

INSPECTION REPORT

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108031

Headteacher: Mr P Fletcher

Reporting inspector: Mr R A Robinson
21024

Dates of inspection: 20 - 23 May 2002

Inspection number: 245820

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

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Eden Way
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr K Berlet

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21024	Mr R Robinson Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Provision for children in the foundation stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1234	Mrs T Bradley 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?
18344	Mr D Earley Team inspector	Science Geography History Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27777	Mr R Greenall Team inspector	English Art Design and technology Music	How well are the pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This small Catholic primary school for boys and girls aged 3 -11 years is situated in Kirkstall, close to the centre of Leeds. Pupils come from a very wide range of social backgrounds. The school has 161 full-time pupils and 24 children in the nursery who attend part-time. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Eleven pupils are from travellers' families. Thirty-eight pupils (19 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs, which is below average; these pupils have mainly moderate or specific learning difficulties. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs; this is at about the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is broad, though it is well below average overall: this is much lower than at the time of the last inspection. A significant proportion of pupils leaves the school at the end of the nursery to attend Catholic schools which do not have nursery facilities. About a quarter of pupils at the school are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The number of pupils on roll has fallen since the last inspection. There has been significant movement of pupils to and from the school this academic year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary is a good school. Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is good. Pupils' behaviour, personal development and attitudes to work are very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. The pastoral care for all pupils is a particular strength. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and he manages the school well. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and those from travellers' families, for the following reasons:
 - The quality of teaching is good.
 - Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and personal development are very good.
 - Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils are very good.
 - Equality of opportunity for all pupils is very good.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and good progress in all other areas of learning.
- Standards, by the end of Year 6, are above average in art and physical education.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The pastoral care of pupils is of a high standard.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards, by the end of Year 6, are below the national average in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards, by the end of Year 6, do not meet the national expectations in design and technology and music.
- Pupils' attendance is well below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in June 1997. Pupils' achievements are good. The quality of teaching has improved; there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. The

provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now very good. The overall leadership and management of the school has improved from satisfactory to good. The following items represent responses to the areas for development identified in the last inspection:

- The School Development Plan has been improved and there is now some monitoring of teaching and learning, though the role of co-ordinators in monitoring teaching is limited. Members of the senior management team have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- Teachers' lesson plans have improved and identify what pupils should learn in lessons. The checking of pupils' progress is now good and the information is used satisfactorily to influence future teaching.
- All statutory requirements are met in respect of the curriculum. Standards in information and communication technology have improved very well and are in line with national expectations, though standards in music and design and technology remain below average. There are still some minor omissions in the governors' annual report to parents.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	D	D	C
mathematics	A	E	E	C
science	D	D	D	D

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

The variations in the size of classes, the differences in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and the changing character of the school's intake of pupils over time make comparisons between years, and the tracking of trends, unreliable. Standards, this year, are below the national average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6; however, inspection judgements show that pupils' achievements including those with special educational needs and of travellers' children, are good.

Children in the reception and nursery classes achieve well overall. By the end of the reception year, children are on course to meet the standards expected nationally in personal, social and emotional development, in physical development and in creative development but are unlikely to reach expected standards in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.

In the 2001 national tests, at the end of Year 2, standards were above the national average in mathematics and in line with the national average in reading and writing. Compared to similar schools standards were well above average. Standards this year are close to the national average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics because of a significantly increased proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

Standards in art and design and physical education are above the national expectations, but they are below average in design and technology and in music by the end of Year 6. Standards in geography, in history and in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6.

The school's targets for the proportion of pupils likely to achieve the level expected by the end of

Year 6 are very demanding, particularly in view of the significant changes in the composition of the present Year 6 class; however, the school is on course to exceed the target set for mathematics though may not quite achieve the target set for English.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils have very positive attitudes to their studies, and work industriously.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; pupils behave very well, and older pupils set a high standard for younger pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils use their initiative very well and relationships are very strong.
Attendance	Poor; attendance rates are well below the national average, in spite of the school's efforts. Too many pupils are absent for family holidays during term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It is particularly good in Years 2 and 6. The good quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes gives children a flying start to their learning at school. All teachers have very good relationships with their classes. These are based on clear and consistent management of lessons, high expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort; as a result, pupils work together very well and make good progress in their learning. The quality of teachers' planning is good and what is to be learnt in lessons is clear, shared with pupils and achievable. Teachers are well versed in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and they teach basic skills well; as a result, pupils develop secure skills in these areas. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to use talk to explore and express their own views, which promotes very good achievement in speaking and listening. The school meets the needs of all pupils well. In particular, pupils with special educational needs and travellers' children are helped well throughout the school and make good progress. Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively and use other resources well to assist pupils to learn with confidence and interest. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. There is some good practice, but most marking is cursory and gives few pointers to what a pupil has achieved or can go on next to achieve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; the curriculum is planned carefully to enable all children to achieve well within a caring learning community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; all staff work well together to give pupils the help they need.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral,	Very good; the strong provision pervades the whole life and work of the school. The exceptional care, respect and trust shared by pupils and adults are based firmly on Christian values and are a

social and cultural development	significant strength of the school.
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How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well; this is a very caring school with adults dedicated to the well being of each child. The procedures for checking pupils' progress are good and the information is used satisfactorily to support lesson planning.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very good and he manages the school well. The deputy headteacher and other members of staff assist him ably. The subject co-ordinators have few opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching in order to improve standards further. The aims and values of the school are promoted very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive of the school though its roles of monitoring standards are underdeveloped.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Staff and governors have identified areas for development well and actions taken to improve the school have been effective. There is a strong determination to provide a good education for all pupils within a very caring Catholic school.
The strategic use of resources	The school deploys its staff well and provides a good range of training for new teachers. Financial planning and day-to-day administration are good and grants for pupils with special educational needs are used well. The governing body understands soundly how to ensure it obtains best value for the benefit of pupils when spending its financial allocation.

The school has a sufficient number of staff. The accommodation is satisfactory. Learning resources are satisfactory overall; however, there are limited suitable resources to support pupils' learning in design and technology, information and communication technology and music.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Partnership with parents is good. Parents contribute well to their children's learning through supporting the school's homework policy and by providing additional resources through fund-raising activities.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enjoy school, behave well and make good progress because the teaching is good. The school helps children to become more mature and responsible. Children are expected to work hard. Parents find the staff are approachable and keep them well informed about their children's progress. The school is effectively led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of activities outside lessons is limited.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. The position in relation to extra-curricular activities is similar to that found in many schools. During each academic year there is a good range of sporting and other opportunities, such as a chess club and rehearsals for school productions.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001, standards in English and in science were below the national average, and, in mathematics, standards were well below average. Standards, compared with the national average for similar schools, were in line in English and in mathematics but below average in science.

2 Standards of the current Year 6 are similar to the 2001 national test results in English. They have improved in mathematics and science but are still below average. This improvement results from a combination of factors but particularly from the strengths in the teaching of the subjects in Year 6 and differences between the groups of pupils in 2001 compared to this year.

3 Statistical evidence indicates that standards have not improved enough compared to the national trend since the last inspection, when pupils' attainment in the national tests in 1997 was in line with the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science. But, this comparison does not take into account many significant changes in the composition of classes in the school. Since the last inspection, there has been a particularly high change over in the composition of classes; for example, in this academic year, 19 pupils who were mainly higher and average attainers have left the school and 14 pupils, mainly lower attainers, have joined the school. Over half of the pupils now come from very disadvantaged areas and backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the nursery and also the reception class is much lower than it was at the last inspection because of changes within the areas the school now mainly serves.

4 Standards in the national tests in 2001 for seven-year-olds were in line with the national average in reading and writing, and they were well above the average achieved in similar schools. Standards in mathematics were above the national average and well above the average of similar schools. Attainment of the present Year 2 is close to average in writing, below average in reading, and below average in mathematics and science. Standards of speaking and listening are above average. The differences between the test results and inspection judgements are the result of the small number of pupils in the year groups, which make statistical comparisons unreliable. In addition, the present group of pupils in Year 2 includes a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in the previous year.

5 No significant differences in the performance of boys and girls were seen during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and travellers' children make good progress because of the good support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils have been identified recently as being talented mainly in art and they achieve well.

6 Overall, pupils' achievements are good, from when they enter the school to reaching the end of Year 6; this is because of the good teaching at each stage of pupils' education and the very good attitudes to work and the high standard of behaviour of pupils. The good planning of lessons, good quality of teaching and strong emphasis on providing equality of opportunity within a very caring environment for all pupils ensures that they make similar progress, irrespective of their level of attainment.

7 The achievement of children of reception age is good. They make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and good progress in all their other areas of learning. A significant proportion of higher attaining children leave the school at the end of nursery to attend

other Catholic schools without nursery facilities resulting in attainment on entry to the reception class remaining well below average. In Years 1 and 2, pupils build on their prior attainment well and make good progress as the teaching is good and often very good in Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching is good, overall, and pupils achieve well; the teaching of the oldest pupils is often very good resulting in pupils making rapid progress.

8 Pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6 is good in the development of the skills of speaking and listening, and in reading, writing, mathematics and science, as a result of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. In English and mathematics, there are satisfactory opportunities to practise skills in other subjects. The good implementation of the literacy strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment in English.

9 Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with national expectations and their achievement is good; but the limitations of the equipment at the school restricts further improvements in standards. The use of information and communication technology to assist learning in other subjects is limited, particularly, in literacy, numeracy and science lessons. In art and design and in physical education, standards, by the end of Year 6, are above the national expectations and pupils achieve well because of teachers' good subject knowledge. Standards are below average in design and technology and music and their achievement is unsatisfactory; this is because of unsatisfactory learning resources and learning opportunities. In all other subjects, pupils achieve well and reach standards in line with the national expectations.

10 The school has set targets for the proportion of pupils expected to achieve the level expected of their age in English and mathematics by the age of eleven. The targets are based on the school's good records of pupils' attainment; however, because of significant changes in the present group of pupils in Year 6, these targets are very demanding. Despite this, because of the high proportion of very good teaching in Year 6, pupils are likely to exceed the target set for mathematics and almost reach the target set for English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 Pupils' attitudes to school have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Pupils behave very well during assemblies, lessons and at lunchtimes when they are not so closely supervised. Lunchtimes are happy and relaxed social occasions when pupils are keen to chat with visitors as well as their friends and teachers.

