning in mathematics. Teachers use the overhead projector very effectively when teaching pupils to construct and solve simple linear equations. The pupils learn to use modelling programs in information and communication technology lessons that promote their skills in data handling. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils used a program to consolidate their ability to estimate the weight of an object. However, there are insufficient opportunities provided in some mathematics lessons for promoting learning using information and communication technology.
85. The subject co-ordinators manage and lead the subject very well and they play a key role in raising standards. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the attainment of pupils because of the analysis of pupils' performance undertaken in the national tests as well as a range of other tests taken at regular intervals. The findings inform teachers' planning and are used to set targets for individual pupils. These targets are shared with both pupils and parents and motivate the pupils to improve their performance in mathematics. The assessments also provide detailed information to enable the governing body to have a clear understanding of standards in mathematics so that challenging, but realistic targets can be set. The co-ordinators also know the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers through an effective programme of lesson observations and scrutinising planning and samples of work. As a result, they are in a good position to advise and support teachers, including the provision of in-service training. Resource provision is very good. The subject co-ordinators audit resources to ensure that they are of a sufficient quality and quantity to support learning. The subject co-ordinators, with the help of the teachers, also identify

gifted and talented pupils. These pupils have the opportunity to participate in Saturday morning sessions run by Manchester University. This experience, together with tasks in school that challenge them, enables them to make good progress and maintains their interest and enthusiasm for mathematics. To raise standards further the subject coordinators have correctly identified the need to provide more learning support for the pupils with special educational needs in the junior years and the need for all teachers to use information and communication technology more effectively for planning, assessment and in lessons to support learning.

## SCIENCE

86. The 2001 teacher assessments of pupils in Year 2 indicated that standards were above those found nationally for pupils achieving the expected Level 2, but well below for those achieving the higher Level 3. The national tests for pupils in Year 6 showed that standards were very high, with all the pupils attaining at least the expected Level 4 and a significant proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence indicates that standards remain satisfactory overall for pupils aged seven, and are well above average for pupils aged 11. This represents very good improvement in standards since the last inspection for pupils by the end of Year 6.
87. By the end of Year 2, standards in science should be higher. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 ensures that pupils make good progress in lessons in their acquisition of facts relating to life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. However, they make only satisfactory progress in developing the skills of scientific enquiry. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make very good progress in all aspects of the science curriculum because the teaching promotes learning through scientific enquiry. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
88. By the age of seven pupils have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of electricity. They have a secure understanding of the dangers associated with electricity and, with help, can construct a simple electric circuit. Pupils in Year 1 learn that objects can be made to move in different ways by pushing and pulling. By the end of Year 2 pupils know what seeds need to grow and can sort materials into those that are natural and those that are manufactured. They are introduced to the skills of scientific enquiry. However, although pupils are beginning to make predictions, there is too little emphasis placed by teachers on pupils undertaking their own experiments and investigating for themselves. The pupils learn to record their work in a variety of ways, although a significant amount is pre-determined because of the over-reliance on worksheets provided by teachers.
89. By Year 4, the pupils' skills of prediction and testing are good, because they are encouraged to organise their own investigations in response to questions. For example, in Year 3 the pupils predict whether or not light will travel through a range of materials, then carry out an investigation to check whether or not their predictions are correct. Year 4 pupils use their knowledge and understanding of friction to investigate how objects move across different surfaces. The pupils become skilled at making predictions based on what they already know. They organise their own experiments, choose how to record their results and draw conclusions from their findings. By Year 6, the pupils' skills of scientific enquiry and knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science are very good. They are able to select an appropriate way of recording their work and draw conclusions from the results of their investigations. They use correct vocabulary in all their work and understand how to ensure that they carry out a fair test.



