

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN FISHER RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Middleton, Rochdale

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105849

Headteacher: Mrs A M Kenny

Reporting inspector: E Jackson
3108

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th November 2001

Inspection number: 242789
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:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stanycliffe Lane Middleton Manchester
Postcode:	M24 2PB
Telephone number:	0160 643 3271
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J P Carey
Date of previous inspection:	8 th September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Eric Jackson 3108	Registered inspector	Mathematics; art and design; design and technology; physical education.	Characteristics of the school; results and achievements; how well are pupils and students taught; how well is the school led and managed?
Maureen Roscoe 9884	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; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Michael Wehrmeyer 15015	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; science; information and communication technology; special educational needs.	Assessment.
John Evans 20404	Team inspector	English; geography; history; equality of opportunity.	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John Fisher Primary is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary of average size, serving the parish of St Agnes and St John Fisher in the Salford Diocese, although its pupils are drawn from a wider area. Governors have recently lowered the standard admission number to 30 pupils. There are 119 boys and 124 girls on roll: in Year 6 there is a large, imbalanced group of 16 boys and 26 girls, and there is a large class of 40 pupils in Year 3. The number of pupils on the register of special educational needs has doubled to 51 since the previous inspection. This is, in part, because the pupils are identified more accurately and at an earlier stage. The total is broadly average for a school of this size. Five pupils have a statement of special need, which is above average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups, and no pupils learn English as an additional language. Ten per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. Attainment at entry is broadly average. The school has gained *Investors in People* status, and is recognised by its local education authority as a leading school for the teaching of literacy. Most of the staff are new to the school since the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has improved sufficiently to become a very good school since the last inspection. It is very well led by the headteacher, who provides outstanding educational direction for its work and development. Her high standards are shared and supported by the deputy headteacher, other staff, and the governors. The high standards achieved consistently by the end of Year 2 have not so far been reflected in results at the end of Year 6, but the high quality of teaching in the upper juniors is now having a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning and progress. This is beginning to drive standards up quickly, and they are now above average in English and mathematics, and average in science. The quality of teaching is very good, and there are strengths across the school. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high by the end of Year 2, and are rising swiftly towards the end of Year 6.
- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and her deputy are very good; the governors and other key staff make a good contribution to the promotion of high standards, and the effective use of resources.
- The quality of teaching is very good, leading to very good learning for the pupils. The support staff are very effective in helping the teachers to meet pupils' learning needs.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, promoting their personal growth very well in line with the school's Catholic mission, aims and values.
- All pupils experience rich and well-planned learning opportunities, and there is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Very effective assessment procedures yield very good information about pupils' attainment and progress, which are used very well by the staff to set new learning targets that are shared with the pupils.

What could be improved

- The quality of pupils' writing, including spelling, by the end of Year 6.
- The amount of teaching space for the junior classes.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. The above points are already covered in the governors' current school improvement plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Very good improvements have been made in a number of important areas of the school's work since the last inspection in September 1997. All the key issues from that inspection have been successfully dealt with, and the school has moved forward in a number of other areas. Key improvements have been in leadership and management, the quality of teaching and learning, the raising of standards by age seven, and in art and design, design and technology, and information and communication technology (ICT) across the school. Standards at the end of Year 6 have kept pace with the national rise, and have begun to increase rapidly in the last two

years, although they have lagged behind improvements by the end of Year 2 until this year. They are now a better reflection of pupils' prior attainment.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	C	C	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	C	D	D	
Science	B	C	E	E	

The table gives a misleading picture of the school's achievements. The overall trend in the school's results has risen in line with the national rise in standards over the last four years. The 2001 cohort was a lower attaining group in general than previous groups in the school. The class had also had a difficult passage through the juniors, having a succession of supply teachers due to staff absence. Standards of attainment for the current Year 5 and Year 6 groups are much higher, and continuing to improve rapidly. They are now above average in English and mathematics, and average in science. This is because recent staff changes have raised the quality of pupils' learning and the progress they make. The school met its target for English agreed with the local authority last year, but not for mathematics. The school is on track to achieve this year's targets, and has ambitious but achievable targets for the 2003 and 2004 cohorts. If achieved, these will bring results by age eleven up to those expected based on results by age seven. Results at the end of Year 2 have been maintained at high levels in reading, writing and mathematics tests for a number of years. Pupils achieve well throughout the infants, and pupils in the juniors now achieve as they should, with more pupils reaching higher levels in response to the improved teaching. Currently, pupils in Year 2 attain above average levels in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, and history. They attain expected levels in ICT, music and physical education. In Year 6 they attain above average levels in English, mathematics, design and technology, ICT, and physical education. However, apart from the most able pupils, few of them extend their ideas sufficiently and link sentences in ways that bring depth and complexity to their writing. Another relative weakness is in the accuracy of pupils' spelling. Attainment at entry to the Reception class is broadly average. Because the teaching is well matched to their needs, these pupils are on track to achieve the expected levels by the end of the year in all the areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding: they respond superbly to the work they have to do, and concentrate well to complete it. They clearly enjoy coming to school, and share the common approach cited in the school's mission statement.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Similarly, pupils' behaviour is outstanding, and a real credit to them, their parents, and their school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships at all levels are very good. Pupils work very well with teachers and support staff. They develop self-confidence and self-esteem, and are very willing to take responsibility for jobs in school and for their own learning. They have too few opportunities to be independent in their learning, however.
Attendance	Just above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good.	Very good.	Very good.

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

The quality of teaching is very good. Five of the 55 lessons seen were outstanding, and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. The high expectations of the pupils by the whole staff team give the school a rich working atmosphere, tempered by good humour, and founded in the warm but purposeful relationships. The staff set a tremendous example here, led with infectious enthusiasm by the headteacher and her deputy. The teaching of basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy, and English and mathematics, is very good, although further work is required to improve pupils' skills in independent and complex writing and the accuracy of spelling in the juniors. The teachers have good subject knowledge across the curriculum, and this leads to an enthusiastic response from the pupils, who work hard and with great concentration on the interesting range of tasks prepared for them. Pupils with special needs are well supported by teachers and support staff.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and very well balanced. It covers the full range of required knowledge and skills. Careful planning ensures that the subjects of the curriculum are covered in sufficient depth and that the different aspects of each subject are given due weight.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: the school is fully inclusive, and pupils receive very good support from staff to take part in all activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	This area is now very good. It is a strong feature of the school's provision, and is anchored deeply in its Catholic faith and mission. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good; it is good for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a secure and happy place, where staff uphold their duty of care to the pupils. All adults know them well, and there is a family atmosphere, much appreciated by parents. All members of staff are alert to the pupils' needs. The care for pupils with special needs is exemplary.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management in the school are very good, and provide the key to the school's many improvements, and its high standards and expectations. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory duties effectively. Governors know the school well, and oversee its work assiduously.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is very good, as is the promptness of the action taken to implement priorities for development.
The strategic use of resources	The resources available to the school are used very well to provide a high quality of education for the pupils, and the school has made a good start in applying the principles of best value to its resource acquisition and use,

	including surveying the views of parents and pupils.
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Teaching and support staffing are very good. The school's good resources are used well to support pupils' learning. The accommodation has some strengths, particularly for the Reception and infant classes. These areas are used to the full to promote learning. There are good outside play areas, and playing fields. However, the junior accommodation is cramped for the number of pupils, limiting opportunities for large-scale work and activities outside the classroom.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That their children like coming to school, and are expected to work hard and do their best.• That the teaching is good, and helps their children make good progress.• That behaviour is good, and their children are helped to become mature and responsible.• That the school is well led and managed, and that they feel comfortable in approaching the staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The information they receive about their children's progress.• The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection supports the parents' positive views of the school. The range of extra-curricular activities is similar to that found in many primary schools. The inspection supports the view that reports on pupils' progress could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Good improvements have been made in attainment in many subjects at Key Stage 1 on those reported at the last inspection in 1997, particularly in English, mathematics, science, art and design, and design and technology. At Key Stage 2, standards are similar to those reported in 1997 in most subjects, although they are higher and above average in design and technology, ICT, and physical education. Pupils currently in Year 6 are making rapid progress in their learning because the quality of teaching is so good. The school has been dissatisfied for some time with the standards attained in national tests at the end of Year 6, so important staffing changes have been effected. Two recently appointed teachers have been deployed to work with the 42 pupils in this age group. They work together very effectively, set high standards, and have high expectations of the pupils' application and progress. The pupils respond superbly to this high quality teaching, and are on course to raise the overall levels of attainment significantly by summer 2002.
2. This dramatic improvement towards the end of Key Stage 2 is also supported in Year 5, and is the culmination of the headteacher's and governors' plans over the last three years to reverse the trend in the school's results from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. Six new staff have been appointed in the last three years. Because the quality of these appointments has been high, high standards of teaching have been maintained in the infants, and have improved significantly in the Reception class and in the juniors. This is having a cumulative effect in accelerating progress and raising standards by the end of the Reception year, and across the juniors.
3. Attainment at entry to the Reception class is broadly average, but there have been few high attaining children in the entry-level tests for the past few years. Currently, the pupils make good progress, and very good progress in some areas of learning. This is because the teaching is focused accurately on their needs, and puts them on track to achieve the expected levels by the end of the year in all the areas of learning. Indeed, in their physical development and growing knowledge and understanding of the world, they are on track to achieve higher than expected levels.
4. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have been maintained at high levels for a number of years. This is because the quality of teaching has been strong. Teaching for the current Year 2 class is consistently very good. Pupils' progress is also enhanced because classes have been kept smaller than 30 for infants, and the adult : pupil ratio is much lower. This year, for example, the ratio of pupils to teachers in the infants is 23 : 1, whilst in the juniors it is 29 : 1, with one class having 40 pupils. As there are also more support staff for the younger pupils, they receive attention when they need it. Girls in the school on average attain higher levels than boys by age seven in reading, writing and significantly so in mathematics. In all three tests pupils have attained well above average levels taken over the last five years. These results are also well above the average for schools in similar circumstances, and include a well above average percentage of pupils achieving higher than expected levels. Based on teacher assessment, the results in science are above average.
5. The results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have matched the national average over the last five years overall. Last year they were average in English, but fell to below average in mathematics and well below average in science. This represented unsatisfactory progress based on the same pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 2, and was below results in schools with similar eligibility for free school meals. The results met the set target in English, but did not reach it in mathematics. The governors feel that the targets agreed with the local authority for this group of pupils did not take sufficient account of the school's own

performance data for them. The school also feels that the higher targets set for this year are nonetheless more realistic, and at the current rate of progress, inspection evidence suggests that the Year 6 group may well exceed them. Ambitious targets have been set for 2003, with very demanding targets for 2004, which the school feels confident it will be now able to achieve. Inspection evidence supports this view.