12 Children under five settle well in school and soon become accustomed to the daily routines in the nursery. The attitude of many older pupils in the juniors is extremely positive. Throughout the school pupils are extremely responsible, use their initiative well and treat other pupils with respect. Their good manners demonstrate their maturity and provide the younger pupils with positive role models to emulate. Examples of maturity were seen when an older girl mopped up a spilt drink, without adult supervision, and an older boy was particularly polite as he passed between two rows of younger children to join his friends for lunch. There are times when learning is an obvious joy to pupils and this makes a significant contribution to their spiritual development; for example in the reception class children were enthralled to learn about exotic tropical fruits, such as the dragon fruit, and delighted to find a shiny berry hidden beneath the folds of the Physalis leaves. Most pupils confidently discuss their feelings openly and enjoy school-life

13 The school's behaviour policy is used widely to promote high standards of good behaviour which contribute to the happy family atmosphere in the school. Bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour are dealt with systematically and parents are consulted when necessary. There were no exclusions this year. Throughout school, behaviour is very good. In the classroom, pupils respond particularly well to their teachers' high expectations of good behaviour and involvement in lessons. Teachers are kind to pupils' and demonstrate high levels of respect and sensitivity in their relationships. In consequence, lessons are well managed and make a good

contribution to pupils' moral and social development. Pupils concentrate well and present work of good quality in which they take pride.

14 Pupils discuss school life in a mature and sensible manner. Whilst discussing behaviour, bullying sexism, and racist attitudes, the pupils were perceptive about the feelings of others, understanding the impact of friendship on pupils who are lonely or unhappy.

15 Very good relationships make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Friendships are strong and help to raise self-esteem as pupils mature with confidence. The differences of other races are considered in lessons, including their values and beliefs, and this learning provides a sound base for the understanding of other people's traditions. Pupils can be seen arm in arm as they stroll around school. They are also secure in their relationships with the headteacher and the other adults who care for them.

16 When pupils are asked to undertake specific duties in school they respond very well. They fulfil the roles of class monitors efficiently by running errands for their teachers, and help to maintain the momentum of school routines; for example, they organise the seating arrangements for assemblies and a small group of 'buddy' volunteers help to improve the quality of play at break times by introducing traditional games to the younger children. The responsible contribution of pupils has a positive effect on personal development throughout the school.

17 Most pupils with special educational needs and travellers' children are very eager to improve. They work hard, behave well and co-operate with each other. This is because teachers and teaching assistants establish very good relationships and, where necessary, help children to improve their behaviour by providing positive support. They provide work which is well suited to the pupils' needs.

18 Pupils from the travellers' community enjoy coming to school and are very well integrated into the work and life of the school. This is because the school values and respects all pupils and works very closely with staff from the travellers' education unit.

19 Pupils' attendance remains well below national levels despite the fact that children like school and the efforts made by school to promote full attendance. The school's analysis of attendance figures confirms that most pupils are absent from school because of illness but a significant number of pupils are taken out of school, during term time, for family holidays.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20 The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. It is good in English, mathematics and science, and in most other subjects. It is good throughout the whole school, and it is very good in Years 2 and 6. This consistently effective teaching is the main reason why children achieve well in their learning by the time they leave the school, whatever their prior attainment when they entered school. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection as there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. The reasons for the improvements can be attributed to improvements in teachers' planning, checking of pupils' progress and the introduction of the national strategies in literacy and numeracy.

21 The children in the nursery and reception classes have a good start to their education because of the consistent good or better standard of teaching; this strength in teaching continues throughout the rest of the school. Teachers' good skills in most aspects of their work are matched by equally good learning. Very good management of pupils' behaviour and learning activity is a hallmark of most lessons. Expectations for behaviour, effort and attitude to learning are consistently high. Pupils who show the least sign of falling below the school's high standards are left in no doubt about what is expected. At the same time, teachers value every pupil and every

effort. They know their pupils well and often use well-judged praise to move learning forward. The very good relationships that all teachers have established with their classes make pupils feel secure, valued and eager to concentrate, work together and do the best they can. These strengths reflect the school's core values, and create a climate for learning that supports all pupils well.

22 In most lessons, planning is good and reflects teachers' clear understanding of the different needs of their pupils and of the quality of their previous learning; for example, good planning brought clear focus, balance and direction to a history lesson in Year 1. The lesson built carefully on earlier work and used resources well to challenge all pupils to find out about the past from old photographs, and to understand differences between past and present.

23 Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of most of the subjects they teach. This expertise informs their planning and preparation of learning resources and activities. It also enables them to explain their learning intentions clearly, to use questions effectively and to encourage pupils to share and consider their ideas. In a good Year 3 science lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge gave clarity to her explanations, and order and sharp focus to her questions, so that pupils could follow with interest and extend their understanding of magnets.

24 Teachers use a good range of methods to engage and maintain pupils' interest and advance their knowledge and understanding; for example, in a history lesson with Year 6, the teacher used role-play very effectively to extend pupils' understanding of the class system in Victorian society. Several children acted out a scene that illustrated the typical features of different social classes. The other pupils responded vigorously to the challenge of deciding from the evidence of the dialogue which class each character belonged to. The teacher's questions provoked and extended thought, and made pupils reflect on how society could be viewed from different perspectives. This example also illustrates the very good teaching of speaking and listening skills. Teachers use several methods and create many opportunities to encourage pupils to explore and express their own ideas openly, and to listen purposefully. Thoughtful discussion is a feature of many lessons. As a result, pupils achieve a good standard for their age in using spoken language to share their thoughts, negotiate agreements and support each other's learning. This is another way in which teachers reinforce and use the good relationships found in every class. Very effective discussion is a particular feature of the very good teaching seen in Years 2 and 6. These teachers set a standard in using talk to promote learning. Their style is relaxed, calm, reassuring and good-humoured. At the same time, it is interesting, interactive, focused and challenging. For instance, in a very good Year 2 art lesson, the teacher produced a picture she had made by using a range of media and techniques. Pupils were fascinated by the picture and stimulated by her challenge to work out how she had made it. Her cries of dismay as they identified different materials and techniques intensified their detective work. The quality of talk rose as sharp questions, such as 'Why do you think that?' or 'How do you suppose that was done?', urged them to look for evidence and explain their suggestions. The discussion engaged all pupils in reconstructing the making process in words. As a result, the pupils were full of ideas to choose from and try out in their own practical work. They had also learned a way of analysing a picture and of putting words to its features.

25 The teaching of other basic skills in English and mathematics is effective. Teachers' good command of these subjects leads to good planning and good teaching methods. The guidance, structures and training programmes associated with the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have strengthened these aspects of teaching. Literacy and numeracy lessons now begin with a clear focus on the learning intentions. Teachers maintain this focus through a balanced sequence of teaching and learning activities. They often use the learning intentions well at the end of lessons to check, share and review what pupils have learned. The way teachers use assessment information to match work to pupils' different levels of attainments has improved since the last inspection. Their use of homework has also improved, and pupils complete regular, worthwhile and increasingly substantial tasks at home. This not only reinforces key skills in literacy and numeracy, it also strengthens working relationships between school and home.

26 The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is because these pupils are well taught in small groups in class and when, according to the availability of

teaching assistants, they are taken out of class to work in small groups. This allows staff to provide individual help which is closely linked with targets in their individual education plans. Where necessary, pupils receive well-planned work in literacy and numeracy in classes whose age group is below their own. This is effective in providing work at appropriate levels where there may have been gaps in their education; for example, due to absence.

27 The school works very closely with the travellers' education service. Members of staff from the service work well with pupils and liaise closely with staff in school to ensure that these pupils make good progress.

28 Weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons were where teachers lacked confident expertise, as commonly happened in music, and sometimes in design and technology, resulting in slow progress. A minority of lessons were rather lacklustre because the drive and commitment seen in most lessons was absent. Pupils then lost motivation and creative effort. Sometimes this related to a slow pace, or to dull, routine tasks, or to a lack of confidence in the subject or the chosen methods. Teaching assistants worked hard and effectively to help teachers and pupils; however, their full value was not realised when a limited role during whole-class sessions restricted their contribution to the learning or assessment of particular pupils. Most tasks were carefully matched to pupils' needs so that they were able to do them and learn from them; however, work did not always challenge the higher attaining pupils by giving them opportunities to think in more demanding ways. Sometimes they were obliged to do the work set for other pupils before starting a more advanced task.

29 The school is beginning to address the needs of its most able pupils. The initiative to provide special tuition and opportunities for pupils with particular talents in art is a good example of what can be done. Similarly, the school is beginning to recognise the need to develop the skills of independent learning, and to enable pupils to develop their understanding of how they learn; for example, the recently introduced system for setting individual targets in English aims specifically to enable pupils to control and assess their own progress. This is good, but it is not yet used consistently, nor is it supported by other systems; for instance, individual targets are insufficiently well backed up by teachers' marking of pupils' work. The quality of marking is inconsistent. Most of it is cursory and superficial. It does not note any specific progress made by the pupil, nor does it point out what the pupil should go on to achieve next.

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

30 The school provides a good range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and travellers' children. It meets all the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum because it has addressed successfully criticisms of the previous inspection by its inclusion of information and communication technology within the curriculum and allocating a suitable amount of time to the teaching of design and technology. The school has in place effective systems of planning which allow pupils to build on their previous learning in order to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding. This is enhanced by the good use the school makes of the national guidance for schemes of work.

31 The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. It is well planned and based on the early learning goals for children up to the time they leave reception class and on the early stages of the National Curriculum. Because all pupils are valued and respected, the school is very successful in ensuring that they all have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and equal opportunity to succeed in them. This is a particular strength of the school. The school has implemented the literacy strategy well and the numeracy strategy satisfactorily and together with the good teaching in these subjects this is helping to raise standards.

32 The school makes sound use of literacy in other subjects. This helps to improve pupils'

skills in literacy and to increase their understanding of the other subjects; for example, in Year 2 pupils' applied their writing skills to scientific work, and produced clear, detailed descriptions of the growth of a bean observed over a period of time. In geographical work in Year 5, pupils wrote detailed accounts of their trip on the canal.

33 The school makes satisfactory use of mathematical skills in other subjects; for example, in a Year 4 physical education lesson, pupils helped to measure and record their achievements in athletics. In Year 6 work on forces, pupils used Newton meters and calculated the mean averages of their measurements. Although information communication technology is used in a few subjects, this is not generally well developed, although pupils in Year 6 used digital cameras in order to investigate habitats in the school grounds as part of their work in science and used the Internet and CD ROMs to search for information in geography.