90. The pupils enjoy science. Pupils of all abilities co-operate well in pairs and small groups. They are enthusiastic and work hard to complete the tasks set by their teachers. By Year 6, the pupils are very confident. They challenge each other's thinking and readily share their knowledge and ideas. The presentation of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 is variable. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils learn to organise and record their work for themselves. As a result, their presentation skills develop very well and are almost always of a very good standard.
91. The quality of learning in lessons observed and the progress made by the pupils is linked directly to the quality of teaching. All teachers follow the science programmes of study closely and plan lessons carefully. Learning objectives are clearly communicated to the pupils and appropriate resources are used to support their learning. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. Teachers ensure that pupils' learning of facts is secure. However, the activities are commonly very teacher-directed and too few opportunities are provided for the pupils to use what they already know to organise their own investigations. As a result, the pupils' enquiry skills do not develop as well as they could. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good. The teaching focuses strongly on learning through enquiry. Teachers pose questions and skilfully guide the pupils' thinking to enable them to use what they already know to make predictions, carry out investigations, record their findings and draw conclusions. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the pupils devised an investigation in response to the question: 'Does the person with the longest hands also have the longest feet?'. Pupils confidently made predictions, worked out how to measure accurately and keep their investigation fair. In lessons organised in this way teachers' expectations are high and all the pupils are challenged. Consequently, the pupils make very good progress in all aspects of science and achievement is high. Some aspects of the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well; for example, pupils write clear instructions for carrying out investigations and present their results using graphs. However, there is little evidence of ICT used to record findings or offering alternative ways of discovering information. The use of sensors to gather and display environmental information from experiments is in the very early stages of development. Teachers assess the pupils during lessons through questioning, effective use of marking of pupils' work and testing at the end of each unit of work. The results of these assessments are used well in Years 3 to 6 to guide future planning and to guide school improvement. However, in Years 1 and 2, teachers' assessments of the pupils' achievements are not accurate, because lessons are often over-directed and opportunities for the pupils to demonstrate what they are achieving are limited. Homework, the school environment, and the provision of visits are used appropriately to support pupils' learning.
92. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has actively promoted the subject in the short time he has been in post. He has ensured that the school's scheme of work has been implemented throughout the school and pupils' progress is regularly assessed. He has undertaken a rigorous analysis of pupils' responses in both the National Standard Assessment Tests, and tests carried out at the end of units of work. This analysis has provided useful information, which has been used to guide the planning of future developments in science. However, the co-ordinator's monitoring role does not focus upon the quality of teaching and progression of learning through enquiry across the school. The school's accommodation for teaching science is satisfactory overall but the current Year 4 classrooms have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Resources are good.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

93. Since the school was taken out of special measures there has been satisfactory improvement in art and design. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Although no art and design lessons were seen during the inspection, evidence was available from work displayed, teachers' planning and the pupils' sketchbooks. Standards in the subject are in line with those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, there are a few examples of standards above the expected level. Pupils gain sufficient experiences to meet the standards expected in both infant and junior classes. The pupils work with a variety of media including paint, pencil, clay and collage materials.
94. In all year groups the pupils use sketchbooks to test ideas but their use is underdeveloped and inconsistent across classes. Year 2 pupils decorate boomerangs in links to their geography studies. Year 6 pupils create African art in newspaper, chalk and charcoal, print African style textiles and work in three dimensions to make large African masks. Links to other subjects are satisfactory but the use of information and communication technology to enhance teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.
95. The use of observational drawing, work linked to great artists and three-dimensional work is insufficiently used. Where it is used, the study of famous artists' work, for example coloured collage linked to the work of Matisse, adds to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The pupils' work is valued and displayed. All the pupils are included in lessons and those with special educational needs are given support where necessary.
96. No art and design lessons were seen during the inspection, so it was not possible to make a judgment on the quality of teaching. Planning includes work on textiles, sculpture, painting, collage and drawing and is linked to a scheme of work based on national guidelines. The use of sketchbooks is not consistent between year groups and between classes of similar ages and there is some confusion of art and design with design and technology. As a result, it is difficult to distinguish between the two subjects in the sketchbooks. This is an area for improvement.
97. The co-ordination of art and design is satisfactory. The subject has not been a focus for development for some time due to the emphasis on English, mathematics and science. This emphasis reduces time given to learning and teaching in art and design, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The co-ordinator gives informal advice to staff and has organised two training sessions this year to boost the confidence of some staff who are less assured in teaching the subject. She monitors planning and the quality of work on display. Formal checks of teaching and learning are not yet established so the subject co-ordinator lacks an overview of the standards throughout the school. There is no portfolio or record of work to show progression of skills. This makes it difficult for teachers to monitor and assess how well the pupils doing. There are no formal methods of assessment. Cultural links are promoted well, as, for example, a visit to the Whitworth gallery to look at African masks and textiles. Resources are satisfactory and in sufficient quantity to support the teaching of art and design.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

98. Since the school was taken out of special measures there has been satisfactory improvement in design and technology. Standards are at the level expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 2, when given the opportunity, most pupils are able to draw a design, for example 'Joseph's coat', and then select appropriate materials to make it. The quality of the finished product indicates satisfactory progress. In Year 4, the pupils design and make torches using simple switches. They consider

the size of hands that will be using the torch and design accordingly. This links well with science, as they have to know how to make a simple electrical circuit. By the end of Year 6, the pupils can make models, choose appropriate materials, and use tools safely.