6. An important factor in the slowing of progress in the juniors in the past three years has been the difference in class sizes between the infants and the juniors. The national infant class size initiative has reduced infant class sizes to 30 or less pupils in a class since 1998. Infant classes in this school since then have had mixed ages, but have been in some cases, as now, as low as 20. As this school had an admission number of 37 until this year, often increased at appeal to over 40, junior classes have had as many as 42 pupils. Indeed, this year's Year 3 class has 40 pupils, and the Year 6 group has 42 pupils. The governors convinced the local authority that its admission number should be reduced to 30 from this year, and the chair of governors now attends all appeals for places beyond this with the headteacher. This reflects the governors' concerns about this issue. Governors have also agreed this year to appoint extra classroom assistants to support teachers and pupils in Years 3 to 5, as well as an extra teacher in Year 6. These measures will take time to be fully effective, but have already begun to have a very promising impact on pupils' progress.
7. Another barrier to improvement in the juniors is the small size of the teaching area. Forty Year 3 pupils are squashed into a space that could reasonably accommodate 24 for the full range of the primary curriculum. Even when there were only 28 pupils in the Year 5 classroom, to attempt a practical lesson in design and technology, making instruments from a variety of materials and fixing agents, required careful ingenuity on the part of the pupils and teachers. The school has been able to add teaching space in the infants as part of the infant class size initiative, but may have to use space outside the classrooms to accommodate this large group of juniors as they move through the school.
8. Standards in speaking and listening are above average. By the time they are seven, most pupils listen well and speak clearly. Pupils of all abilities talk readily about their work and are considerate in conversation, listening to each other's contributions and taking turns. By the age of eleven, pupils have made suitable gains in speaking and listening. They listen actively, weigh arguments and give considered answers. Standards in reading are above average. This is most clearly the case for the younger pupils, a high proportion of whom exceed the national standard by age seven. Pupils of all abilities care about their achievement in reading and want to improve. At the same time, pupils in both age groups are very enthusiastic about reading, and enjoy talking about the books they have read. Standards in writing are above average by the time pupils are seven but average at the time they leave the school. This difference in attainment reflects differences between the two groups of pupils and the slow progress that many of the present upper junior pupils made in their lower junior years.
9. However, many pupils in all classes make too many spelling mistakes. Although most pupils are competent writers for their age, many are not as confident as they should be in writing independently. In most classes, average and more able pupils often receive too much guidance on the content and form of their writing from the teacher and classroom assistants. Further, few pupils extend their ideas sufficiently and link sentences in ways that bring depth and complexity to their writing.
10. In mathematics, pupils develop good numeracy skills, and currently achieve above average standards towards the end of both key stages. Year 2 pupils handle numbers up to 100 with confidence, and begin to find general patterns in considering arrays of numbers on a peg board. Almost all of them measure accurately to the nearest centimetre, and have good understanding of shapes and space for their age. Pupils in Year 6, working in sets, have developed a good range of strategies in computation, and use mathematical language accurately when reading out co-ordinates. They work at speed to complete a target set of multiplication facts in 60 seconds, some of them achieving 48/50 in that time.

11. Because the school recognised that results in science were too low last year, the staff have put in place a number of measures to try to improve them. The school has
 - adopted a new, stronger curriculum based on national guidelines;
 - analysed the test papers to show areas of difficulty, and to identify particularly weak groups of pupils;
 - deployed additional support staff to work with these groups and with the larger classes.The inspection findings are that progress through the infants is very good, and that junior pupils also make good progress now. Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve at least average, and possibly higher, results by the end of the year, based on their attainment now which is in line with that expected.
12. Boys and girls achieve similar levels in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The level of attainment of pupils who have special educational needs is overall well below national averages at both key stages, but is commensurate with their abilities, and in some cases represents higher than expected achievement. The pupils make very good progress because the school is committed to inclusion and has organised a very strong programme of support. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
13. Good improvements in the teaching of art and design, design and technology, and ICT since the last inspection have led to above average standards in design and technology at ages seven and eleven, in art and design by seven and in ICT by eleven. These improvements stem from teachers' increased subject knowledge, better lesson planning, and consistently higher expectations of the pupils' potential achievement, founded in improved assessment of their progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' excellent attitudes to school help them to apply themselves very well in lessons, and they show great care and consideration for others. This is an improved picture when compared to the last inspection, and is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. Then as now, however, there are insufficient opportunities for younger pupils to develop more independence in choosing resources, or for older pupils to develop their research skills.
15. The Reception year pupils are keen to learn and always interested in what the day brings. This is also typical of the girls and boys in Key Stages 1 and 2 who are also happy, confident and eager to take a pride in their work. Almost all of the parents who returned a questionnaire agreed that their children like school and behave well. This was seen during the inspection when, for example, Year 5 pupils concentrated with enjoyment on literary activities and Year 2 pupils contributed keenly when answering mathematical questions.
16. In most lessons pupils are highly engaged, often asking helpful questions, making relevant suggestions, or acting on the good advice teaching staff provide. Similar high levels of enjoyment and active listening and concentration were evident wherever pupils took part in practical activities, such as artwork in Year 2, where their response was outstanding.
17. Pupils who have special educational needs maintain a particularly positive self-image as the support assistants strive to help them to achieve success in their work. The pupils with the most severe difficulties keep up their interest and concentration because of the cheerful encouragement of their support assistants. Children and adults have established close bonds of trust and friendship. The school is commendably flexible in its approach to meeting individual pupils' needs, ensuring that they move to the location that is best suited for the needs of the moment.
18. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and a credit to them. Standards have risen here, and exclusions have declined. A friendly, co-operative atmosphere exists, promoted very well by staff and

adopted by the children. This ensures that excellent relationships thrive in a positive environment of praise and celebration of achievement.

19. Personal development is very good. Pupils enjoy each other's company at work and play. They are courteous, thoughtful and polite. They take a genuine interest in others and have well-developed social skills, such as respecting others' property and speaking in turn when answering questions. Boys and girls alike respect their teachers. This helps to create a 'family feeling' where learning and affection go hand in hand.
20. Pupils are frequently consulted on their views of the school. Some make an important contribution to the smooth running of the school, especially in helping to supervise younger pupils alongside staff at lunchtimes. Too few opportunities exist, however, for all pupils to develop initiative, independence and using their ability and aptitude for organising their own learning. For example, not all pupils are given enough chances to evaluate how well they have done after a lesson.
21. Attendance levels are improving, and are now slightly better than the national average. Almost all pupils are punctual, although a small minority of pupils arrive late in the morning. The school's efforts to raise attendance levels further are hampered by holidays taken during term time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in 12 per cent of lessons in the last inspection, and good or better in only 20 per cent. The teaching of art and design, design and technology and ICT was strongly criticised, and important aspects of teachers' planning became the subject of key issues. This situation has been completely turned round: teaching is now very good across the school, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed, and 90 per cent of lessons seen were good or better. Almost 40 per cent of lessons were very good or outstanding. This high standard of teaching is having a very positive effect on pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to work, and their progress.
23. The inspection took place just as many of the developments and improvements, that the staff, pupils, governors and parents have worked hard for, are achieving fruition. For example, the headteacher led the school to Grant Maintained status in order to improve its resources. Although this status was changed in September 1999, the resources to support teaching and learning, including support staffing as well learning resources, are now above those found in many primary schools. These resources are very efficiently deployed, and so the pupils gain tremendous benefit from them. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, there were sufficient calculators for the pupils to work in pairs to check their answers, whilst in a Year 5 music lesson there were enough varied percussion instruments from a range of cultural styles for all the pupils to 'invent' a different eight-beat pattern to perform for the rest of the class.
24. Pupils who have special educational needs maintain a particularly positive self-image as the teachers and support assistants strive to help them to achieve success in their work. The pupils with the most severe difficulties keep up their interest and concentration because of the cheerful encouragement by their support assistants.
25. The high expectations of the whole staff team for all the pupils gives the school a rich working atmosphere, tempered by good humour, and founded in the warm but purposeful relationships fostered throughout the school. The staff set a fine example here, led with infectious enthusiasm by the headteacher and her deputy. Indeed, the deputy headteacher sets a model of very effective teaching with her Year 2 class: relatively inexperienced teachers testify to her high standards and professional leadership. Two of these teachers work together with the Year 6 pupils, and already display teaching skills of a high order that are helping these pupils to make really good progress. For example, the topic in mathematics during the inspection for Year 6 was to read and plot co-ordinates in four quadrants. After establishing that almost all the pupils could comfortably achieve this in the first quadrant, the expected level of

understanding for their age, the teachers enthusiastically led the pupils into not only reading and plotting using positive and negative co-ordinates, but into translating shapes accurately by using different values. This was work at a high level for their age, and typified the spirit of ambition amongst the staff to take the pupils to greater heights in their learning.

26. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the curriculum have improved significantly since the last inspection. This is partly because new staff have been appointed specifically to add their skills to the team, but also because the headteacher and governors value staff development as a means to improving the learning opportunities open to the pupils. For example, the Reception class teacher has adopted the national guidance for the Foundation Stage successfully, and at times the quality of her planning, preparation and organisation, together with the amount of adult support, is excellent. Teaching for the Reception class fully meets the school's aim to provide quality experience for all pupils. Also, all teachers' planning for ICT now covers all aspects of the ICT curriculum, and leads to consistency in the approach to the subject across the school. Consequently, the pupils learn and make progress in a systematic way. There is also now good quality teaching, particularly using the expertise of the ICT support assistant who teaches groups of pupils well. Teachers are more confident now in the wide use of the computer to support learning in many other subjects, and pupils are encouraged to assess and evaluate their own progress.
27. Weaknesses in art and design, and design and technology, have also been tackled and eradicated. During the inspection, Year 1 pupils built on their woven warp patterns from the week before by adding a colourful variety of natural and man-made materials as a criss-cross weft. The skills shown by some of these five year old pupils were remarkable, and their concentration was intense as they carefully selected flexible or stiff materials, and intricately wove them in detailed patterns. From the teachers' planning, it is clear that these skills will lead to the pupils creating their own weaving frame, and executing their own design, linked to greater understanding of materials as part of their work in science.
28. This exemplifies another very good improvement. The quality of teachers' planning is very good across the school, based on thorough schemes of work for each subject, and increasingly in the guidance for the Foundation Stage in the Reception class. Here, the teacher has successfully adapted the national guidance for three to six year olds to her situation. At times the quality of planning, preparation and organisation for the Reception pupils, together with the amount of adult support, is excellent. For example, in a movement lesson in the hall, the teacher reminded the children what they were to practise and learn, related to the learning objectives for physical development. She then led them from free to structured dance activities skilfully. They loved this, and took part with gusto, yet responded with measured care to the more structured work. A supply teacher was able to work successfully from the Year 3 class teacher's half-termly plans during the inspection. This was both to his credit, and showed the effectiveness of the plans.
29. Lesson planning for English and mathematics, based on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, is also very good. The teachers help the pupils to make good progress in learning basic skills in these sessions, and also through other subjects, such as science, history, geography and religious education. In a very good Year 2 English lesson on changing verbs to the past tense, for example, the teacher had prepared work for five groups of pupils at different stages of learning. This enabled all the pupils to take a full part in a lesson of very good pace, with appropriately focused support from the teacher and classroom assistant. In a very good Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher moved through the different elements of the lesson at a cracking speed because he was so well prepared. This made the pupils very confident, and because the relationship between the class and teacher was so strong, the pupils were not afraid to try out an answer, knowing that if they made a mistake, they would be helped to put it right. In reading out numbers in addition, the teacher insisted that the pupils read the value of each digit. For instance, adding the numbers 48 and 26 would be $8 + 6$, and $40 + 20$, thus reinforcing the amount represented by its written position.

30. Literacy and numeracy are developed well in other subjects. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work in pairs and groups, and to respond to questions in whole class sessions. For example, Year 1 pupils discussed the differences between their homes now and homes in Victorian England during a history lesson. They listened very well to the teachers' descriptions and explanations of a video they had seen, and could name a good variety of artefacts available in the classroom, and say what and how they were used. There are many good examples in the pupils' science work of data handling, when they present the information they have gathered in charts and graphs. There are relative weaknesses in the teaching of English across the curriculum, however, in helping the pupils to develop independent and extended writing, and to spell accurately.
31. These weaknesses might seem surprising, in that the school has tackled so many aspects of teaching and learning and made significant improvements to them. The current school improvement plan includes both these aspects of English for immediate staff concentration, however. This is because the staff use the information gained from rigorous assessment of pupils' attainment and progress to set new targets for their learning. They also monitor and evaluate teaching and learning systematically, led by the headteacher and her deputy, but involving the whole staff. The insights gained from this are coupled with pupil assessment data to set priorities to take to governors for the following year. This is why the development of teaching and learning and the consequent raising of standards is so effective.

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

32. The school teaches all the subjects that it should and provides very good learning opportunities for pupils of all abilities. Teaching and non-teaching staff also provide very well for pupils' personal and social education.
33. The curriculum is broad and very well balanced. It covers the full range of required knowledge and skills. Careful planning ensures that the subjects of the curriculum are covered in sufficient depth and that the different aspects of each subject are given due weight. For example, in design and technology, there is carefully balanced emphasis on both designing and making. This ensures thorough understanding, and gives pupils satisfaction in their learning by enabling them to see their work through from initial idea to finished product.
34. The weaknesses in planning identified during the last inspection have been remedied, and planning for all subjects is now very detailed and secure. This is a great improvement. When the school was last inspected, there was no clear guidance for teachers on what should be taught in, for example, history and geography. As a result, pupils did not make the progress in these subjects that they should. Clear guidelines are now in place. These are raising standards by improving lesson planning, securing subject coverage and building progress more systematically from year to year.
35. National guidelines for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are effective in encouraging good achievement. The secure guidance that they provide sharpens the focus of lessons and helps to promote high overall standards of provision in English and mathematics.
36. Teachers ensure that pupils have frequent, well-planned opportunities to use computers in lessons. This is valuable in broadening pupils' understanding of ICT and enables them to practise their computer skills in ways that enhance their learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in their final year at school used desktop publishing to produce a newspaper. This extended their computer skills and, at the same time, improved their understanding of journalistic style.
37. Teachers build many such constructive links between different subjects. For example, pupils writing witches' spells after studying *Macbeth* learned something of the historical context in which Shakespeare wrote. This strengthened their learning in both history and English. The

links that teachers build between subjects and themes are often particularly valuable in improving the quality and range of pupils' listening, speaking and writing. For example, in history and geography lessons, teachers stress the use of correct terminology and accurate expression, and encourage pupils to extend the range of words they use.

38. The school is very successful in providing equality of opportunity and ensuring that all pupils are fully included in the range of opportunities that it provides. This results from good planning supported by careful assessment. These enable teachers to present new learning at the right level, taking account of pupils' differing needs and abilities. Governors also monitor this through their developing links with individual subject co-ordinators.
39. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. This is a substantial improvement since the previous inspection, reflecting the school's aim to bring out the best in all pupils. The school justly deserves its growing reputation for handling a wide range of special needs sensitively and effectively. All the pupils' individual education plans are in place. The pupils' targets are clearly defined, work programmes are shown in detail and their progress is reviewed at regular intervals. They show the indicators that enable the staff to measure successful achievement, enabling them to track the pupils' progress closely. The large number of experienced and well-qualified support assistants means that pupils can be helped to achieve over a wide range of situations and subjects.
40. The previous inspection found that the provision for pupils' personal development was varied, and that a wider cultural awareness was not encouraged. Because staff value the uniqueness of each individual, and respond to their talents with praise and encouragement, this area is now overall very good. It is a strong feature of the school's provision, and is anchored deeply in its Catholic faith and mission.
41. The provision for spiritual development is very good, reinforced when teachers and support staff value all pupils' answers in lessons and build on them. Staff foster calm and considerate behaviour and encourage friendship and humour to underpin very good relationships. Time to reflect before answering questions is encouraged, and often staff in the infants point to their own heads to demonstrate to younger children that they are expected to think and reflect, too.
42. Music played as a backdrop to lessons allows for heightened sensitivity. It evokes for some pupils what they describe as 'peacefulness or mystery'. The school encourages spiritual awareness in pupils by providing opportunities for reverence each day, and wonder at the splendours of the natural world. This air of reverence is strongly felt in singing lessons throughout the school.
43. Provision for moral development is very good because pupils are expected to be caring, to be aware of other people, and to be self-disciplined. Additionally, staff act as role models for patience and courtesy because they cherish the children in their care. Whilst demonstrating high standards in their own work and behaviour, the staff also apply the few school rules consistently, and pupils are consulted about their application and effectiveness. This insistence on a clearly understood moral code creates a climate where tolerance towards others and care for their feelings flourishes. A good variety of rewards are provided, and pupils work hard to achieve them. Pupils are proud to be awarded the 'Always' badge of honour. Year 4 pupils who were awarded badges in Year 1 described how they always tried their very best because of the 'specialness' of this award. Pupils are aware of those less fortunate than themselves, and often raise money for charity.
44. Much of the very good provision for social development is a natural part of how the school works. This begins in the Reception class, where children are inducted skilfully into the school's patterns and expectations by the staff. All pupils are expected to get on with others, and be polite and well mannered. As a result all pupils develop a good sense of community responsibility. The dining hall is a friendly place where pupils and mid-day supervisors interact and socialise very well. Pupils work well in pairs and groups because of not wanting to 'let the

team down'. Registration periods provide very good opportunities for pupils to exchange news and views. The sensitive and responsible integration of pupils with special needs into all social activity is of mutual benefit for all pupils.

45. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils have a very good awareness of their own culture and satisfactory knowledge of non-European culture and heritage, particularly through teaching about the faiths practised by different groups. Pupils are introduced to different lifestyles as part of work in geography and design and technology, and the school tackles issues, such as life in a culturally diverse society or the problems associated with racism or stereotyping, through its scheme of work for religious education.
46. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, emphasising seasonal sports. Residential trips for upper junior pupils help to promote their social and personal development and extend learning in ICT, physical education and geography.
47. Links with the community are good. The school has a strong relationship with the church and parish and further constructive links with the local nursery and primary schools and the nearby Catholic high school. There are valuable links with initial teacher training and students at Trinity and All Saints College in Leeds and Liverpool Hope University.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. As reported in the last inspection, the school is a secure and happy place, where staff uphold their duty of care to the pupils. All adults know them well, and there is a family atmosphere, much appreciated by parents. All members of staff are alert to the pupils' needs. They comfort them when they are upset, and deal with any concerns.
49. The care shown for pupils who have special educational needs is exemplary. The assessment programme for these pupils is very good. Teachers identify children who are likely to experience learning difficulties at the earliest opportunity, even in the Reception class. Throughout the school, pupils are monitored regularly to see if they have made sufficient progress to come off the register, or if they need further help. The school draws well on the expertise of specialist services for more detailed testing for the pupils at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice. The school values the very good relationships with many specialist agencies, particularly the Rochdale Additional Needs Service, and the educational psychology and occupational therapy services. The resulting teamwork contributes very effectively to the pupils' well-being and progress. The school staff use their knowledge of pupils well in giving guidance on behaviour and improvement in classwork. The school has had considerable success in settling pupils who have experienced difficulties elsewhere.
50. Procedures for child protection are tried, tested and supported by staff experience and training. All requirements are met. The co-ordinator ensures all staff understand and follow agreed procedures. The governors and staff place importance on monitoring and promoting good behaviour. A large majority of parents support the school's consistent pursuit of excellence in standards of behaviour. At a meeting held for parents, they described their support for the rewards for good and improving behaviour, and the effects of these on their children's self-esteem.
51. The behaviour policy is well implemented and includes a very effective system of praise, rewards and sanctions. Pupils are well used to receiving and recording their own recognition for improved work or effort. Mid-day supervisors provide a good point of contact with pupils. They enjoy an easy relationship with them and calmly deal with all issues, which are logged for future reference. Parents report that in this environment of celebration and promotion of self-esteem, oppressive behaviour cannot thrive because issues are firmly and fairly dealt with. Inspectors endorse this positive view because they did not observe one unkind word or gesture between pupils.

52. Statutory requirements in relation to health and safety are met. Governors take a satisfactory approach towards their responsibilities here. Staff fulfil risk assessments effectively on most pupil activity. Registration practice has improved, but some procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are not sufficiently rigorous, such as following up absences closely as they occur, or identifying the effects of lateness or taking holidays during term time.
53. The school has improved its arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and recording progress significantly since they were a key issue in the previous inspection. This area is a developing strength. The school has developed a very good programme of procedures and record keeping in English, mathematics, science and some of the foundation subjects. The school's best practice lies in the detailed records for tracking pupils' level of attainment in English and mathematics, so that additional support can be put in place. The assessment procedures also help teachers in each year to know accurately what pupils have already achieved so that they can plan suitable starting points for future lessons. Teachers' lesson evaluations feed into this accurate picture of pupils' attainment. The headteacher monitors these records closely to see if individual pupils are moving ahead fast enough. Where cause for concern appears, action is taken at once. The teachers set demanding, precise targets for pupils to work on, as a result of this very close monitoring. The school is determined to have a precise understanding of all pupils' progress.
54. Teachers in each year mark set pieces of work, including tests, and use the levels to predict fairly closely how the pupils will perform in the Year 6 national tests. Appropriate arrangements are made for the statutory National Curriculum tests to be carried out. Teachers keep samples of pupils' work in the record of achievement file, so that profiles of pupils' strengths and weaknesses are built up in English and mathematics. Staff discussions are held to reach agreement on how to grade different pieces of work, so that teachers have a consistent picture of standards for the school.
55. A further improvement since 1997 is in the analysis of the pupils' answers in the standard tests. The staff pinpoint exactly where pupils are going wrong, for example how they misinterpret information from graphs. Teachers then plan extra teaching on those points in next year's work. Every Year 6 pupil is provided with an opportunity to refocus their efforts in preparation for the end of key stage tests, and to be aware of their own progress.
56. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Staff ask the pupils for their opinions in this area, which allows the school to plan for particular needs. Lessons in personal, health and social education also make a contribution. There are clear channels of communication with parents and the school takes advantage of these – especially those connected with pupils' special educational needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. This area of the school's work has improved since the last inspection, and its links with parents and carers are very good. The parents hold very positive views of the school, and use the openness of the school to consult teachers as necessary. The questionnaires returned reflected parental satisfaction with standards in their children's work and behaviour. The parents who attended the meeting confirmed that they find all staff approachable and that their concerns or suggestions were dealt with effectively.
58. The school rightly prides itself on its close involvement with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. They are fully involved in the procedures at every stage, and are kept well informed of their children's progress. Most of them attend the important annual review meetings. Parents are delighted with the school's approach to inclusion, its readiness to help, and their children's progress.
59. Many parents support their children's reading at home and make a very good contribution to the standards achieved. Parents' involvement with the work of the school is good because

attendance at meetings held for parents is high. Staff effort is valued, and many parents loyally signed the home school agreement. Parents are regularly consulted. A parents' group raises significant sums of money to buy learning resources. Against this very positive picture it is surprising that more is not done to enlist parental help in reducing term-time holidays and late arrivals at school.

60. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. There are strengths and weaknesses in this area of the school's work. Clearly, there are good lines of communication between school and children's homes because many parents feel very comfortable speaking to the headteacher and the staff. Good procedures are in place to inform parents when their child is identified as having special educational needs and they are invited to meetings to review their child's progress toward their targets. Not all the required information is provided to all parents in the prospectus and governor's annual report, however.
61. A small percentage of parents voiced some disagreement about how the school works with them and how well they are informed about the progress their child is making. These concerns are justified to a degree. Regular newsletters help to maintain good links between home and school, and contain information on general matters of interest. Opportunities have been missed, however, to help parents understand what they can do to support their children's learning by informing them about what is taught and when. The school is aware of this and has produced curriculum information that will be sent to parents in the spring term, 2002.
62. Written progress reports meet requirements, but the school is planning to improve them this year. Presently, reporting on progress in the foundation subjects is weak. Descriptions of what has been covered in lessons for each year group are provided, but no information is offered with regards to the quality of work each child has achieved, and whether it has been in line with their ability. A clearer idea of progress is provided in the core areas of English, mathematics and science, but again the reports in these areas omit to state where improvements are necessary.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. Leadership and management in the school are very good, and provide the key to the school's many improvements, and its high standards and expectations. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties effectively. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are very good, as is the promptness of the action taken to implement priorities for development. The resources available to the school are used very well to provide a high quality of education for the pupils, and the school has made a good start in applying the principles of best value to its resource acquisition and use, including surveying the views of parents and pupils. The school gives very good value for money, much improved since the last inspection.
64. The headteacher is a very effective leader, who gives outstanding clarity to the path the school should follow, to maintain its strengths and tackle its weaknesses. She has used the opportunities given through her own further training to implement and carry through monitoring and evaluation systems that deliver accurate information about where the school is, and where it should go next. She breathes high expectations into all the school's work, and ensures that it fulfils its mission statement on behalf of the pupils and their parents. Whilst the school has made and is making rapid improving strides, she helps the staff to control the pace to make it manageable, and keeps the governing body very well informed. Recent developments have included clear procedures to keep track of individual and class progress. This is helping to lessen the gap between attainment at seven and eleven by enabling staff to be clear as to what they should expect of groups and individuals.
65. There is mutual trust at the strategic planning level between the governors and the headteacher. The chair of governors works very closely with her, yet maintains a 'critical friend's' view of the work of the school, raising searching questions about standards, and the

effective use of resources on behalf of the pupils. The governing body as a whole know what is happening, and often visit the school. As well as fulfilling their statutory duties well in the main, the governors also have a spiritual interest in the success of the school and its pupils. This is partly the natural reflection of its Catholic status, and the close ties with the parishes it serves, and the diocesan requirements. Beyond this, the governors seek to see past the immediate to plan for the future, and have improved their development planning. Good examples of this are the decisions to lower the admission number to a more manageable number, and the long-term intention to open a nursery on-site to improve the school's overall provision.