34 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and this enables them to make good progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator supports pupils, parents and staff well and the school liaises effectively with outside agencies. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs provide clear, manageable targets for pupils to improve and these are based on thorough assessments. Pupils are given work in class which is suited to their levels of attainment and where teaching assistants are available, receive good support from them in class and when they are withdrawn for extra help. The school is well placed to implement the new code of practice for pupils with special educational needs.

35 The school has particularly effective links with the travellers' education service. This strong partnership helps to ensure that these pupils are well integrated into the life and work of the school and make good progress.

36 The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. Older pupils take responsibility for organising and providing help with the supervision of younger children at lunch and break times. Pupils organise and work in the tuck shop. They take responsibility for helping with the smooth running of the school. The ethos of the school is a significant factor in the promotion of a very caring community where pupils care for and help one another in their daily lives; for example, unbidden they help others who fall in the playground. Provision for the development in citizenship is provided in subjects such as history; pupils in Year 3, for example, had opportunities to debate issues such as democracy, in their work on Ancient Greece. In Year 6, issues such as exploitation, class and gender were discussed during a lesson on the Victorians. Education, about the uses and misuses of drugs and sex education are taught throughout the school as part of the science curriculum. Sex education is specifically taught in Year 6 with the assistance of the school nurse. In such subjects as science and physical education, pupils are taught about the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise.

37 There is a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a chess club and to participate in the sports and arts scheme provided by the local education authority. There is a good range of extra curricular sporting activities. These include football, rugby, tennis, cricket, athletics and swimming. Approximately one third of the pupils take part in competitive sports with other schools. The school provides a good range of visits outside the school in order to enrich the curriculum; these include museums, farming shows, sea life exhibitions and outdoor pursuit centres

38 The school has satisfactory links with the local community. Priests from the local parishes regularly visit the school to talk to children, help to prepare pupils for First Holy Communion and to celebrate Mass. The school nurse and representatives from the local police, fire service and ambulance service visit school to help to support work in the curriculum. The school welcomes representatives from local sports teams who work with pupils as part of the extra curricular provision. Pupils conduct traffic surveys locally as part of their work in geography and visit local theatres.

39 The school has sound overall links with partner institutions. It has close links with a local

teacher training institution whose students work in school. Students from local colleges of further education and high school also work in school. These links provide opportunities for students to further their training and provide additional help for pupils in school. Sound links with the many secondary schools to which pupils transfer ensure that the process is smooth.

40 Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.

41 Provision for spiritual development is very good. This is because the very strong Christian precepts which permeate the life and work of the school help to create an ethos where all pupils and adults are respected and values and beliefs are highly regarded. Time is given throughout the school day for prayer and reflection. During assemblies, pupils are given opportunities to reflect on the need for peace in the world and to empathise with those less fortunate than themselves in other countries. Before and after meals they are asked to consider their own good fortune and to think about others who are not well fed. In history, in Year 6 pupils had well considered opportunities to explore the feelings and emotions of people in different strata of Victorian society and, in Year 1, pupils considered how in caring for others they might make the local environment safer. The school is very careful to foster pupils' self esteem; for example, in a science lesson in Year 3 pupils' achievements in creating games using magnets were praised by the teacher and recognised by other pupils. The beliefs and life styles of pupils from other communities, such as the travellers' community and pupils from ethnic minorities, are celebrated and valued. Teachers and pupils share special moments, as for example, when nursery children responded with excitement to the huge bubbles the staff produced for them. Pupils in Year 4 shared their fascination at the downward spiral of spinners in scientific work on forces.

42 Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and this is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. This is because the adults in school are very good role models in their relationships with one another and with the pupils, and the school has a very clear behaviour policy. This helps the pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the differences between right and wrong and the ideas of honesty, fairness, truth and justice. This is further enhanced by the school's high expectations concerning respect for individuals which comes from the school's Christian ethos. Members of staff take time to address any issues which may arise and pupils are given well considered opportunities to reflect on the consequences of their actions. Daily acts of worship contribute very well to pupils' personal development by considering such themes as caring for others and respect for truth.

43 Provision for pupils' social education is very good and is an improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils are taught the importance of sharing and working together; in the nursery, for example, children shared the home corner equipment willingly and co-operated well in their role-play of imagined events in the home. In Year 6, pupils collaborated very effectively in their scientific investigations into light and reflection. Relationships in the school are very good and pupils learn to respect others and their belongings. As they move around school, pupils stand back to let others pass and, pupils take good care of resources and the property of others. Members of staff know the pupils very well and there is within school a very strong sense of community; for example, during assemblies, prayers are said for pupils and staff who may be ill. Pupils take part in fund raising activities for a wide range of local and national charities, in order to help those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils have responsible jobs, such as looking after the library and returning registers. At playtimes and lunchtimes, they generally get on very well together.

44 Provision for cultural development is good because pupils have a wide range of opportunities for appreciating their own culture and the richness and diversity of other cultures and because the school has a very strong ethos of respecting the values and contributions of all. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. In learning about their own culture, pupils celebrate festivals such as Christmas and Harvest festival, and they take part in a local music festival. Pupils are provided with opportunities to sing local songs and to take part in traditional dancing. They learn about the local mining heritage by visiting a nearby mining museum and their interest in local sporting culture is enhanced by coaching sessions from local professional

teams. Although the school is very strongly influenced by the precepts of the Roman Catholic faith, time is devoted to the study of other religions such as Judaism and Islam. Pupils are provided with opportunities to respect and discuss the beliefs and traditions of children from other faiths; for example Ramadan and Eid feature in assemblies and are discussed in class. Children in the nursery celebrate the Chinese New Year. As part of their work in music pupils sing African songs and listen to Gregorian chants. Pupils watch performances of Irish dancing by children from the school and hear stories from such countries as India in assembly. Pupils in Year 5 learn about traditional creation stories from South America. In their work in geography and history pupils learn about life in other cultures such as modern Mexico and ancient Egypt. In art, for example, in Year 3 pupils study patterns from different cultures, such as native Australian, Irish, Islamic and Mexican. In these subjects the school values the contributions of pupils with family links to such countries as India and Ireland. The school has worked hard to ensure that in the library and classrooms there is a wide range of texts referring to other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45 The school takes very good care of its pupils; high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. A very strong philosophy of loving care for the individual child pervades the school. This belief stems from the headteacher and is followed by the dedicated staff. The medical conditions of pupils are monitored well by the headteacher, the administrative assistant and other staff with first aid qualifications but there is little written advice for temporary teachers about the specific medical conditions of pupils and how they should be treated. The headteacher and the site manager carry out risk assessments of the accommodation regularly and conscientiously, although the involvement of the governing body is limited.

46 A member of staff has responsibility for child protection. This person has been trained appropriately and has a very good knowledge of procedures. Child protection arrangements are linked closely to the needs of pupils being looked after by the local authority and the same co-ordinator checks the progress of these pupils; however, the school, as a whole, has yet to carry out specific formal training for all staff. The pastoral support of pupils is very strong and this assistance is extended to their families whenever difficulties arise. The weekly assemblies celebrate academic and personal success and contribute to raising the self-esteem of pupils as they mature.

47 Procedures for assessing pupils' academic development are now good and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. There is a wealth of data gathered in all classes and this is recorded clearly in English and mathematics and to a lesser extent in science and other subjects. The information is used satisfactorily to determine groupings and to affect changes to the overall planning of lessons, but its use to push on pupils' progress at a faster pace is limited; for example, to set precise targets for pupils which they understand. Systems are in place to track pupils' attainment over time in English and mathematics which provide valuable information on the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils year on year, though the full potential of this data is not yet realised.

48 The school helps different groups of pupils well. The quality of the support available to all pupils is good and has a positive impact on their learning. The school monitors carefully the academic performance and personal development of pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator ensures that thorough assessment procedures are used to help with planning and set targets for improvement. Pupils with statements of special educational need are assessed comprehensively and their targets for improvement are clear and manageable.

49 The school works very closely with outside agencies such as the psychology service and travellers' education service so that travellers' children and pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum and opportunity to succeed.

50 The school uses very good strategies to promote positive behaviour. Rewards and

sanctions are generally effective and considered to be fair by pupils. The school monitors attendance very well. A learning mentor has been appointed recently and provides good pastoral support to pupils and monitors attendance well. The school's efforts to promote attendance are now beginning to eliminate unauthorised absences and check on where pupils are when they are not in school; however, monitoring cannot be fully effective whilst families continue to take holidays in term time. The school works very well with its educational welfare officer to support children with poor or inconsistent attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51 At the meeting with parents before the inspection, the good relationship between the school and parents was apparent; this was confirmed by the questionnaires which showed a high regard for what the school does for the children and the quality of education it provides. Parents were appreciative of the family atmosphere in which their children learn and of their children's enjoyment and increased maturity whilst at the school. In almost all other areas of the schools' work parents expressed positive views: the good progress children make, their children's behaviour, the quality of teaching, the friendliness and high expectations of staff and the strengths of the leadership and management. Some parents had reservations about, particularly, the provision of activities outside of lessons and a few had concerns about the amount of homework, information about their children's progress and links with parents.

52 Inspectors agreed with the positive views of parents and judged that most of parental concerns were unfounded. Homework is used well throughout the school to support pupils' learning. Parents receive satisfactory information about their children's progress. The school offers parents good opportunities to meet with teachers through the school's surgery system; however, the annual reports to parents do not provide a clear view of the learning targets their children need to meet in the main subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology, to improve their learning, nor do the reports show whether such skills would bring their children's learning in line with, or ahead of, other children nationally. The school works very well with parents and has already identified plans to improve the quality of this aspect of its work. The range of activities outside lessons is satisfactory with a strong emphasis on sporting activities.

53 The school has good links with parents and carers. A home-school agreement is signed to ensure that the family and school work together for the benefit of the children. The school takes prompt action to contact parents about attendance and makes every effort to work with parents and carers to support their children. The majority of parents are helping their children with their reading and homework and in this way are making a good contribution to their children's learning. Parents are involved from an early stage in discussions concerning the needs and targets for improvement of pupils with statements of special educational need.

54 The Friends Association has arranged many functions and through fund-raising has enabled the school to enhance learning resources. The school's reading volunteers make a positive impact on the progress pupils make with their reading.