99. When opportunities are taken to describe and discuss designs and finished products, speaking skills for literacy are promoted well. However, designs and labelled diagrams at the planning stage are insufficiently used, and material and equipment requirements are not always noted. The quality of some of the presentation of design work in the sketchbooks used is sometimes unsatisfactory, giving insufficient attention to detail. Therefore some pupils are missing an important stage in the programmes of study. Where designs, lists, labelled diagrams and problem solving are used, learning in design and technology is at its best.
100. Throughout the school the pupils learn to handle materials and equipment safely but opportunities for older pupils to make written evaluations of their finished product, testing and considering future improvements, are limited. This inhibits their learning, not always considering amendments or improvements to their design. Measuring skills are promoted by some tasks. The pupils work well together in pairs or small groups. Well-briefed teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs.
101. In the one infant lesson seen the teaching was good. Of the lessons seen in the junior classes, the teaching overall was satisfactory. In the best lessons, the pupils are given opportunities to think carefully, consider the needs of the user, draw a design, list the equipment needed and label which materials are needed for their product at the planning and design stage. In these lessons the pupils are usually given the opportunity to test and evaluate their finished product. However, this is usually by informal discussion rather than written evaluation.
102. The subject knowledge of teachers is satisfactory overall. Opportunities are provided for the pupils to make decisions and teachers move around classrooms, interacting in a way that enhances the pupils' understanding and enables them to feel included and make progress. Teachers promote social skills by ensuring that pupils collaborate in small groups. Behaviour is never less than satisfactory and often good, resources are well organised and together these have a positive impact on learning. The use of information and communication technology to support learning should be improved.
103. The co-ordinator, who has a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject, has a clearly defined role and has reorganised the resources, enabling them to be located easily and efficiently by staff. The scheme of work, based upon national guidelines, ensures that work builds on previous learning and becomes more demanding.
104. The co-ordinator has time to visit junior classes to work alongside colleagues in an advisory capacity but no formal monitoring has taken place. As a result, she is unable to form a view as to standards in design and technology across the school. There are no formal records of assessment in design and technology. The co-ordinator has prepared a useful portfolio of examples of work from most year groups but these are not yet linked to National Curriculum levels. These are a very good start to ensuring that all teachers understand the standards expected for each year group.

## GEOGRAPHY

105. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Comparison with the previous inspection report is not possible as there is no reference to standards in this subject, but standards have risen since 1997.
106. By the age of seven pupils have a satisfactory understanding of places and early map skills. They mark their route to school on a street map. They identify physical and human features of the seaside. Through a study of an island home they compare Manchester with a different locality. They extend their knowledge and understanding of the world by identifying places on a map of the British Isles and on a map of the world. By the age of 11, the pupils have further extended their knowledge and understanding of places and their map skills. They know the difference between primary and secondary sources of information when researching topics. The pupils compare and contrast Manchester with other localities including villages in Kenya and places in Nigeria. They distinguish between human and physical features of the environment and know how people can affect the environment. When investigating the use of water in the home they draw on their mathematical skills to produce graphs to illustrate their findings. The pupils know the names of the continents and some of the main mountain ranges and the important rivers of the world. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support learning, though it was used to good effect in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were learning about the physical and human features of the seaside. By the age of seven, all the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. Junior pupils make satisfactory progress. Given that attainment on entry to the school is below average, the pupils achieve well overall.
107. The quality of teaching is good overall. Seventy per cent of the teaching seen was good and 30 per cent was satisfactory. All teachers have a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding enabling them to plan activities to ensure coverage of the subject. Where the teaching is good there are high expectations of both work and behaviour, lessons are planned and managed well and conducted at a brisk pace. There is effective use of questioning, focusing on skills as well as knowledge and understanding to assess and enhance the learning of all the pupils so that good progress is made. In a good lesson, Year 5 pupils considered whether a national company should be allowed to build a supermarket on a former industrial site. The teacher challenged pupils to draw on the information they had gathered from surveys of parents and shopkeepers and from a discussion they had had with a council officer from the planning department to prepare arguments for and against the proposal. This motivated all the pupils and group discussions were conducted with a high level of interest and concentration. The arguments put together by each group drew on their knowledge and understanding of the issues involved and were confidently and clearly stated. The groups used persuasive language to good effect when presenting their case. As a result, all the pupils made good progress in their learning. When teaching assistants or voluntary helpers are present they are employed effectively to support teaching and learning, for example in a good lesson in a Year 1 class. Where the teaching is satisfactory the pace of lessons is slower and teachers have lower expectations of the pupils. This restricts their progress. The generally positive attitudes of pupils to the subject were confirmed in a discussion with Year 6 pupils.
108. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The subject co-ordinator has only recently been appointed. She has monitored planning, scrutinised samples of pupils' work and added to the resource provision but has not yet had the opportunity to observe teaching and so be in a better position to advise on how standards of