66. Financial planning and control are efficient and effective, and the school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. A fairly large surplus carried forward for a few years has been brought within acceptable levels this year, and the funds have been very well used to appoint extra teaching and support staff. The school secretary keeps a close watch on the budget on behalf of the governors, and works well with the headteacher. The support staff are deployed well to meet pupils' needs, and give very good value for money. The caretaker is conscientious in his duties, and he and his staff keep the school tidy and clean.
67. The headteacher is also well supported by other staff with management responsibilities. The deputy headteacher achieves this most effectively by the standards she sets in her own teaching, which is consistently of a very high standard. She also sets the lead in working effectively with support staff in a productive professional relationship to meet pupils' particular needs. Further than this, she acts as mentor to relatively inexperienced staff, who attest to her skilled support. She has acted as headteacher when the head was asked to lead another school in the diocese out of special measures, and has been closely involved as a governor in all the recent appointments. Her enthusiasm for her teaching was evident in the excitement she generated amongst the Year 2 pupils in working in the style of the artist Kandinsky, for example.
68. The management of special educational needs is outstanding. In the absence of the appointed co-ordinator the headteacher undertakes this role most effectively. The co-ordinator has established an ethos of teamwork with a commitment to high standards of provision and care for pupils, without compromise. This is an exceptional improvement since the previous inspection. The particular strengths of the management are foresight, and very good development planning. The school orders technical equipment well in advance to be ready in place for when it is needed. The co-ordinator informs the high school staff well in advance of the arrival of pupils with severe needs, so that they can have the necessary resources and expertise ready.
69. The organisation of training is raising the expertise of the support staff to a high level. Careful timetabling ensures that this expertise is in the right place at the right time, ready to begin interacting with pupils from the start of lessons. The school is already preparing for the requirements of the new Code of Practice. One point for development is to improve the school's paper-based record keeping into a more efficient, possibly electronic, form.
70. The subject leaders take their roles seriously, and work hard to ensure that staff and pupils know what they should do to achieve the best results. They all ensure that their colleagues are fully informed of developments in the subject, and check that their planning covers the required elements effectively. Those with responsibility for core subjects such as English, mathematics and science have opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in classrooms. For example, the recently appointed mathematics co-ordinator, in only her second year of teaching, has been effectively supported to monitor almost all of her colleagues in their classroom work. The subject co-ordinators keep in touch with local developments through meetings of co-ordinators with local subject advisers, and training courses. The whole staff work together to promote the pupils' learning, and they are now extremely well placed to continue to make improvements to the quality of education, and to raise standards further.

71. The school is now well resourced, an improvement since the last inspection, and these resources are used well to support pupils' learning. More large play equipment is on order, to improve the outdoor play facilities for the younger pupils. The accommodation has some strengths, particularly for the Reception and infant classes. These areas are used to the full to promote learning. For example, a pupil with special needs from the juniors has access to the sand and water play areas with his support assistant to help with his physical co-ordination. There are good outside play areas, and playing fields. However, the junior accommodation is cramped for the number of pupils. Years 3 and 5 are very tightly packed in their class areas. This makes the coverage of the full curriculum difficult, particularly for activities such as art and design, design and technology, and practical mathematics, music and science. The ICT suite is a useful addition, but it has limited computer resources, and requires careful management to ensure that all pupils have full access to the equipment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards of attainment and the quality of education further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in writing by the end of Year 6 by helping pupils more effectively to develop skills in spelling, and in writing longer pieces of work that include more complex ideas and sentence structures.
(Paragraphs 9, 30, 85,96)
- (2) Continue to seek ways to increase the amount of teaching space at Key Stage 2, as funds allow, in order to provide sufficient learning areas to support the teaching of the full curriculum.
(Paragraphs 7, 71, 117, 134, 136)

Governors may also wish to consider the following minor issue:

To provide further opportunities for pupils to develop independence in their learning: this depends in part on improving the amount of learning space at Key Stage 2.
(Paragraphs 20, 76, 114, 142)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

55

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

24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	15	30	5	0	0	0
Percentage	9	27	55	9	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents almost two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	234
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	25
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	51
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	21	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	16
	Girls	21	19	21
	Total	36	34	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (100)	89 (100)	97 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	20	21	21
	Total	35	37	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	97 (100)	97 (100)
	National	85 (84)	86 (84)	91 (90)

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	22	19	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	12	17
	Girls	15	11	14
	Total	31	23	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (83)	56 (80)	76 (90)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	13	16
	Girls	14	12	15
	Total	29	25	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (80)	61 (89)	76 (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	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	213
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	30.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	257

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	518466
Total expenditure	488074
Expenditure per pupil	1915
Balance brought forward from previous year	35708
Balance carried forward to next year	66100*

** This has been reduced this year to £25000 (5% of budget)*

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	243
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	31	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	34	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	29	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	58	8	2	0
The teaching is good.	61	32	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	47	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	31	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	45	42	10	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	66	27	0	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	32	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	44	10	3	10

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

72. Since the previous inspection the school has set about systematically to improve the quality of the teaching, of the curriculum and of the assessment of children's progress. These are now all very good. The children make very good progress through the Reception year. The long-term planning is now securely linked to the national strategy for three to five year olds. The weekly and daily planning contains clear objectives for the children's learning, starting from the early learning objectives, or 'stepping stones', guidance. The children's progress is measured carefully from the earliest simple tests, known as baseline records, until they are ready for transfer to Level 1 of the National Curriculum. The teachers identify the children who are likely to experience difficulties at a suitably early stage. The additional support then put in place is of very good quality, enabling pupils who have special educational needs to make very good progress.
73. The quality of teaching in the Reception class is very good. At times the quality of planning, preparation and organisation, together with the amount of adult support, is excellent. Teaching fully meets the school's aim to provide quality experience for all pupils. The aim of the Reception class is that not a minute shall be wasted. The exceptionally strong teamwork of the staff builds a very positive attitude in the children. They love coming to school, and concentrate well throughout the busy day.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. The children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. They start at an average level, and by the end of the Reception year most socialise well, mix appropriately with older pupils and understand the class rules and the behaviour expected of them. The teachers use well-established routines to train the children in polite behaviour, and require them to tidy up after activities. Relationships are very good, and adults provide good role models for the children to follow. The Reception children get on well with the Year 1 pupils. They line up to go to the hall sensibly, and in assemblies they sit quietly and pay attention. They easily achieve the final learning objectives for their age in self-confidence, behaviour and self-control. This is because the teaching is very good.
75. The teacher uses physical education lessons in the hall to explore aspects of health and exercise. The children know that their heart beats faster after an active warm-up for the lesson. The main school hall is a good venue for the teacher to bring out the parachute, which allows children to develop confidence in facing unusual situations. The children bristle with nervous excitement before plunging underneath. Several adults are nearby in case the adventure proves too much for anyone. The human body display in the classroom shows how children are building up knowledge using appropriate vocabulary. Children co-operate well with each other in the small group activities. The staff keep detailed records of children's social development, which give them precise information to plan from. The school is aware that it is not making sufficient use of the potential of the outdoor play area to enhance this area of learning. The necessary large and adventurous play resources are on order.

Communication, language and literacy

76. Children start school slightly below average in language skills. They make good progress. By the time they leave, most of the oldest Reception children achieve the final 'stepping stones' or beyond. In the general activities the children have good opportunities to listen to adults and each other, and to develop their speaking skills. The teacher uses the structure of the literacy hour well to introduce the children to the letters and sounds needed to build their reading skills. The children love reading the big books with expression. In the follow-up activities the children

practise making the letter shapes in sand, with playdough, or on the creative table with a variety of materials. In two formal groups they learn to sequence the letters into words, and the quickest children copy whole sentences which the teacher models for them. All children get equal turns in the group activities and the changeover is very fast, no time is wasted. The teaching is good and enables the children to make good progress in reading and writing. However, the literacy sessions are slightly too long and the emphasis on reading and writing is greater than on talking. The role-play areas are little used in the mornings, for example. No adult is deployed to focus children more on this important skill.

Mathematical development

77. Children start school about average in mathematical awareness. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage and are likely to achieve the last 'stepping stones', or above, at the end of the Reception year. The teachers plan and resource good practical activities to give the children the hands-on experience which leads them to understand shape, size, weight and capacity. The teachers stress the importance of correct vocabulary, and ensure that the children know the terms full and empty, and half-full. The regular play with construction kits enables the children to see different shapes, how they fit together, how heavy they are and how to make patterns with them. The children count to 10 using counters. They learn how to solve simple problems involving 'more than' and 'less than'. The teaching here is good. At the end of the lessons, the teacher checks that the children have understood the new material and activities.
78. The school has precise measures of where the children are in relation to the mathematical 'stepping stones', and can plan accordingly. The numeracy sessions are quite long, so the teacher rightly breaks them up to include a free choice session. Here the children can select from a number of activities, including the role-play doctor's surgery and the computer. These are valuable learning opportunities in their own right. They could usefully be expanded to take a larger part of the timetable, with adult supervision, to guide the further development of children's speaking and listening skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. The children enter the school with a below average knowledge and understanding of the world. They make very good progress and by the end of the Reception year most are likely to exceed the required learning goals. The teaching is very good, and creates a lively learning environment filled with objects to stimulate the children's curiosity. Teachers plan topics to capture the children's interest. They marvel, for instance, at the effect of the wind on the kites and streamers they have made. They are proud of their boat models, but even more excited when they test them, finding that they actually float and move before the wind.
80. Children learn about the world in and around the school, making good use of the school's site and further afield, on visits to widen their horizons. They receive good direct teaching on the use of computers. They develop an awareness of past times from events they recall in their family lives. They talk about the seasons, the changes in the weather and the passage of time. The school values the contribution of parents to the teaching of some of these activities. The rigorous system of measuring how children are progressing along the relevant 'stepping stones' enables the teacher to plan step-by-step learning opportunities for them.