55 The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Newsletters are written in a friendly style. The prospectus provides satisfactory information but the governing body's annual report does not contain all the information it should about the school and its facilities to educate disabled pupils.

56 A very good example of the success the school has achieved through working closely with parents is its friendship with the travellers' community. This friendship is having a valuable impact on the progress travellers' children are making.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57 The leadership and management of the school is good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and he manages the school well. He is assisted well by the deputy headteacher and other staff. The headteacher has built up a high performing team of staff, most of whom have been at the school for some considerable time. He has a very clear vision for the future which is based firmly on providing the best education for all pupils with an emphasis on the spiritual dimension of the school and the strong care and welfare of pupils and staff. The headteacher has an active role in the day-to-day teaching in the classrooms and supports colleagues very well. Teamwork is a strong feature of the school though much of this is achieved informally rather than planned specifically; for example, the senior management team meet infrequently and minutes of meeting are not kept. The headteacher is very aware of the need to involve senior managers and governors more formally in the running of the school. He arranged recently an assessment report by Investors in People and is currently working on their recommendations to extend the management structure of the school. The success of the school can be traced back to the standards set by the headteacher in all aspects of the school's work and the very good relationships between staff and governors.

58 The aims of the school, to provide 'a friendly, loving and welcoming environment' are met very well and are of paramount importance resulting in pupils' good achievements and very good attitudes to school and behaviour. Members of staff at all levels have a strong desire to do the best for all pupils and have the necessary skills to achieve further improvements in standards.

59 A very knowledgeable and experienced special educational needs co-ordinator, supported by the headteacher and staff, ensures that provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator is working hard to prepare for the implementation of the new code of practice. He has a clear understanding of how the provision for special educational needs is to be developed and works very conscientiously to support pupils and staff. A significant feature of the school's good provision is the close liaison between the co-ordinator, teaching assistants, outside agencies and class teachers. This enhances the continuity and consistency of pupils' learning and helps them to make good progress. Statements of special needs and individual educational plans are reviewed regularly in order to monitor progress and amend targets for improvement where necessary. The governing body is kept informed of developments and the governor allocated responsibility is particularly well informed. The school makes good use of the specific grant and its own budget in order to provide well for pupils with special educational needs.

60 The roles and responsibilities of the subject co-ordinators have been developed satisfactorily since the last inspection. The co-ordinators lead their subjects well, though their opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects are limited. They are reliant on the headteacher to keep a firm hold on the quality of teaching and on standards. The school strategies for the professional development of staff are progressing satisfactorily. Appropriate targets have been set for teachers linked to school priorities and their own professional development.

61 The governing body fulfils its roles and responsibilities satisfactorily. It is very supportive of the headteacher and staff though at times is over-reliant on the headteacher in terms of monitoring and evaluation. The governors spend insufficient time working alongside staff and pupils to find out for themselves the strengths of the school and problems staff encounter. The governing body has a sound understanding of pupils' achievement and is aware of the effect the movement of pupils to and from the school is having on standards. With guidance from the headteacher, the governing body has responded well to the previous inspection. Governors have high expectations of all who work at the school; they are proud of the school's achievements and are aware of areas for development.

62 The school development plan has clear priorities to improve standards in literacy and numeracy which are most appropriate; however, details of developments in other subjects are not highlighted except in a brief overview plan for 2001 to 2003. There is, however, a thorough plan for 2002 to 2004 to develop provision in the nursery and reception classes but no similar detailed plans exist for other subjects, except literacy and numeracy.

63 Funding is allocated wisely to maintain the good level of staffing at the school. The school administrative assistant and the governors' finance committee ensure that finances are kept in good order. The strengths of day-to-day financial administration were acknowledged in a recent audit by the local education authority.

64 The teachers provide a good range of expertise to meet the needs of the pupils. They are supported well by capable teaching assistants and other staff. The accommodation is satisfactory and is used well. Learning resources to support the teaching are satisfactory, on balance, though the range and quality to support the use of information and communication technology are insufficient, and, in design and technology, geography and music, resources are limited. The school is well placed for the training of new teachers as the quality of teaching is good and the school fosters spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

65 Parents acknowledge appropriately in their responses to the parental questionnaire, that the school is led and managed well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66 The headteacher, staff and governors should take the following action:

- [i] Improve standards in English, mathematics and science in these ways*:
 - Fully implement systems to track pupils' attainment referenced to small steps of learning within the levels of the National Curriculum.
 - Set targets for individuals and groups of pupils, including higher attainers, and monitor progress towards these regularly.
 - Extend the roles and responsibilities of the subject co-ordinators to include the rigorous monitoring of standards, teachers' planning, pupils' work and the quality of teaching.
 - Improve the use of information and communication technology to support learning within lessons.
 - Agree and implement a policy for marking which will enable teachers to mark work consistently to show pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve.

(Paragraphs 1-2, 4, 9, 28-29, 47, 60, 80, 83-87, 89-92, 99, 101-1-3, 105-107, 123, 128)
- [ii] Raise standards in design and technology and music.*
(Paragraphs 9, 28-29, 115, 117-118, 134-135, 137-138)
- [iii] Improve the levels of attendance.*
(Paragraph 50)

The following less important areas for development should be included in the action plan:

- Development of the roles and responsibilities of the governing body.*
(Paragraphs 45, 55, 61)
- Improvement of the resources for information and communication technology, music and design and technology.*
(Paragraphs 9, 64, 118, 124, 131, 133, 135, 138)

**Staff and governors have already identified these areas for development.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	9	27	9	0	0	0
Percentage	2	20	58	20	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 more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	12	161
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		40

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	31

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	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	7	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	18	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (100)	100 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	18	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (96)	100 (92)	100 (92)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

*Details of the numbers of boys and girls achieving Level 2 have not been included because fewer than 11 boys or girls were in the year group. This is so that individuals cannot be identified.

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	12	17	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	8
	Girls	13	11	15
	Total	21	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (76)	72 (62)	79 (72)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	8
	Girls	13	12	15
	Total	22	20	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (59)	69 (62)	79 (79)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	146
Any other minority ethnic group	6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	149

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
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.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
	£
Total income	469 470
Total expenditure	451 970
Expenditure per pupil	2385.07
Balance brought forward from previous year	-11 910
Balance carried forward to next year	5 590

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	201
Number of questionnaires returned	86

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.	65	34	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	43	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	39	11	0	3
The teaching is good.	67	29	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	36	7	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	19	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	26	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	38	10	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	54	35	3	2	6
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.	35	25	22	5	13

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

67 Children have a good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes because the teaching is very good in personal, social and emotional development and good in all other areas of learning. As a result, pupils, relative to their well below average level of attainment on entry to the nursery, achieve very well in personal and social and emotional development, and achieve well in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. The children make good progress relative to their below average attainment on entry in physical development and in creative development. By the end of the reception year, the children are on course to meet the level expected of their age in personal, social and emotional development, and in physical development and in creative development, but are below average in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development, and in knowledge and understanding of the world.

Personal, social and emotional development

68 Children enter the nursery generally very willingly, though, on occasions, they are unhappy and act immaturely. Teachers are very welcoming and greet children, though some children do not respond verbally or prefer to make noises to communicate. Most children know the routines of the class and register their attendance by taking their named tag from a pegboard and placing it in a container to indicate attendance, as teachers have established good systems which encourage children's independence. Parents have plenty of opportunities to discuss day-to-day matters with the staff. Members of staff care for children with special educational needs particularly well. They ensure that children who have not had breakfast have opportunities to eat before beginning their activities. Children enjoy choosing activities that interest them and love to work in the outdoor area. Teachers work hard to interest children and encourage them to behave well. At times, when the children gather together on the carpet, some lack concentration and tend to shout out, though higher attainers listen to the teachers with interest.

69 In the reception class, children enter the class happily and independently and talk to their friends and teachers cheerfully. The teacher uses a large cuddly toy well to stimulate children's interest and to encourage children to concentrate and behave well during whole class discussions. Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and rightly discuss with individual children how they should behave to refocus attention; however, most children behave well and work with enthusiasm. They respond well to the adults who help them with their individual tasks.

Communication, language and literacy

70 In the nursery, teachers provide interesting opportunities to help children to communicate verbally; for example, in the role-play 'Transport Café'. Members of staff encourage plenty of discussion through effective questioning, as many pupils have limited language skills and respond with one-word answers. Teachers read expressively to children from carefully selected books and this engages most children's interest, though a few find sitting down together and listening to a story difficult. Some children lack concentration and when questioned about the story will respond by talking about unrelated points which have no bearing on the story they have listened to.

71 In the reception class, the teachers use books extremely well to stimulate discussion. The children enjoy talking about stories, though only a few are able to offer opinions for the reasons for expressions on the faces of the characters. The stories are selected carefully to enhance aspects such as the features of traditional tales and understanding of other cultures. Travellers' children are given good help from specialist staff and begin to recognise letters and letter sounds. Some of these children know a few letters and letter sounds but some are unable to find letters without help. They all enjoy practising actions and sounds to link to letters of the alphabet. Higher attainers hold interesting discussions with an adult; for example, the story of 'The Tortoise and the Hare'. Higher attainers and some average attainers can copy words correctly and neatly. Teachers and teaching assistants help children with special educational needs well in the classroom and some children

benefit from individual tuition outside the classroom which focuses on their particular needs. Members of staff organise exciting activities and manage behaviour very well so that children work very well together and sustain concentration. All adults have a good awareness of the need to encourage the development of language whilst children are working on individual or small group activities.

Mathematical development

72 In the nursery, teachers take every opportunity to encourage children's mathematical development; for example, at the beginning of the day children practised ordering the days of the week, counting up to five, and, when playing in the sand, were encouraged to use language, such as 'bigger'. With the help of teachers, the children find out about ways children travel to school by making a pictogram showing those who walk to school, come by bus or come by car. Children learn to set out a picnic so that each person has a cup, saucer, plate, knife, fork and spoon.