attainment could be improved. Resources to facilitate the teaching of the selected topics are now satisfactory. Video tapes and CD-ROMs are available for a number of topics, for example 'Rivers', and the school has access to computer web sites to aid research. Although the school follows the national guidance, the organisation of the curriculum does not allow the pupils to study the subject in sufficient depth or with sufficient regularity and this restricts the opportunity for pupils to attain the higher levels. Teachers' marking rarely includes comments that will take pupils' knowledge and understanding forward. To raise standards of attainment the school should ensure a fuller and more regular access to the subject, utilising planned links with other subjects and making better use of information and communication technology and assessment to inform teachers' planning.

## **HISTORY**

109. There were no history lessons observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on evidence gathered through looking at school documents, teachers' planning, pupils' past and present work, displays around the school and discussions with staff and pupils.
110. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and 11. Overall, all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The statutory requirements for the teaching of history are met. The pupils in Year 6 have not been provided with sufficient opportunities to achieve standards above those expected for pupils their age.
111. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop an understanding of chronology and of how things change over time. They compare aspects of the past with today and learn about famous events and people in history. They are able to recall the main facts relating to the Great Fire of London and give reasons as to why the fire spread. They understand the effect it had on people's lives and how it influenced the subsequent building of housing in London. When studying the life of Florence Nightingale, the pupils recall facts about her life and understand the impact her work had on the care for wounded soldiers of the Crimean War. A visiting nurse provided pupils with information about modern hospitals which enabled them to make comparisons between the medical care available today with that at the time of the Crimean War.
112. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 continue to develop an understanding of chronology through their studies of the Romans, Victorians and World War II. They are able to recall the significant people and events from each of these areas of study and have a secure understanding of how things have changed over time. For example, pupils in Year 4 compare and contrast how life in a Victorian school compares with their own experiences. The pupils in Year 5 develop an understanding of what it was like to be an evacuee and live through the blitz in World War II through their questioning of someone who experienced it.
113. In Year 6, the pupils experience one block of work for history. They study aspects of life in Ancient Greece, including pottery and myths. Whilst they demonstrate satisfactory standards overall, the organisation of the timetable in this way limits the opportunities available for pupils, particularly higher-attaining pupils, to reach levels that are higher than those expected for their age.

114. The pupils throughout the school learn to use a variety of primary and secondary sources of evidence and draw conclusions from what they have learned. They use visitors, visits, pictures, videos, written accounts and artefacts as they develop their research skills in support of their knowledge and understanding of different historical events. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is not fully explored, although it is used to research facts about famous events and people.
115. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use a variety of strategies and resources to ensure that pupils learn the significant facts of the time they are studying. Visits and visitors are used effectively to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 visited Lytham St. Anne's when studying the history of the seaside holiday and Year 5 pupils visited the Vernon Park Museum to experience life as an evacuee. When links are made to other subjects they are effective in supporting pupils' learning. For example, the pupils learn to write in different forms when writing postcards home as 'an evacuee', or listing the main events of World War II. Pupils are encouraged to present their work in a variety of ways. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn and present them with work to support that learning. Opportunities for the pupils to learn through their own research are limited. When these opportunities are provided, the pupils' learning is good. For example, the quality of their understanding of life in World War II was good, after they posed their own questions to someone who lived through the experience. Pupils' work is marked regularly but rarely provides them with an indication of what they have learned and what they need to do next. Teachers assess pupils' work against the expected learning for each unit of work completed.
116. As a result of the school's emphasis on raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, progress in history since the last inspection has been slow. However, the co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has a clear vision about how she would like to develop history teaching across the school. Through monitoring of teachers' planning she has a secure knowledge of the history taught across the school. Assessment is insufficient to enable the co-ordinator to understand the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievements to guide developments. Resources are adequate.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

117. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected, with some current work by older pupils of a high standard. The computer suite came into full use after the last inspection. This, together with good teaching and management of ICT as well as substantial staff training, has had a positive impact on standards and the pupils' achievement. There has been good improvement in the provision for ICT since the last inspection. Pupils are achieving very well and making good progress. Pupils usually work in pairs in the ICT room and this is helpful to pupils with special educational needs, who also make good progress. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress and are adequately supported.
118. By Year 2, the pupils confidently use the keyboard and mouse to operate drawing programs and access games, stories and information. Year 2 pupils were observed using a turtle graphics program effectively to draw letters of the alphabet. The pupils had clearly been taught well and had acquired the necessary skills to work out which instructions to type in, with many pupils able to self-correct and adjust the commands. By Year 6, the pupils can use sensors as part of science investigations. They were observed interpreting information presented as a result of a light sensor tracking

variations in the intensity of light during different periods of the day and night. The pupils throughout the junior years are able to use word processors to edit and refine their writing and to carry out spell checks. The pupils respond well to the challenges of combining text and graphics and most are able to present text in a variety of forms with good attention to detail.

119. Pupils have good attitudes to ICT. They enjoy working in the computer suite and also using the machines in their classrooms when available. The youngest children in the nursery and reception classes are making a good start and also have access to the ICT suite. The pupils behave very well and they respect the equipment and all take pride in the work they complete and print out.
120. The quality of teaching is good, although more could now be done to provide more opportunities for the pupils to experience ICT as part of a range of topics and subjects. The school has appointed a technically proficient member of staff to organise ICT lessons and to monitor the progress that the pupils make. Consequently, lessons are well planned and build on previous work. However, in some subjects ICT is lacking and opportunities are missed to use ICT as a tool to support learning across the full range of subjects. The school has been successful in improving basic skills and the use of the ICT suite has been largely responsible for this. Good use is made of the overhead projector and whiteboard to demonstrate and explain the key learning objectives of each lesson. There has been a systematic and well co-ordinated training programme for all the staff and their confidence is increasing as they use the facilities. Consequently, there is now very good expertise within the school. Satisfactory links are made with subjects such as English, mathematics, science, but this is less evident in subjects such as art and design, design and technology, geography and history.
121. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has a thorough knowledge of the ICT curriculum and has the necessary expertise to lead and co-ordinate staff training. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator and staff have improved standards in ICT and the subject is now an improving feature of the school's curriculum. An effective scheme of work is used. The recording of pupils' work on computer files is developing well but needs to be more systematic in every year group. Resources are good and are utilised well.

## **MUSIC**

122. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the pupils' attainment is in line with that expected of pupils of this age. The pupils make good progress in their learning because of the enthusiasm of the staff and the pupils' interest in musical activities, particularly in the junior years. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils experience a good range of work, including listening, singing, dancing, and playing tuned and untuned instruments. By the end of Year 2, the pupils sing clearly and in tune. They develop an awareness of patterns in music, for example when they repeat a clapped rhythm. They begin to understand the difference between pulse and rhythm in the music.
123. In Year 3, the pupils can trace the shape of the notes as they sing. A very good example of this was the performance of the song 'Yesterday at half past three', when the teacher used the piano effectively to promote the quality of the singing. The quality of the pupils' singing by the end of Year 6 is very good. They perform well together and sing with feeling, showing their appreciation of the significance of the words. This was exceptionally well demonstrated when Year 6 pupils sang the song 'Mandela is the one'. The pupils also make good use of ICT to develop their skills. In Year 3, they compose

music with a range of instruments using computer technology and they achieve some good results.