Physical development

81. The children start school at an average stage of physical development. They make very good progress through the Foundation Stage, and most are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the time they finish the Reception year. Teaching is very good in this area. The school provides a secure outdoor play area where children grow in confidence, and practise running, jumping and playing imaginatively. This resource is due to be enhanced considerably in the

near future. The teacher provides further opportunities in physical education lessons where children learn to co-ordinate and control their bodies as they move around. They take care to use the space well and show concern for the safety of others. The children are agile, alert and enthusiastic. The very wide range of equipment and media planned and provided in the nursery allows children to learn to use tools and materials safely and with increasingly fine control.

Creative development

82. The children's creative development is below average on starting school. They make very good progress so that by the time of leaving the Reception year all the children have reached the final 'stepping stones' and some are above average by this time. This is due to the wide experiences provided, and to excellent teaching. With the encouragement of the staff, the children develop enthusiasm and confidence to explore their own ideas. For example, they gain knowledge of colour, texture and shape, when blowing paint through straws. In a relaxed session singing together, children learn to sing songs from memory and give moving renditions of hymns such as 'My Head, My Heart'. Children build up an effective class tapestry. They choose their own materials to make musical instruments, but do not talk to adults or one another enough about their experiences.
83. Children develop their imaginations well, and they are never bored. They explore a wide variety of movement in dance, and during the 'Bear Hunt' they express a wide range of feeling and facial expression. In the surgery corner they play the roles of doctor, nurse and receptionist. They have very good resources to use, and as many as six young registrars can 'stethoscope' the 'poorly patients', and present a healthy bill for their services. Creative development is a strength of the Foundation Stage.

ENGLISH

84. Pupils' attainment in English is above average by the time they are seven, and by the time they leave the school. This is above the results of recent national tests and is confirmed by analysis of pupils' past work, observation of lessons and discussions with pupils. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.
85. The overall quality of teaching is very good in the infant and junior classes and very good progress is being achieved. Progress in the infant and upper junior classes is particularly vigorous. Here, the quality of teaching is consistently very good and sometimes outstanding. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have some gaps in their learning from previous years. As a result, there are still some weaknesses in their work, notably in writing. Teachers are working very effectively to redress these and standards in writing for pupils in their final year at school are set to rise.
86. Standards in speaking and listening are above average for both infant and junior pupils. The school's results are good in this aspect of English because a higher than average proportion of pupils reaches the national expectation. The proportion of pupils doing better than the national expectation is about average. By the time they are seven, most pupils listen well and speak clearly. They show understanding by giving apt answers to teachers' questions. Pupils of all abilities talk readily about their work and are considerate in conversation, listening to each other's contributions and taking turns.
87. Most pupils are confident about joining in class discussions. This results from the very good ethos for learning that teachers create and the sense of security they give pupils through thoughtful and skilful management. However, a minority of pupils remain reticent in class discussions and need more encouragement to join in.
88. By the age of eleven, pupils have made suitable gains in speaking and listening. Pupils listen actively, weigh arguments and give considered answers. In mathematics and ICT, for

example, pupils engage in lively discussion, exchanging ideas fluently and using words accurately. This results from teachers' high expectations and carefully planned attention to the correct use of vocabulary. Pupils support each other in conversation, for example, when discussing their history work, and respect and appreciate each other's views. This reflects the way that teachers consistently value and acknowledge pupils' contributions to lessons and the very strong example that teachers and classroom assistants present of good humoured, co-operative working.

89. Standards in reading are above average for infant and junior pupils. This is most clearly the case for the younger pupils, a high proportion of whom exceed the national standard. Pupils of all abilities care about their achievement in reading and want to improve. At the same time, pupils in both age groups are very enthusiastic about reading and enjoy talking about the books they have read. Teachers are careful in the books they select for pupils or guide them towards. The books they provide are well matched to pupils' differing abilities and interests. This promotes very good progress, especially in the upper infant class, and gives pupils pleasure in reading.
90. By the time they are seven, most pupils read fluently and accurately. Most pupils use their knowledge of sounds systematically to read words they do not know. Average and more able pupils have a very good understanding of what they have read. Less able pupils and some pupils with special educational needs are less confident in reading difficult words and their understanding is less secure. Nevertheless, because of the high quality of teaching, they achieve well.
91. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a suitably wide experience of different kinds of books, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Most name clear preferences, explaining, for example, that they enjoy the humour in the writing of authors such as Jacqueline Wilson. Average and above average readers read fluently, accurately and with some apt expression. Less able pupils are sometimes hesitant with difficult words but draw on a satisfactory reading vocabulary and good knowledge of sounds. This enables them to read suitably matched books confidently and to enjoy them.
92. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' ability to read for information was found to be relatively weak. This is no longer the case. The school library is well organised and has a good stock of interesting, relevant books. Teachers provide opportunities in topic work for pupils to practise using the library and look for information in books. Pupils confidently use the contents and alphabetical index of a book and can locate a subject in the library using the simplified Dewey system.
93. Standards in writing are above average by the time pupils are seven but average at the time they leave the school. This difference in attainment reflects differences between the two groups of pupils and the slow progress that many of the present upper junior pupils made in their lower junior years.
94. By the time they are seven, most pupils attain or exceed the expected level in writing. They write clearly, sequencing ideas in sentences and usually showing these correctly with capitals and full stops. Pupils' handwriting is suitably formed, positioned and fluent. The most able pupils write with a good sense of overall structure and use a wide vocabulary. Their story writing is sometimes lively and imaginative and they write fluently and accurately about factual matters, for example, in geography and history.
95. By the time pupils leave the school, their writing is generally neat and well presented, showing that pupils take pride in their work. Average and higher ability pupils use a satisfactory range of words and adjust their writing well for different purposes, including stories, newspaper articles, diaries, play-scripts, poems and factual reports. Pupils in their final year at school used desktop publishing to produce a newspaper. This extended their ICT skills and, at the same

time, improved their understanding of journalistic style. This reflects the very effective emphasis that teachers give to increasing the range of pupils' writing.

96. Infant and junior pupils share some weaknesses in their writing. Many pupils in all classes make too many spelling mistakes. Although most pupils are competent writers for their age, many are not as confident as they should be in writing independently. In most classes, average and more able pupils often receive too much guidance on the content and form of their writing from the teacher and classroom assistants. Teachers do not place enough emphasis on building the skills that pupils require to write independently. Apart from the most able pupils in Year 6, few pupils extend their ideas sufficiently and link sentences in ways that bring depth and complexity to their writing.
97. Teachers have already identified these features of pupils' writing and have begun to remedy them. This typifies the school's very purposeful approach to teaching and learning, in which pupils' attainments are very carefully tracked and clear targets are set. Concise, individual targets are shared with pupils, so that improvement becomes a joint enterprise. This engages pupils very effectively and improves progress.
98. Teachers and classroom assistants in all classes promote excellent relationships, giving pupils confidence, security and satisfaction in their learning. They provide interesting, varied and challenging tasks that engage pupils and often capture their imagination. This is reflected in pupils' very good attitudes to learning. Pupils in all classes are interested and enthusiastic. They listen carefully to the teacher and are eager to achieve well. In conversation and in lessons, pupils are polite and very well behaved. They are considerate towards one another and support one another well when working together.
99. The richness and versatility of pupils' speaking, and to a more limited extent their writing, is improved by the links that teachers build with other subjects, for example, history. Teachers consistently emphasise, in other subjects such as mathematics and science, the importance of listening, speaking and writing well, and using special or technical vocabulary correctly.

MATHEMATICS

100. At the last inspection, standards of attainment were described as about average, despite higher attainment in national tests. The quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their learning were judged satisfactory. Significant improvements have been made since then in all areas of the subject. Some of this is due to the successful adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy, some to changes in teaching, and some to better procedures to identify and remedy weaknesses in teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is very good across the school, and all lessons seen were at least good. This supports the pupils' learning very well, and they make good progress overall. Because the work is so interesting and the teachers have very good working relationships with the pupils, they have very good attitudes to the subject, and their behaviour is excellent.
101. By age seven, pupils attain above average levels currently, but may improve to the school's usual well above average levels by the time of the national tests in May 2002. Progress for this group has been good since entry, and they have made very good progress in Year 2. This is because they concentrate very well on their work, and respond very well to the high quality of teaching. At the beginning of a lesson, in the warm-up activity, Year 2 pupils count on speedily with the teacher in 2s, 5s and 10s in practising tables. The teacher slipped in some 'errors' but the pupils quickly spotted this and were eager to 'correct' her. At her prompting, individuals explain that, for example, 36 cannot be in the five times table as it does not follow the pattern of final digit 0 or 5. These pupils have clearly had good experience of using practical apparatus to aid their thinking, such as pegboards and number lines, and handle calculators competently for their age. A group of Year 2 pupils, some with special needs, works in a class with Year 1 pupils. Although they work at a lower level than most of their peers, they are well supported by the teacher and support assistant, and achieve only slightly below expectations for their age.