73 In the reception class, children chant with their teachers numbers up to 100 and count back from 20. Good questioning of children reveals what they know and challenges them to improve their understanding; for example, a child stated incorrectly that the number before six was seven but after a little thought responded correctly. Higher attainers can give the numbers before and after numbers up to 30. Some very low attainers are delighted when they answer questions correctly, such as the number after one or two, though have difficulties above three. They draw round shapes with interest and enthusiasm. Teachers use books well to develop problem solving; for example, the teacher used the traditional story of 'The Boy who Cried Wolf' very well to extend understanding of the use of number and subtraction for higher attainers: 'The boy had nine goats and the wolf ate two. How many were left?' Matrices, such as a nine by nine grid, are used well to develop children's understanding of direction and to practise their counting skills. Most children use positional language such as 'up' and 'down' correctly and are mainly secure with 'left' and 'right' to direct lateral movement.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74 Many opportunities are provided for children in both the nursery and reception classes to find out more about the world around them and this results in children making good progress in their learning. The outdoor environment is used very purposefully by teachers; for example, in the nursery, children learnt more about light when they pretended to be pirates in a 'ship' and looked out through 'telescopes' they had previously made from tubes and different coloured transparent plastic materials. They drew diagrams to make maps of the playground. The children were amazed at the size of bubbles and how the bubbles blew in the wind and out of their reach when they chased after them excitedly.

75 In the reception class the children build well on their prior experiences, as teachers plan first hand experiences, such as gaining an insight into what it must be like to be blind through a visit from a visually impaired lady and her guide dog. The children were fascinated by the talk and were thrilled especially by the dog. They wanted to find out more and asked questions such as 'How do you cook and wash up?' The teacher developed discussion well to extend children's understanding. Activities in the classroom and in the outdoor environment exploited the opportunities presented by the visit; for example, pupils identified sandpaper letters whilst blindfolded and found out that you could identify materials and objects by touch but could not tell the colour without sight. They investigated Braille and used a Braille notemaker.

Physical development

76 Teachers place a strong emphasis in the nursery and reception classes on physical development. The good outdoor accommodation and plentiful high quality resources enhance children's learning opportunities. Lessons are planned well and resources are used effectively to support children's learning.

77 In the nursery, children dress up for instance as a police officer, and ride tricycles around an interestingly marked out 'road'. Most pupils ride tricycles with reasonable care and attention. Some children are very confident bikers and pedal powerfully and ride speedily. Children play football well

together in groups of about three. Members of staff record pupils' achievements carefully; for example, when a child with special educational need rode a cart independently. In the reception class, most children have good control when using a pencil, though a few pupils hold pencils and paint brushes incorrectly. Teachers take time to help those who are struggling and model how the pencils and paintbrushes should be held. Children enjoyed using a white stick in the playground to negotiate obstacles whilst blindfolded.

Creative development

78 In the nursery, teachers plan and organise many good opportunities for children to develop their creative skills. Teachers expect pupils to mix independently different colours of ready-mixed paints. They make 'pirates' hats' from paper and coloured foils in preparation for role-play. Teachers take time to discuss with children what they are doing and suggest how they can improve their techniques. Teachers encourage children to explore recycled waste materials and to assess the suitability for its intended purpose; for example, pupils made boats from different materials and found out that those made from compressed paper egg boxes disintegrated and sank when tested in water whereas those made from a plastic tray remained afloat. Teachers develop children's repertoire of traditional songs to consolidate counting up to five and ordering the days of the week.

79 In the reception class, the teaching continues to be well organised and children have a wide range of experiences. They sew neatly in different colours of thread on woven materials. They paint over their wax candle drawings and notice the effect. They make well-organised sculptures using recycled materials. Children made interesting patterns using printing materials such as potatoes and tyres. They drew detailed pictorial maps of the local valley and drew carefully features such as roads, railways, a park and a church. They know a range of simple songs and enjoy learning new songs in the weekly hymn practice. The children particularly enjoy responding to their names in song and copying their teachers' singing.

ENGLISH

80 Overall, standards are average at the end of Year 2, and below average at the end of Year 6. These standards are similar to the school's national test results in the last two years. They are also broadly similar to what was reported by the previous inspection. This represents good achievement because attainment on entry to the school is lower now than it was then. Those who begin their education in the school's nursery and reception classes and stay on in the school make good progress, particularly through Years 1 and 2. Significant and increasing numbers of pupils leave or join the school later. Pupils who join the school make good progress.

81 Standards in speaking and listening are above average at both seven and eleven. Pupils achieve very well in this aspect of the subject because teachers provide very good and frequent opportunities for them to practise and extend these skills. Teachers use a range of methods and set up a variety of situations so that pupils have opportunities both to listen attentively for a variety of purposes and to express, share and explore ideas together. The high quality of care and relationships across the school strongly supports the development of spoken language. Pupils, including those who are shy and those who find learning difficult, contribute eagerly in the confident knowledge that what they say will be listened to, valued and used. Teachers explain and instruct clearly so that pupils know what is expected of them. They also spread questions around the whole class, and use humour and first-hand experience so that all pupils are interested, involved and have something relevant to offer.

82 In both Year 2 and Year 6, the quality and range of opportunity impact strongly on attainment in speaking and listening. Pupils are challenged to use language to reflect, think and reason. In Year 2, pupils eagerly grasped the opportunity to play the role of a character from the story they were studying. They took turns to sit in the 'hot seat' and defend their character in response to a good flow of questions from other pupils. The questions were clearly phrased and perceptive, and the answers thoughtfully expressed the point of view of the character, sometimes with an extended explanation. Very good progress continues and, by the end of Year 6, pupils share, sort and explore ideas sensitively, sometimes offering evidence and reasons to support a suggestion. The way they respond to and build on each other's ideas reflects the quality of their listening skills and co-

operative attitudes. A group of average attaining pupils showed impressive maturity, openness, skill and shared purpose as they talked with the teacher to work out the typical features and qualities of science-fiction writing. Higher attainers vary their talk to suit changing situations, and show a very good ability to present their learning clearly and confidently when the situation is more formal. These skills strongly support pupils' learning in all subjects.

83 Pupils' attainment in reading is below average overall, both in Year 2 and Year 6. Progress is mostly good, but both classes contain pupils who find reading difficult, and who are not working at the level expected for their age. Good systems and resources support the development of pupils' reading skills, tastes, attitudes and practices. Systematic teaching of basic skills within the literacy framework steadily develops pupils' ability to read new material. Teaching assistants effectively help pupils who have special educational needs or from the travellers' community, and intensive programmes of literacy support boost the confidence and progress of lower attaining pupils. Good homework routines enable parents to play a significant part in reading development. Commercial reading schemes have been carefully organised to build skills and confidence in small steps in the early stages. Every classroom has a wide range and generous number of good quality storybooks suited to pupils' ages. These books are used effectively to promote enjoyment of reading and introduce pupils to a variety of authors and kinds of literature. Good borrowing systems help pupils to learn how to choose books and develop their own preferences. The recently opened non-fiction library completes this picture of good provision and answers a criticism in the last inspection report. It provides a very stimulating and well-resourced setting in which pupils can be taught library skills and do independent research.

84 Pupils benefit from these good opportunities. They develop confidence, enjoyment, accuracy and fluency in their reading. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils who are capable of achieving the standards expected for their age do so; for example, pupils in Year 2 explain how photographs and other features help them to recognise an information book by its cover. They also know how an index helps you 'to find the part you need' because 'you don't have to read all the book'. By Year 6, lower attaining pupils can use the cover of an information book to predict the sort of information to be found inside. They can also work with more able pupils to identify the distinctive features of an information book and explain their uses. Those pupils who do not reach the expected standards are the substantial numbers currently in Years 2 and 6 who have either joined the school late or who have special educational needs. These groups adversely affect the school's overall performance; however, two other factors compromise attainment in reading by restricting the progress of the more able pupils: these pupils are not being moved through the reading scheme at a fast enough rate as teachers are not using assessment well enough to ensure that all pupils are effectively challenged by what they are asked to read. Pupils' understanding of what they read does not develop as well as their knowledge of books and their skills in accurately reading new material. This affects all pupils, but particularly holds back the more able; for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made sound comments on the events, setting and characters introduced in the opening of a story; however, they were unable to comment on the effect of the passage, or to use the text to suggest how the author's choice of language produced that effect.

85 Standards in writing are average, and pupils achieve well. The school has concentrated much attention on raising attainment in writing. This focus has led to a number of sound developments; for example, pupils have been given individual writing targets so that they know exactly how to improve their work to reach the next level. The range of new developments has significantly improved provision for writing, although the impact on standards is only just beginning to show. The strengths noted in the previous report have been maintained. In particular, the presentation of pupils' writing is exemplary. The school introduces a joined style of handwriting very early and sets a high standard. Pupils steadily improve their fluency and neatness so that, by the end of Year 6, most pupils use a mature and fully joined style. Teachers consistently follow the nationally recommended programmes for developing knowledge and skills in spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and sentence structure. As a result, standards are sound in these areas. At times, however, the tasks used to secure this learning are very dull, and do not help pupils to understand how best to apply their knowledge of spelling and grammar to improve their writing.

86 Pupils learn to make links between reading and writing. Teachers lead pupils to see the features and forms of different kinds of writing, and then enable them to use these as frameworks for their own imaginative and factual writing. Throughout the school, pupils learn in this way to write in different forms that include different kinds of stories, play-scripts, poems, letters and factual

accounts. The range is much wider than at the time of the last inspection, but the very heavy bias towards imaginative work places a responsibility on other subjects to secure and extend the range of factual writing; this is met satisfactorily. The quality, as well as the range, of pupils' factual writing is lower overall than that of their imaginative work. Average and lower attaining pupils in particular cannot organise their ideas well. Many also fail to maintain the formal style that is often necessary, and they lapse into non-standard expressions such as 'He could of nicked the money'.

87 Subjects such as science, history and geography make overall a sound contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills; for example, pupils in Year 6 explained how they had used the non-fiction library independently to find out as much as they could about the ants, ladybirds and other small creatures they had discovered by examining part of the school's field. Overall, the use of information and communication technology to assist learning in English is limited. However, in some classes pupils search CD-ROM and the Internet, in addition to books, as sources for the information they need; for example, pupils in Year 3 had researched the place of slaves in Ancient Greece. Using this information, they wrote arguments about why slaves should, or should not, have the vote. They then performed these arguments very dramatically to the class. This also illustrates how well pupils' good skills in spoken language support the development of literacy. Through talk, pupils begin to learn the vocabulary and the special uses of English that belong to different subjects.