124. The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good overall because lessons are well prepared and expectations of the pupils' performance are high. The very good teaching in a Year 3 and a Year 6 class is a result of the teachers' extensive knowledge and understanding of music and their skill in demonstration. A range of excellent strategies is used to guide the pupils, for example using hand movements to reflect the pattern of the music. They further inspire children by their own enthusiasm and musical talent. The good pace in lessons helps to maintain the pupils' interest. Worthwhile opportunities to evaluate and improve performance bring a good response from the pupils, for example when they amend their computer-generated rhythms and as they play instruments.
125. The pupils have good attitudes to music and they show much joy and enthusiasm as they participate in performance. During lessons they are well behaved, listen intently to the teacher and follow instructions well. When the teacher is a conductor the pupils give much attention to following the guidance. They try hard to improve their performance. The pupils have increasing confidence when performing in front of an audience. In the junior classes, the pupils show high levels of maturity as they practise the African songs and dances they are to perform at the Zion Centre. They also talk enthusiastically about their forthcoming participation in a musical performance during the Commonwealth Games.
126. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator and several teachers have strength in their subject knowledge and skills. The subject is guided by an effective policy that is successfully implemented. The school has recently adopted the Local Authority's scheme of work and early indications show that this is proving more helpful for teachers and improving the quality of the pupils' learning. Additional instrumental training is available for violin and cello and all junior pupils are taught to play recorders. The pupils in Year 6 interviewed had an outstanding enthusiasm for the subject. They all wanted to demonstrate their talent in singing and spontaneously clapped each other. They can talk about a wide range of music and the need for practice to improve performance. The school's resources for music are satisfactory.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

127. Pupils make good progress in their skills in physical education (PE) and achieve standards above those expected for their age by the time they are seven and 11. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress in relation to their prior learning and achieve well. Due to a clear and effective scheme of work and the competence of the teachers, the pupils benefit from an effective and progressive programme of PE. The teachers' good planning indicates that pupils are given the opportunity to make good progress and to work towards developing all the skills and knowledge required in the subject. In Year 2, the pupils made good progress in basic games skills as they focussed on basketball skills. The pupils could throw and pass a ball with increasing accuracy. The lesson was well planned, with the teacher providing appropriate support, linking different ball skills so that the pupils could build on previous learning.
128. The pupils in Year 3 displayed good gymnastics skills as they linked a series of movements, balances and body shapes to form a sequence. They were given the opportunity to extend their skills as they improved their performance and the lesson had clearly built on previous work so that the pupils were able to compare and improve their



own performances. In a good dance lesson, the pupils in Year 5 performed a series of movements and improvised well as they adapted their dance to respond to “The Power of the Circle” as part of a native American theme. The lesson started with a poem to evoke ideas from the pupils as they formed a series of movements to recorded music. In a very good Year 6 dance lesson, the pupils were taught by a professional dance teacher as part of their South African project. This evoked some high quality dancing and the pupils had clearly made very good progress over a series of lessons. In all the lessons seen, the pupils displayed a clear understanding of the importance of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.

129. The pupils display positive attitudes towards their work, and are particularly keen to improve their performance. In a good Year 2 lesson, for example, the pupils enjoyed listening to the recorded music and improvising and adapting their movements accordingly. As with other dance activities, pupils were prepared to listen to other people’s suggestions, explored and altered their ideas and finally arrived at a well-structured performance. Good collaborative learning takes place, with the pupils refining their skills through repetition and practice.
130. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Lessons are well planned, organised and resourced, with teachers sharing lesson objectives with the pupils. Teachers focus on health and safety issues and provide appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities at the beginning and end of lessons. Teachers give good individual demonstrations of the skills to be learned and provide opportunities for the pupils to demonstrate good practice. Praise is well used to promote the pupils’ self-esteem and confidence in their abilities. The final part of lessons is used in an effective manner to review, to share and to celebrate by showing what has been learned in the lesson. The co-ordinator has good plans to introduce formal and systematic assessments of the pupils’ progress. These will build up a picture of how well the pupils are doing to maintain the good standards achieved by the pupils across the school.
131. The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator ensures that teachers’ plans are monitored for consistency and progression in pupils’ learning. The useful scheme of work guides teachers in their planning. Resources are good. The school has good access to a playing field which it shares with its neighbouring school. There are also two good-sized playgrounds but the hall floor is in urgent need of improvement. The floor has not been polished for some time although the governors have approved funding for this to be done before the new school year.
132. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities including football, hockey, basketball and athletics. Pupils are also given the opportunity to take part in inter-school competitions and a local swimming gala. The school benefits from additional coaching activities from individual sports clubs in the area. The schools’ commitment to promoting physical activities and school sport is reflected in its range of competitive sports. With its emphasis on inter-active work and team building skills the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils’ personal and social development.