102. By age eleven, the current Year 6 group work at a terrific pace with their teachers, matching their enthusiasm with their own application and enjoyment, and achieve above average levels. They present their work systematically and tidily, and try hard to achieve the learning objectives shared with them by the staff. This is a good feature of the teaching in the subject throughout the school, as teachers let the pupils know what they are expected to learn at the beginning of a lesson, and check with them how far their understanding has progressed by the end. Almost all pupils in the higher attaining set are confident in applying their prior knowledge to deal with new problems. For example, after learning how to read and plot co-ordinates in four quadrants, they excitedly seize the teacher's challenge to walk blindfold a grid marked on the classroom floor. The teacher skilfully involved the whole group in providing sets of co-ordinates, and from the accuracy of the blindfold translation from one point to another, it was clear that the new learning was being consolidated. This work was at higher than expected levels for their age. Boys and girls achieve equally here.
103. In the second set, the pupils worked on the same topic, but at a level appropriate to their prior understanding. Almost all these pupils understand how to plot and read co-ordinates in the first quadrant, the expected level for their age. Because they were guided by challenging but well-supported tasks, many of them understood how to translate a point or a regular shape, given new co-ordinates. Two girls, in discussion, began to describe the abstract numerical basis to this activity, and to formulate 'rules' for themselves. This was work at a high level for their age, and represented very good progress for them. In this group, pupils with special needs were very skilfully prompted by the support assistant to understand that moving along or down the axes made the use of negative numbers necessary.
104. Whilst there was a solid concentration on number, and the progressive development of numerical skills, during the inspection, teachers ensure that the whole of the mathematics curriculum is covered. At Key Stage 1, the careful use of a commercial scheme of work provides regular checks for staff and pupils of their learning in prepared workbooks. Similarly at Key Stage 2, pupils consolidate their learning using textbooks for further practice. Because there are many opportunities in whole class work, and in working in pairs and groups, for pupils to listen and talk, they have very good opportunities to use the specific subject vocabulary. This contributes well to their development of speaking and listening skills.
105. Teachers also ensure that pupils use practical activities to reinforce their grasp of ideas and patterns. For example, Year 1 pupils used number lines and physical objects to help them learn subtraction; Year 3 pupils used counting blocks and bags to aid their work in division; Year 5 pupils caught and threw a soft ball with their teacher to 'fix' their tables practice; Year 6 pupils used specially prepared dice to play a co-ordinates game. There are also good examples of the use of skills learned being used in other subjects such as science and geography. Year 6 pupils have already learned to work with spreadsheets when in Year 5, and there were some supportive ICT programs in use in some lessons during the inspection.
106. The recently appointed co-ordinator has made a very good start to her leadership of the subject, and has already a very good grasp of the strengths and potential weaknesses from her monitoring of classroom teaching and lesson planning. She correctly feels that further computer programs are required to help the pupils to develop their mathematics skills using ICT, and that the concentration on raising standards by eleven is the chief priority.

SCIENCE

107. Since the previous inspection, standards for pupils in Year 2 have been maintained well above those expected for pupils aged seven years. The standards attained in the national tests in Year 6 were well below average in 2001, but over five years have been broadly average, with a high point in 1998. The school is particularly concerned because the 2001 results show that pupils did not achieve the potential indicated by the teachers' assessments when they were in

Year 2. The staff have put in place a number of measures to try to overcome this imbalance. The school has adopted a new, stronger curriculum based on national guidelines. The headteacher has analysed the test papers to show areas of difficulty, and to identify particularly weak groups of pupils. Additional support staff are working with these groups and with the larger classes. The inspection findings are that progress through the infants is very good, and that junior pupils also make good progress now. Overall the teaching of science is very good throughout the school. Year 6 pupils achieve at least average levels currently, and, if the pace of progress continues at its current rate, possibly higher by the end of the year. The staff take account of the needs of all pupils so that pupils who have special educational needs, even those with severe needs, also make very good progress.

108. Strengths in the subject are:

- the high standards in the infants, and the pupils' sense of curiosity;
- very good teaching throughout the school;
- the very practical nature of the work given;
- junior pupils' evaluation of their own standards;
- the very good support for slower pupils.

Areas for improvement are:

- to bring the juniors fully into line with the high standards in the infants;
- the marking of pupils' work.

109. Teaching is very good overall throughout the school, and contributes to good progress. Teachers explain well how the lesson links with earlier work to enable pupils to see how their learning is improving. The teachers in the infants encourage the pupils to look at science through questions. For example, their study of electricity raised the question of the difference between simple and complex circuits. This encouraged pupils to look ahead; as one Year 2 boy said, "If you're going to make an upstairs, downstairs circuit, you're going to need four connections." With this clue, and very good support, a group of pupils with special needs was the first to solve the task. In all lessons, the teachers' explanations are very clear, in suitably short introductions to lessons. The good relationships mean that pupils are interested and willing to learn. They learn by listening well, watching closely and answering questions readily. The teachers often say, "Work quickly; observe closely; be enthusiastic."

110. Learning is particularly strong in those lessons where pupils conduct the experiment themselves. They gain a more secure understanding from the hands-on experience. For example, in the Year 5 study of sound, the pupils accelerated the learning by comparing two sources. They were soon convinced that the principle applied equally to the milk bottle blowing and the harp string plucking. Teachers use question and answer very effectively to draw out and extend pupils' ideas. By repeating the question "Why?" this teacher got the pupils to work out that the reason for the sounds they could hear was vibration carried through the air. The older pupils enjoy the responsibility of deciding their own format for recording their findings. The teachers use ICT well for pupils to research and to display their results. The use of ICT is not evenly balanced across all of the topic areas, however. Year 6 pupils learned that science is concerned as much about communication as about finding things out. They saw that their literacy skills were needed to write accurate reports about the startling results of a reversible change experiment. They used their numeracy skills well to control the fairness of the experiment by adding carefully measured increments of water to the chemicals. While pupils discuss well in their working groups throughout the school, not enough use is made by staff of formal reporting by pupils to the whole class. This means that pupils do not always share their findings fully.

111. Many features have improved significantly since the previous inspection. These include procedures for monitoring progress, the focus on the use of literacy and numeracy skills, the step-by-step development (but not the monitoring) of the curriculum, and opportunities for

pupils to interpret their work in graphs and charts. However, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, particularly the accurate spelling of subject specific words.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Teaching and learning in both these subjects were unsatisfactory in the last report. Standards in art were below average at ages seven and eleven, and well below average in design and technology at eleven. Teachers' subject knowledge, and the place of the subjects in the curriculum, were also weak.
113. Since then, significant improvements have been made. National guidance has been adopted for both subjects, and they both have a clear place in the curriculum, and in teachers' planning. From displays round the school, and work observed in lessons, seven year olds attain above average standards in both art and design and design and technology. By age eleven, pupils attain above average standards in design and technology, and average standards in art and design. The subjects both make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development, particularly through the study of the work of a variety of artists and craftspersons.
114. Because the teaching of the subjects is planned for a half-term alternately in each key stage, only lessons in art were observed at Key Stage 1, and in design and technology at Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching in both subjects was very good, leading to good progress for the pupils, who take part in the lessons with great enjoyment, enthusiasm and creative drive. Occasionally, however, teachers and support assistants do not allow the pupils sufficient opportunities to choose the materials and equipment they need for themselves.
115. Year 2 pupils responded superbly to a very well planned lesson, to work in the style of the artist Kandinsky. Because the teacher is such an enthusiast, and was supported by a support worker who has good skills in the subject, the pupils caught the mood and took the basics of form and colour to create a wide variety of bold and, in some cases, subtle paintings. Many of them applied high level skills in mixing the colour they wanted, and in placing colours next to one another to achieve particular effects. They know that they should not copy the paintings they have seen, but use the ideas in their own way, and explain very clearly for their age what they have tried to do. Both boys and girls achieved successful outcomes, and those pupils with special needs were fully included in the work.
116. Pupils in the two Year 1 classes had been introduced the week before to formal weaving techniques, as part of a sequence of making patterns with materials, linked well by the staff to learning about materials in science. A student teacher led significant aspects of this work alongside the class teachers, useful in her progress in learning to be a teacher. These young pupils showed great concentration and good skill for their age in choosing materials and colours to develop the weft against last week's warp. This was high level work for their age, very skilfully supported by the staff. Unusually, the staff ensured that there were hard and resistant materials in the mix, and demonstrated how to use a vice and hacksaw to cut them to size.
117. In design and technology, a display of the Year 6 pupils' designs and construction of a pair of slippers shows above average skill in following the full design and make process through from consideration of the initial idea to design, evaluation, and creation, with ongoing evaluation of the work in progress. The finished product is also of high quality in almost all cases. Similarly, in a Year 5 design and technology lesson, pupils developed their designs for a musical instrument further in discussion with a partner. These designs had moved from the initial sketched idea, to firm proposals, with indicative size, specific materials and quantities, and methods and processes for the construction. The teacher's high expectations shone through the high quality of this work, and he was well supported by a support assistant who ensured that those with special needs were able to take a full part in the work. The classroom for these pupils is very cramped, and both the staff and pupils used ingenuity to enable this work to proceed. For example, the pupils had been asked to bring materials suitable for the task from

home. As there is very little storage space, the pupils had to keep them under their desks between their feet, and take care not to step on them as they stood to work.