88 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers across the school understand how to promote very effectively skills in speaking and listening. In Years 2 and 6, this quality is very strong. The effective teaching of spoken English is inextricably tied to teachers' very good management of, and relationships with, their classes. All teachers set high standards for behaviour, effort, care, attitudes and mutual support and respect. They uphold these standards with a light and friendly touch. Pupils grow in self-esteem and contribute with confidence because they know that every positive effort will be valued and shared. Learning activity often has an appreciative and celebratory air and pupils applaud each other's contributions spontaneously. The basic skills of reading and writing are taught well. Teachers are also consistently effective in encouraging pupils to read widely for interest and enjoyment, and to write imaginative stories and poems. Teachers have a secure understanding of how to teach these aspects, and they use a good range of methods to achieve their aims. Teachers make careful and effective provisions for lower attaining pupils, for those with special educational needs and for travellers' children. They make every effort to include these pupils in all activities. They give them opportunities to succeed and achieve their targets. Good teamwork with teaching assistants ensures that these pupils are well supported and able to maintain confidence and progress.

89 A number of weaknesses account for the variations between very good and satisfactory teaching. Learning is not always challenging enough for all groups of pupils. The quality of tasks and the use of the reading scheme for the more able pupils are particular points of concern. The final phase of the literacy lesson does not consistently ask pupils to review what they have learned and to think about what they need to learn next. The quality of the marking of pupils' work is equally inconsistent. In the best marking, teachers celebrate points of progress and identify shortcomings that need attention. These teachers also refer to the relevant individual targets to help pupils to use these targets to guide their efforts to improve. However, most marking is simply congratulatory, and some is perfunctory. Factual writing is less effectively taught than imaginative writing. There is an imbalance, and a lack of range, and some underachievement. The literacy links between subjects could be strengthened. The use of information and communication technology to assist the development of reading and writing is also inconsistent and underdeveloped.

90 Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has worked consistently and conscientiously over several years to improve the work of the subject and raise standards. She has led the development of the literacy strategy, and taken a number of good initiatives to adapt the strategy to the particular needs of the school and make it more effective. The very good new non-fiction library is the result of one such initiative. She has taken professional advice from a number of expert sources to ensure that the subject's action plan tackles the right priorities. The various developments focused on writing provide a good example of this, the most recent being the introduction of a very useful system for setting individual targets in writing. She regularly samples pupils' work in books in order to monitor standards. Although this is done thoroughly and rigorously, it relates only to writing. Not enough is done to monitor work in reading or the quality of English lessons across the school.

MATHEMATICS

91 Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is below average; too few pupils attain at a level higher than typically expected. Pupils' performance by the end of Year 2 is below average because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

92 Overall, pupils' achievement in mathematics is good because of the good teaching and learning throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and travellers' children make good progress because work for these pupils is planned carefully. Higher attainers make good progress overall; however, in some lessons, opportunities to hasten their progress are not planned well enough.

93 In Year 1, there is a lively pace to the lessons and praise is used well so that pupils work hard and are eager to improve. The teaching of basic mental calculations is good and this helps pupils to increase the speed and accuracy of their calculations. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good. Pupils are confident to give answers to mental calculation tasks because the teaching welcomes their efforts. The travellers' children are integrated well into the class and supported well by teaching assistants.

94 In Year 2, the teaching is exciting; for example, the teacher and classroom assistant threw two large foam dice around the classroom to individuals and then asked pupils questions appropriate to their level of attainment. Consequently, pupils were interested and worked hard to answer the teachers' questions. Most pupils could add 20 to any two-digit number accurately though slowly. Higher attainers added 30 to 43 correctly and quickly. Lower attainers had difficulties adding units on to numbers up to nine. In the lesson, there was very good rapport between the adults and between the adults and pupils; this assisted the learning. Pupils knew the properties of shapes, such as a rectangle, and during the lesson developed a deeper understanding of symmetry by identifying the lines of symmetry in different shapes.

95 By the end of Year 2, most pupils can double numbers up to ten correctly though less accurately above ten. They understand clockwise and anti-clockwise. Pupils tell the time to the nearest five minutes. They read scales on a measuring cylinder and estimate to the nearest 50 ml. Most pupils can sort numbers according to particular criteria, such as odd and even. Lower attainers add and subtract within ten generally accurately. They confuse sometimes largest and smallest. They can sequence numbers in twos up to 16. Most lower attainers can tell the time to the nearest hour. Higher attainers investigate the number of heads when throwing four coins and record the results in a bar chart. They identify and name shapes, such as hexagon and pentagon, correctly. They multiply and divide accurately by 2, 4, 5 and 10.

96 In teaching of good quality in Year 3, for example, the teaching was well-organised with clear small steps of learning, good management of pupils, good explanations, and effective use of questions which enabled pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress. In a lesson about recognising right angles, for example, pupils were well behaved because the teacher controlled them well, learning resources were at hand and pupils were clear about what they were expected to learn. The teacher checked pupils' progress well and quickly explained to them what to do next. Most pupils by the end of the lesson, understood right angles as measurements of turning and higher attainers knew there were four right angles in a circle.

97 In Year 6, learning resources, such as individual small whiteboards, are used well to practise multiplication and division. In one lesson, pupils used the boards to play a game of 'Bingo' which gave pupils plenty of practice of basic skills. The rapport between teacher and pupils is good and pupils behave well. Teachers encourage pupils to work with partners to consolidate and check understanding of work done; for example, pairs of pupils checked that each other knew the names of two-dimensional shapes such as quadrilateral, rhombus, parallelogram, pentagon and the difference between an isosceles triangle and an equilateral triangle.

98 By the end of Year 6, most pupils can multiply decimals accurately. They divide large numbers by two-digit numbers correctly, such as 3471 divided by 49. They interpret information

from pie charts and construct line graphs and bar charts. Lower attainers use a protractor to measure angles and draw triangles with different lengths of sides and angles. They can find the right answer for multiplications such as £543 times by four. Higher attainers solve problems involving the calculation of percentages. They estimate the answer to sums, such as 8.2 multiplied by 4.2, and then check their estimate through calculation. Pupils work out appropriately the probability of the chance of an occurrence. The presentation of work at all levels of attainment is of a high standard. Pupils do homework conscientiously and it is used well to assist the consolidation of work done at school. In all classes, the management of pupils is of a high standard which is reflected in pupils' eagerness to work industriously, their very good behaviour and their relationships with one another and with their teachers.

99 Shortcomings within otherwise satisfactory teaching are insufficient challenge for higher attainers because much of the work they do is similar to that done by other pupils. Pupils with exceptional aptitude for mathematics are not identified formally. Sometimes the pace of lessons is not brisk enough and the work is too easy for most pupils. There is an over-reliance on the use of a commercial scheme of work and pupils move through the text books page by page instead of teachers planning work more precisely on pupils' level of attainment. Throughout the school, the marking of work does not clearly show how well pupils have done and what they should do to improve.

100 The school has identified well areas for improvement, and the numeracy action plan provides effective measures to promote higher standards. Overall, the National Strategy for Numeracy has been introduced soundly. Members of staff have a strong commitment to raise pupils' achievements which supports the aims of the school well.

101 The use of information and communication technology to support learning in mathematics is underdeveloped. By the end of Year 6 pupils gain experience of computer skills through teaching in the computer suite; for example, pupils learnt how to use, interpret and modify spreadsheets. Pupils use computer programs rarely to assist their mathematical learning during numeracy lessons. Numeracy skills are not reinforced soundly through teaching in other subjects.

102 The monitoring of the quality of teaching is underdeveloped and does not ensure rigorous monitoring of teachers' planning, pupils' work and the quality of teaching by the co-ordinator and senior managers. This weakness is apparent in the recently written, otherwise good, policy for the subject; for example, in the section on the role of the co-ordinator there is no mention of monitoring of standards. The monitoring of pupils' progress through half-termly assessment tests is good as are the yearly assessments which are linked to sub-levels of the National Curriculum. The information is used satisfactorily though its use to determine short-term targets for pupils is underdeveloped.

SCIENCE

103 This year, by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' performance is below that expected of pupils aged seven and eleven; however, most pupils by the end of Year 6 are on course to achieve the level expected of their age, but fewer than expected nationally will reach the higher level. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well because the quality of teaching is good. Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory.

104 Pupils make good progress in developing their skills of scientific enquiry because teachers have a good understanding of how to teach basic skills. Pupils in Year 2 understand how to use a range of questions in order to compare the development of babies and toddlers. They used close observational skills in investigating plants and animals in the school grounds and recorded the number and location accurately. By the end of Year 2, most pupils understand when a test or comparison is unfair, such as in work on the amount of water needed in the growth of plants. Because teachers ensure through their careful planning that work builds securely on what has gone before, most pupils by the time they reach Year 6 have a sound understanding of a range of approaches to scientific investigations. Pupils in Year 6 draw valid conclusions from their investigations and measurements into the rate and temperature of dissolving sugar. They become

familiar with a variety of appropriate ways to answer particular scientific questions, such as looking for links between observations on the separation of salt, sand and water, or adopting a problem solving approach to determine what happens when yeast is mixed with sugar.

105 Teachers present work in lively and interesting ways so that pupils are interested and sustain their concentration; when pupils in Year 6 visited the local university as part of a 'Health Matters' day they increased their understanding of the functions of the heart because they were able to see a trace of their own heartbeat. Pupils in Year 1 extended their understanding of plant growth when they kept a diary of the growth of a plant. Teachers ensure that work is planned for differing abilities so that pupils are challenged to make progress at their own level. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs made good progress; for example, in Year 2 when the teacher supported their work on the classification of living things and set them tasks suited to their abilities. Pupils of average attainment responded well when asked to group pictures of animals and explain their choices. Higher achieving pupils worked hard when they were challenged to extend their understanding by drawing an animal of their choice and fitting it into one of the groups. The understanding and knowledge of pupils of lower ability is generally weaker; for example, in Year 6, lower achieving pupils are less clear about the use of scientific questions. During lessons teachers generally use questions well and interact well with pupils in order to assess their knowledge and understanding. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and when they write comments which help to clarify understanding and guide pupils on the next steps to be taken this helps pupils to extend their skills and understanding; in Year 5, for example, the teacher explained how a towel absorbs water so that the pupils' understanding of absorbency was clarified, but, this quality of marking is not used consistently throughout the school.

106 Teachers manage pupils well so that they behave well and work hard. In the very good teaching in Year 6, because the teacher had very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and explained clearly what was expected of them, pupils settled very quickly to their work on light and reflection and used equipment very sensibly and sustained their concentration. Pupils collaborate very well so that they develop their skills of working together and increase their knowledge and understanding. In Year 3 pupils collaborated effectively to extend their understanding of the uses of magnetism when they produced games controlled by magnets. This is enhanced by the very good relationships during lessons. Pupils are happy to work together and confident to answer questions and make suggestions because they know that their contributions will be valued; however, even though pupils work very well together and work rigorously when not under the immediate supervision of the teacher, the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for older pupils, particularly the high achievers, to select their own equipment and devise their own investigations. This results in lost opportunities to challenge more able pupils.