118. Year 4 pupils enjoyed a very well planned lesson, founded in their previous learning, to design and make a pop-up book. This was an interesting and challenging activity which captured the pupils' imagination. They studied a range of published books, and considered the methods used to animate the pop-ups. With effective support from the teacher and a support assistant, they thought ahead, and considered the sequence of their work, clearly envisaging the design and make process. They measured accurately, and used scissors with skill.
119. The recently appointed art co-ordinator has made a good start to her management of the subject. She is enthusiastic, and has an effective development plan in outline. She is working alongside the design and technology co-ordinator, but has effectively overseen good developments since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

120. Pupils achieve average standards in history and geography by the time they leave the school. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards for seven year olds in history and geography are above average.
121. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were found to be only just in line with the expected levels. This resulted from lack of guidance to teachers on what should be taught and how learning should be sequenced. Clear, informative subject guidance is now in place and lessons are now well planned to build progress.
122. By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge of their own locality and some local environmental issues. They study traffic problems close to the school and have written to the local authority explaining their views and proposing solutions. Pupils use maps in their studies of nearby and remote places. They know some conventional signs and locate places on a map using co-ordinates. They show a good understanding of some differences between localities, contrasting human and physical features of Struay and Tocuaro with those of places they know at first hand.
123. By the time they leave the school, pupils have an increased knowledge of other countries, including Jamaica and Egypt. They understand the effects on people's lives of landscape and climate. Pupils rise to the challenge of geographical questions and answer them well but cannot always draw on recent learning to do so. This is because their most recent topic work has a historical emphasis, based on planning the main focus of the lessons alternately on history and geography for blocks of time. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of environmental issues.
124. In history, pupils have good factual knowledge of some key events, such as the Great Fire of London. They understand, in detail, how it progressed, linking cause and event. Many pupils show some insight into people's thoughts and feelings at the time of the fire. Pupils are developing a suitable understanding of the passage of time and are beginning to use dates accurately.
125. By the time they are eleven, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of some key historical figures such as King Henry VIII and Queen Victoria. They investigate the reasons for their actions and seek to understand how they felt. For example, they consider Henry's motives for marrying Catherine of Aragon and the feelings of Victoria following the death of Albert. Pupils gain a satisfactory knowledge of some ancient cultures, such as those of Greece and Egypt. However, pupils are unclear about different kinds of historical evidence and have not had enough practice in studying and evaluating them.

126. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Infant and junior pupils behave well and are enthusiastic about their lessons. They listen carefully to the teacher, settle quickly to work and concentrate well. When working together, for example, at the computer, they co-operate and support one another well.
127. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the upper infant class, expectations are high, promoting above average standards. Teachers make very good use of the local area, for example, to study the features of rivers and problems associated with traffic. This brings relevance and interest to pupils' learning. Teachers in all classes seek to build pupils' geographical and historical vocabulary and to ensure that pupils use new words accurately. This sharpens pupils' historical and geographical understanding and improves the quality of their listening, speaking and writing. In some lessons, teachers use computers to improve the quality of learning. In one resourceful application of ICT, a junior pupil was helped to feel 'included' in a field trip he had missed by following a computer simulation that the teacher had prepared from photographs taken on the day.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

128. Pupils' attainment is above average in Year 6, and average in Year 2. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school the pupils who have special educational needs make the same very good progress as their peers, because of the high quality support they receive in lessons. The good level of staff training has made them more confident in using the classroom computers for work in a wider range of subjects. All pupils get equal opportunities to use the new computer suite, because they have planned, regular sessions there. The training of a support assistant has been very effective to enable her to give good tuition to small groups of pupils.
129. Strengths in the subject are:
- the teachers' planning, which covers all aspects of the ICT curriculum;
 - the consistency with which all pupils in a class learn and make progress;
 - the good quality of teaching, particularly the expertise of the support assistant who teaches groups of pupils;
 - the wide use of the computer to support learning in many other subjects;
 - the pupils' role in assessing and evaluating their own progress.

Areas for improvement are:

- to organise the timetable to reduce the disturbance by pupils returning to class from the computer suite;
 - to increase the resources in the computer suite so that half or whole classes can be accommodated.
130. The determination and teamwork of the staff, to give pupils a high quality grounding in basic skills, have led to very good progress over time, and high standards. The teachers value the new long-term scheme of work, because it gives them the structure to extend pupils' skills rapidly throughout each year. Each lesson is designed to move pupils forward. The teachers give pupils the initial, clear introduction to the skills to be learned. The support assistant supervises the practice sessions well, and gives additional explanation, particularly valuable for the slower pupils. The discussions about the work are informal and pleasant occasions where pupils listen to each other's views and weigh the evidence. For instance, Year 6 often study the software to judge how effective it is for their learning. They not only learn how to use web sites, but also compare several for quality. They use this awareness when they come to design their own.
131. Following this pattern, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It enables the Year 2 pupils to use the computer confidently for word processing. In art they explore pattern, and work in the style of famous artists. In mathematics, they enter data and use the program

effectively to present the information in graphs. Year 6 pupils are already able to use the computer for controlling a sequence of model traffic lights, and they are beginning to plan computer presentations incorporating sound and animation. These projects develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well. The strategy for teaching brings pupils of all abilities up to a similar level of experience, because they get the attention and help they need in the small groups. However, when the groups return to class there is an inevitable slight disturbance to the flow of lessons. The class teachers always try to show the returning pupils what has been covered in their absence, but this is not always ideal. The computer suite does not have enough computers to teach all pupils in the same class together.

MUSIC

132. During the period when National Curriculum requirements were relaxed the school commendably maintained a good breadth of coverage. Therefore, combined with good teaching, the standards achieved are in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. The influence of the co-ordinator through the new structured planning scheme has established an enthusiasm for the subject. The teachers have been particularly determined to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and to teach music to their own classes. The need for a specialist teacher has diminished since the previous inspection. Pupils who have special educational needs receive considerable support to enable them to make the same good progress as their peers.
133. Strengths in the subject are:
- singing in the infants;
 - the improved range of resources, expanding pupils' range of experience;
 - the promotion of music as a cultural influence.
134. Areas for improvement are:
- singing in the juniors;
 - the accommodation, to allow more exuberant musical activities to be undertaken.
135. Teaching is good and promotes good progress through the school. Teachers have a clear idea of what they want pupils to achieve in each lesson. Many of the projects are planned as a sequence of lessons. For instance, in the Year 2 topic of 'Teddy's adventure', the musical elements of rhythm and pitch are built up week by week. The pupils are good at interpreting actions of the story in sound and are getting better in keeping to time by rehearsing. The teachers maintain a light-heartedness and enthusiasm so that the pupils enjoy the experience. Much of the progress of the work itself is based on the pupils' own suggestions. This makes it more meaningful to them and they remember more. For instance, Year 6 pupils could suggest a variety of ways to create 'body percussion' sounds to use to imitate rhythms of Irish jigs. They do not use ICT enough in music.
136. Music makes a much stronger contribution to pupils' awareness of local and wider culture, than at the previous inspection. The wider range of instruments gives pupils hands-on experience to try the sounds and rhythms of other lands. Pupils are surrounded by music playing during lessons, again from a wide variety of cultures. The open nature of the work areas causes some teachers to hold back on the noisier aspects of music, such as practising pupils' compositions with a large number of instruments. This has inhibited Year 6 pupils' progress in composition and rehearsal.
137. Pupils learn singing, and the words of new songs, in rehearsal periods after assemblies. The calm, respectful atmosphere of the assemblies carries over into the song practice. The infants make more of this, achieving, for instance, a truly spiritual rendition of the hymn 'My Head, My Heart', with the pupils signing the words. The teachers encourage better quality by requiring the pupils "to sit up, breathe well and open mouths wide." Therefore the singing is brighter, more confident and lively. The junior pupils sit to sing, do not have guidance on phrasing and

are quieter and more hesitant. The absence of a simple assessment system deprives the teachers of a useful tool for tracking pupils' progress. This makes it more difficult to decide what pupils need to do next to improve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. The last inspection found standards to be in line with expectations in both the infants and the juniors, with satisfactory teaching leading to satisfactory progress. This situation has been maintained, except that improvements have been made in the teaching of dance, so that standards here for eleven year olds are above average.
139. Most lessons seen were dance lessons, with one Year 3 gymnastics lesson taken by a supply teacher. From teachers' planning, however, it is clear that the whole of the subject curriculum is covered during the year, including swimming at both key stages. The quality of teaching during the inspection was good, leading to good progress in the pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included, including those with severe learning needs, and make similar progress to their peers. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good, and they made good progress in learning how their bodies respond to exercise, and how to co-operate in a variety of social groupings.
140. In a Years 1 and 2 dance lesson, the teacher's excellent management of the pupils allowed the lesson to proceed smoothly. She gave the pupils good opportunities to practise the different elements, and they responded very well in groups and pairs to create an eight-beat dance pattern, to lead to different styles of folk dancing from a variety of world cultures. This is a good theme through the subject: teachers take opportunities to introduce the pupils to a variety of dances and games from around the world, as well as from British traditions. Year 2 pupils were not stretched as much as they could have been, but some of the Year 1 pupils achieved above expected levels for their age.
141. One of the Year 6 teachers takes physical education lessons whilst her colleague takes music with the other class. In the dance lessons seen, pupils were getting to grips with circle dances from Macedonia and Greece. The teacher handled the sessions very skilfully, and managed the potential difficulty of the pupils being required to hold hands with skill. The pupils had learnt the simpler Macedonian dance, and could perform this with skill, although the girls were more competent in general than the boys. In the more complex Greek dance, teacher and pupils showed great patience as those who had clearly understood the intricate weaving pattern tried to help those, mainly boys, who found the required co-ordination difficult. Overall, their attainment was above expected levels, with girls generally attaining higher levels than boys.
142. Year 3 pupils worked well to develop a linked sequence of movements, including rolls and balances. They carried apparatus with care, and worked well in teams to place it accurately in the hall. They made good attempts to translate their work from the floor to the apparatus, but were restricted by the teacher's insistence that they should all approach the apparatus from one direction. This limited their creative opportunities, slowed activity by queuing, and left the spaces round the apparatus unused.
143. The co-ordinator has recently taken responsibility for the subject, and is actively involved in organising extra-curricular sports activities. These include football, netball, and a lunchtime jogging club. There are links with other schools for team games, and occasional extra coaching from a local professional football club.