107 Teachers organise pupils and materials effectively so that lessons run smoothly and children sustain their concentration. Pupils in Year 2 moved efficiently from the whole class introduction and began work on the classification of living things because the teacher shared lesson objectives with them and they knew clearly what was expected. In Year 4 equipment was accessible, such as batteries, switches, bulbs and wires, so that pupils could get on with their work on circuits. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills and satisfactory opportunities to use numeracy skills in science. This helps to increase their skills in these subjects and to extend their understanding of science; for example, In Year 1, pupils wrote clear and accurate descriptions of plant growth. Pupils in Year 6 used mathematical skills in measuring and recording time and weight in work on evaporation. Teachers generally have high expectations regarding the presentation of pupils' work; for example, in Year 4, clear graphs showed temperature changes during the day. Although pupils make some use of information communication technology in science, example being the use of digital cameras to record habitats in the school grounds in Year 6, its use is generally limited.

ART AND DESIGN

108 Pupils' work exceeds the nationally expected standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve well and the subject makes a good contribution to their personal, spiritual and cultural development. Special provisions for the more talented pupils enable them to make rapid progress and produce some outstanding work. Provisions and standards are better than when the

school was last inspected.

109 Many pupils enter school with immature pencil control and under-developed observational and design skills. They make good progress in these skills as they move through the school. This is reflected in the many designs for book covers that have been produced by pupils in all year groups to decorate the walls of the new non-fiction library.

110 Pupils in Year 2 have used pencil drawing and printing techniques to study natural forms. Their pencil drawings of tree-rings, bark and driftwood are very accurately observed and mature for their age. Their work on the current theme of 'Can Buildings Speak' shows a good ability to explore and combine the characteristics of different materials and techniques to create striking images of buildings. These studies include computer-generated images and skilful fine-line drawings.

111 The range of topics and techniques broadens in Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils make assured use of varied techniques in sculpture, collage and printing. They draw and paint in different styles, often using these skills to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils study and use the work and ideas of famous artists as starting points for their own work. Examples from different year groups show that this approach raises the technical quality of their work as well as extending their understanding of the visual arts. For example, imitations of Lowry's study of 'The Man With Red Eyes' extended pupils' skills in portraiture in Year 4. By using wire and tinfoil to imitate the sculpture of Giacometti, pupils in Year 6 learned how to create striking figure studies by simple means. Pupils have good opportunities to study the arts of non-western cultures. For instances, pupils in Year 2 made African face masks whilst Year 3 explored Aboriginal, Mexican and Islamic patterns. Occasional work in textiles and clay is of good quality.

112 A significant feature of the subject is the special provision for pupils who show a particular flair for art. Small groups from Year 3 and Year 6 have an extra lesson each week, when they work with a member of staff who has considerable expertise and interest in art. These pupils produce outstanding work in response to an advanced and challenging programme based on the work of different artists, such as Picasso and Henry Moore, or on specific techniques such as fabric printing or mosaic. Their work sets a standard across the school and shows what can be achieved when a talent is recognised and used well.

113 The quality of pupils' work reflects good teaching and learning, though only two lessons could be observed, both in Key Stage 1. One lesson made good use of the outdoor environment to enable Year 1 pupils to use their observation of trees as a basis for selecting natural materials to create a three-dimensional collage. A very stimulating and effective lesson with the Year 2 class enabled pupils to use and extend their earlier learning in techniques of printing and collage. Pupils learned to analyse how these techniques had been combined to produce a complex image of buildings. From this they learned how to select different materials and shape and compose them into effective images of urban scenes.

114 The subject is well led and managed. Developments carried out in the last two years have significantly raised the status of the subject and the standards pupils attain. The use of national guidance has strengthened the curriculum, and improved resources strongly support teaching and learning. Good use of information and communication technology adds further support. The co-ordinator has begun to monitor standards informally to ensure that pupils' skills develop systematically from year to year. The use of sketchbooks is at an early stage. Pupils use them simply to do rough preliminary sketches for new projects but not to explore, evaluate and refine specific approaches, styles and drawing techniques.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115 As at the time of the last inspection, standards are average at the end of Year 2 but below average by the end of Year 6. Progress remains unsatisfactory through Years 4 to 6. Although the scheme of work has been improved, other weaknesses identified in the previous report have not been tackled. Key developments that are long overdue are not given priority until the 2003 – 2004 academic year. The recently appointed co-ordinator has begun to address the weaknesses in the subject; however, she has no opportunities to observe lessons and the assessment procedures in

use do not provide sufficient information to identify clearly pupils' progress to determine what pupils should learn next.

116 The standard of work in Years 1 and 2 reflects satisfactory teaching which places proper emphasis on helping pupils to understand the factors involved in designing a product; for example, before pupils in Year 1 began to design and make a fruit salad, the teacher involved them in considering and classifying different types, sources and states of food. As a result, pupils learned to distinguish the properties of fruit and vegetables, and of fresh and tinned fruit, and to classify these foods accordingly. On this sound basis, pupils learn to consider, test and select materials in relation to purpose so that by Year 2 pupils apply their knowledge soundly to making wheeled vehicles and a good range of puppets. Pupils' design folders show, by means of drawings and occasional notes, how carefully they had investigated how to fix axles to a chassis so that the wheels could turn freely. Pupils use their art skills well to achieve a good finish for their products.

117 It was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 because of insufficient opportunities to observe teaching. In the lesson seen in Year 3 the teaching and learning was satisfactory. As a result of careful design, pupils' photograph frames were solidly constructed and boldly decorated. They also reflected sound progress in the skills of measuring, cutting, joining and assembling the materials used. A limitation of the work in the juniors is that pupils do not record how they alter their design ideas as a result of testing materials. Nor do they record how well they think their work is progressing or how they would do it better in future. As a result of these and other shortcomings, progress slows down after Year 3; for example, the musical instruments made by pupils in Year 5 show little advance on the Greek temples made in Year 3. Pupils have reproduced the shapes of different instruments, but much work has limited fitness for purpose because of inappropriate choices of materials and methods.

118 To a significant extent, this lack of progress stems from a chronic lack of resources. Pupils have too few opportunities to use resistant materials, such as wood, or sheet materials, such as stiff plastic, or to work with an increasing range of tools, because these things are not available. For the same reason, pupils have no opportunities to incorporate electrical and mechanical components, such as motors or buzzers, into their designs. Information and communication technology is underused to support learning in the subject. Despite an improved scheme of work, teachers are obliged to restrict the curriculum to what they have the resources to do. This hits progress hardest in Years 4 to 6, where pupils are unable to work with more advanced systems, skills and understandings.

GEOGRAPHY

119 Pupils' performance is in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well. Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory.

120 In the few lessons seen, teachers showed good subject knowledge and used clear explanations so that pupils in Year 4 increased their understanding of routes and knowledge of places in India. Teachers generally present work in an interesting way so that pupils in Year 1 extended their understanding of different places when they were asked to consider the kind of clothing they would need for hot and cold locations. Because relationships are good, pupils are confident to ask and answer questions and collaborate well together. In Year 1 pupils clarified their understanding of the climate in different places with the teacher, and in Year 4 children shared maps and worked well with partners.

121 Over time most pupils develop sound geographical skills. This is because teachers ensure that their planning allows pupils to build on previous work. Pupils use appropriate terminology, such as, 'transport' in Year 2, and 'upper limit of navigation' in Year 5, and higher achieving children in Year 6 use the terms 'transpiration' and 'precipitation' confidently. Pupils in Year 2 compared their lives with evidence of how people live on remote Scottish islands. In their fieldwork, pupils in Year 5 conducted traffic surveys and wrote accounts of their canal studies. Pupils' understanding and use of maps increases as they get older. Pupils in Year 1 used plans of the classroom and school and recorded their routes from home to school. Pupils in Year 2 identified countries on maps of the

United Kingdom and the world and used simple co-ordinates to locate places on small-scale maps. By the time they are in Year 5 most pupils recognise features such as deserts and the tropics on maps of the world. Year 6 pupils produced detailed maps of river systems and mountain ranges although their skill in the use of a range of maps with different scales and purposes is more limited.

122 Because teachers generally have thorough subject knowledge, they ensure that pupils develop a sound understanding of places, locally and further afield. Year 1 pupils recognised differences between life at home and in Africa. Pupils in Year 2 know about life in a Mexican village. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils know about countries and places in different parts of the world and confidently research and compare mountain ranges such as the Alps and Himalayas. In this work higher achieving pupils understood the relationship between altitude and temperature. Lower achieving pupils had weaker knowledge of mountain weather and did not clearly understand such features as the snow line. Most pupils learn about some aspects of environmental issues, such as the conservation of water in Year 5 and in Year 3 they learn about how the weather influences lifestyles and in Year 4 consider noise pollution.

123 Teachers ensure that pupils make effective use of their literacy skills in geography. In Year 2, pupils wrote well-presented comparisons between life in Kirkstall and in a Mexican village. They used lists and labelled sketches. Pupils in Year 3 explained carefully the reasons why a place might be suitable for a holiday. Pupils in Year 6 produced detailed writing on mountainous areas. Their use of mathematical skills is more limited and weaker though pupils in Year 6, used their mathematical skills to compare height and temperature in their work on mountains, although their use of co-ordinates in map work was limited. The school is beginning to make use of information communication technology in geography although opportunities are not yet well developed. Pupils in Year 2, produced computer-generated maps of Mexico and pupils in Year 3 used computers in their work on the weather. Pupils in Year 6 searched for information about mountainous regions using the Internet and CD ROMs.

124 The co-ordinator organises the subject efficiently and has a good knowledge of the subject. He supports colleagues effectively and has a clear understanding of how the subject is to develop in order to raise standards. Learning resources for the teaching of geography are unsatisfactory and restrict further improvements in standards.

HISTORY

125 By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' performance is in line with what would be expected for children aged seven and eleven and they achieve well. Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory.

126 The quality of teaching is good with some very good and some excellent teaching and as a result pupils learn well. Teachers work hard to make their lessons interesting so that pupils' enthusiasm for learning is enhanced. In Year 2 the teacher made very good use of clothing and artefacts in order to illustrate how conditions in hospitals at the time of Florence Nightingale were different from those of today. This helped to bring the subject alive for the pupils and improve their understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain this carefully so that pupils increase their knowledge and skills of historical enquiry. In Year 1, the teacher made good use of words relating to time, such as 'past' and 'present' so that pupils' understanding was increased and their vocabulary was extended. In Year 3, the teacher extended pupils' understanding of slavery and democracy. This was further enhanced by the teacher's provision of opportunities for pupils to take part in a debate in role, followed by a vote. In Year 2, the teacher, very carefully, reminded the pupils of artefacts and words used in previous lessons so they were able better to understand similarities and differences between the Victorian age and their own. In Year 1 the teacher engaged the pupils in discussions about his own family history and those of their families in order to clarify their understanding of the differences between past and present.

127 In the excellent teaching in Year 6, the teacher used a video very effectively to illustrate life and conditions in Victorian England. The use of role-play enabled pupils to develop clear insights into the different perspectives of events formed by people in different strata of Victorian society. The dialogue with pupils, enhanced by very good subject knowledge, was very effective in

challenging them to think hard and to engage in well considered discussions about such issues as those relating to gender and inheritance law. This also helped to extend their speaking and listening skills. Questions were used very effectively in order to challenge pupils to reflect on whether or not modern perspectives on class and industrialisation may be applied appropriately to a different period in history. This helped pupils to deepen their understanding. The planning of work was well suited to pupils' abilities. Lower achieving pupils were helped to search for information on a computer. Pupils of average ability were challenged to reflect on comments made by characters in the video. Higher achieving pupils were challenged to write comments from the perspectives of characters in the story. This enhanced the excellent progress made by most children and helped them to achieve very highly.

128 Pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. This is because work is carefully planned so that pupils' knowledge and understanding builds on what has gone before. Pupils in Year 2 talk confidently about the Crimean War and The Great Fire of London. They know about the use of artefacts and sources of evidence and how things in the past were different from the present. Pupils in Year 5 learn how the notions of power and character were represented in portraits of Tudor monarchs and write clear comparisons between the lives of the rich and poor in Tudor times. They know about important events and people in Tudor history and explain changes such as the Reformation. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, although the use of comments which clarify pupils' understanding is inconsistent. Pupils sometimes copy the same work into their books. This leads to missed opportunities to challenge pupils to extend their historical skills, particularly those of the more able. Teachers generally ensure that pupils use a range of writing, research and speaking and listening skills in their work in history, although the use of mathematical and information communication technology skills are more limited.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

129 Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with the national expectations and pupils achieve well; this represents very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were significantly below average and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Hardware and software resources have been enhanced but are inadequate to improve pupils' attainment further. Very good use is made of a local City Learning Centre to provide additional opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to enable pupils to learn about robotics and to prepare multimedia presentations.

130 The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour, personal development and attitudes to work are very good. The best teaching was seen in the small computer suite when the skills of a computer tutor were used admirably. Small groups of Year 2 pupils built on work previously prepared with their teacher in the classroom and designed on the computer posters which included text and pictures taken from the picture gallery on the computers. She helped pupils well using her very good knowledge and understanding of the computers; for example, how to 'click' and 'drag' was explained clearly so that pupils were capable of doing it themselves. The expertise of pupils was used well to help other pupils when difficulties occurred. All pupils opened up programs quickly with their user names and password and on completion of their assignments, saved their work to their own folders in the computer and printed out their work. They practised their literacy skills appropriately consulting books containing the contents of the picture gallery in order to obtain the reference number to enter into the computer to access their choice of picture. Pupils understood how to use the colour palette on the computer to change colours and how to alter the size of fonts.

131 In Year 3 the quality of teaching and learning was good, the lesson was planned very well by the teacher and pupils were given a good body of knowledge by the computer tutor on the work of the Japanese artist Hokusai and pupils studied a landscape picture of Mount Fuji. She clearly and challenged pupils to use their own imagination and to paint a picture on the computer by changing a black and white impression of the artist's work into colour. Pupils were very interested and produced creative interpretations using a graphics program and computer tools such as 'paint', 'pencil' and 'spray gun'. Records were kept of individual pupils' attainments. The limitations of the dated computer system reduced the effectiveness of the lesson as the printing of pupils' pictures took too long and there was insufficient time available for the teacher to discuss the pupils' work in

order to compare and contrast to a print of the artist's work.

132 In Year 5, pupils produced repeating patterns using a program which allowed them to enter formulae into the computer in order to control the design. They prepared a spreadsheet to plan goods for a party and altered the quantities of various items to meet the budget of £150 for the cost of the event. In Year 6, pupils used a 'search engine' to find information on the Internet to assist their learning in history; they found details about Queen Victoria and copied it and pasted it into a word processing program before printing out. At the City Learning Centre, pupils built on their previous experiences at the school by preparing good quality presentations in which they incorporated text and digital photographs. They controlled models of wheeled vehicles using formulae they had programmed into the computers.

133 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator and staff are keen to develop the subject further but are frustrated by the lack of sufficient up-to-date computers and peripheral hardware and software resources; however, the equipment at the school is used very well resulting in pupils making good progress. The policy for the subject is unsatisfactory as it does not give clear guidance and does not represent current practice. The role of the co-ordinator in relation to monitoring of teaching and learning is underdeveloped. The school uses the City Learning Centre very well to teach aspects of the curriculum for which it has insufficient equipment, particularly control and monitoring. Teachers and teaching assistants are experienced, well trained and capable.

MUSIC

134 The standards attained by pupils aged seven and eleven are average in singing, but below average in all other aspects of music. Except for singing, standards have not improved since the last inspection. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to extend the range and quality of their singing, and they respond well to these opportunities. However, their opportunities to learn to read, compose and make music are unsatisfactory, as are their opportunities to hear and respond to music from different sources, times and cultures.

135 Fundamentally, the subject suffers from poor resources and a lack of musical expertise. There are no visiting specialist teachers to provide instrumental tuition and develop the talents of the more able pupils. Nor is there a skilled musician on the staff who could lead colleagues forward and enable pupils to improve their all-round experience and progress.

136 In singing, the school makes effective use of the resources at its disposal. The headteacher gives a good lead, and an accomplished pianist gives invaluable help freely and enthusiastically. The music co-ordinator and a pianist lead a choir, which enables the more musically inclined and able pupils to achieve well. The weekly hymn practice, led by the headteacher, is an uplifting experience. The choir and members of staff set the standard, and the whole school sings with zest and a developing control of dynamics, pitch and rhythm. The repertoire is varied and the singing is tuneful and expressive, with good diction, phrasing and unison. The approach is straightforward and no attempt is made to sing in two or three parts, though the choir adds an effective descant at times and good efforts are made to improve understanding of duration and varying tempo.

137 The two class lessons observed were satisfactory and showed how lessons are raising standards in singing. Both lessons were carefully planned and kept all pupils busy through a progression of varied and challenging activities. Lack of specialist knowledge and understanding led to some missed opportunities because of teachers' uncertain perceptions of the points that needed specific coaching or a different approach. For example, the Year 1 lesson gave all pupils opportunities to use untuned percussion instruments to accompany their singing. These opportunities were not used well, however, because pupils were not asked to listen to their own performance and say how it could be better, and also because instructions were unclear.

138 The school has introduced a new scheme of work for Years 1 to 6 which provides a balanced curriculum and is also satisfactorily suited to the non-specialist teacher. The headteacher gives a strong lead in developing this scheme. However, discussions with older pupils reveal a picture of underachievement in aspects other than singing. Their knowledge of music is very

narrow and does not extend to other cultures and times. Their experience of using instruments to compose and perform has been very patchy. They have had very few opportunities to use computers to help them compose and record their own music. At the same time, they recall opportunities to perform music at events such as the Christmas play or during visits to the school by a Caribbean steel band and a woodwind ensemble. The lack of opportunity to work with instruments is largely due to poor resources. Whilst the number of untuned percussion instruments is adequate, the range and quality are poor. The stock of tuned percussion is unsatisfactory in all respects, and the collection of recorded music is very limited. Music's potential contribution to the life of the school and to pupils' spiritual and cultural development is not realised.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139 In the games lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection standards were higher than would normally be expected. In the athletics and games lessons seen in the juniors standards were also above those that would normally be expected. This is an improvement, on the standards seen at the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. This is because the quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good and teachers' planning ensures that pupils build securely on previous skills. Both these significant factors in the good standards achieved are improvements on the findings of the previous inspection.

140 In the lessons seen, teachers observed pupils' performance closely and used their observations to analyse skills and help pupils to reflect on how they might improve. This enabled pupils in Year 1 to improve their skills in travelling and ball control. During the inspection, the windy weather on the playing field made it difficult at times for pupils to hear teachers; however, because teachers' control of pupils is good and they organised equipment well, this did not detract from the clarity of their instructions and pupils' performance. Pupils in Year 2 responded very well to the teacher's very clear explanations and her very good use of pupil demonstrations to make very good progress in their skills of passing and receiving a ball. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and involvement. This was seen particularly during the part of lessons where children moved from one activity to another. In Year 4 pupils changed athletic activity groups and settled quickly to their new activities. Pupils in Year 2 changed partners, equipment and activities responsibly and efficiently so that the lesson ran smoothly and their co-ordination in the use of a range of bats improved.

141 Teachers generally have a good subject knowledge which they use to explain to pupils how to improve performance. In Year 6 pupils had high standards of control and accuracy in passing and made good use of attacking and defending skills in football. This was enhanced by good levels of sporting behaviour because the teacher insisted on high standards of teamwork and fair play. Because teachers have high expectations of their performance, pupils are challenged to improve their performance; in Year 1 pupils improved their ball control because the teacher asked them to change direction and to use their weaker foot. Pupils in Year 4 were challenged to improve their athletic skills because they timed and measured their achievements so that, in future lessons, they can compete against their own performances.

142 Pupils in Year 4 take part in swimming lessons at a local pool. Pupils learn to swim and many achieve high standards. A few pupils take part in competitive swimming and represent the local area. The co-ordinator has a thorough knowledge of physical education. He works hard to organise the subject, assist staff and ensure that the good quality and range of equipment are used well. He makes a significant contribution towards the enrichment of the curriculum by ensuring that a high proportion of pupils takes part in extra curricular competitive sport in tennis, football, rugby and athletics.