

INSPECTION REPORT

CHRIST THE KING RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Islington

LEA area: Islington

Unique reference number: 100450

Headteacher: Gerard Thompson

Reporting inspector: John Lilly
12487

Dates of inspection: 30 September – 3 October 2002

Inspection number: 246062

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Date of previous inspection:	14 November 2000

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Christ the King is a larger than average Roman Catholic primary school with 400 girls and boys on roll between the ages of three and eleven. Working closely with two parishes, it serves a community that includes people facing significant social and economic deprivation. Almost half the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most children join the school with low levels of attainment, especially in speaking and listening. The number of children identified as having special educational needs is broadly average, although this underestimates the degree of need. The children come from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and more than half the children are either learning English as a new language, use English alongside other languages or use a form of English different from that used by their teachers in school. The school is a member of an Education Action Zone. The school has recently received an Achievement Award in recognition of rapidly improving standards despite considerable problems over recruiting staff.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Christ the King is a rapidly improving and good school. Staff, governors, parents and children are determined that the school becomes a very good school. They recognise what they have already achieved and what still needs to be done. The headteacher provides very strong and inspiring leadership for staff and children alike. He gives others the confidence to share the vision of what is possible, and honestly face and address what needs to improve. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, and support continuously improving standards and the good personal development of the children. By the end of Year 6, standards compare well with the average for similar schools. Strong values lived out each day provide a steadfast, inclusive and caring community that is certain of where it is going. At the heart of these values is the celebration of the unique 'specialness' of each child. It is a good place in which to teach and learn and offers good value for money.

What the school does well

Standards are improving rapidly and by the end of Year 6 already compare well with those in similar schools; standards in music are good. This is because:

- Leadership is very good and management effective. Governors and staff work as a close-knit and determined team, and subject leadership and management are good;
- The school manages its finances well and, therefore, finances are secure and the school provides good value;
- Teaching is good and skilled staff development ensures that it continues to improve; class and behaviour management are very good.
- Strong values and firm but caring discipline help children develop as balanced, confident and thoughtful young people. Provision for spiritual development is excellent;
- There is a strong, working partnership between home and school in support of the children's learning;
- The care for the welfare and guidance of the children is very good.

What could be improved

The school can now look to the future. To achieve their aims, governors and staff need to:

- Ensure that all teaching focuses on improving the children's speaking and listening skills and, subsequently, their writing;
- Make the management of whole-school support for children's individual learning needs more coherent and central;
- Improve provision for children learning English or who speak other languages as well as English through better training for staff and working in even closer partnership with the parents of these children.

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 improved significantly since the last inspection (November 2000). It has the vision, ambition and strengths to continue to improve. Standards throughout the school have improved at faster than the national rate because teaching is now consistently good and subject leadership and management effective. Even so, provision for children learning English as an additional language remains inadequate. Improvement overall is good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	D	D	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	E	D	A	
science	D	D	C	A	

Over recent years there has been an improving trend in national tests and assessments at the ends of Years 2 and 6. The letters above tend to hide this trend because children join the school with very low attainment and, even though they make good progress, many do not have time to reach the higher levels (Level 3 and Level 5) by the ends of Years 2 and 6. The best measure of the school's success is comparison with similar schools. Similarly, many children have to overcome a wide range of English language difficulties. This takes time and the benefits from good teaching only begin to show towards the top of the school. For these reasons, results overall at the end of Year 2 have remained below the national average, even though children make good progress in the nursery, reception and Year 1 and 2 classes. Writing has stubbornly refused to improve, despite the school's best efforts. This is because children's speaking skills remain insufficiently developed to support good writing. Even so, results in reading in 2002 matched the national average. Most children throughout the school make at least satisfactory and often good progress in all subjects, although those children still learning English make least good progress because their needs are not fully met. The school is determined to improve standards and staff set themselves challenging targets that they usually meet.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children are keen to come to school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good and children show marked respect for those of different cultures. Bullying is very rare.
Personal development and relationships	Children develop as balanced, thinking and aware young people, able and willing to value themselves and others. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is average and most children arrive on time for school.

The spiritual development of children is excellent and they learn to recognise, celebrate and respect the value of having so many cultures and races within the school community. They gain a secure moral awareness that they can apply as young citizens within school and outside. An area for further improvement is the way staff help children take responsibility for their own learning and play a fuller part in the life of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is at least good throughout the school, very good in Year 5 and excellent in Year 6. This is because of very good planning, clear learning intentions, very good class management and the way teachers create an ethos of pace, challenge, interest and fun. Especially good is the way the teachers show children how to improve their work. These strengths are particularly evident in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Teaching for children with special educational needs is usually good. Teachers give good general support for children who speak languages in addition to English and who are at early and later stages of their acquisition of English. However, they give insufficiently focused support for the particular language development needs of these children, especially in helping them acquire the form of English they need in school. The school addresses the needs of gifted and talented children but with insufficient precision. Even so, good teaching overall enables girls and boys to make good progress, although they do not find it easy to take full responsibility for their own learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is balanced, broad and relevant to children's present and future lives. Even so, support for children learning English is not good enough to allow them to benefit fully from what is on offer. Whilst satisfactory and including some very good activities, children would benefit from a wider range of activities outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good leadership and management ensure that provision is satisfactory and there are practical and sensible plans for its rapid improvement. The co-ordinator is new and her vision for the future has yet to become full reality.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision has not improved since the last inspection and remains unsatisfactory. This is partly for reasons beyond the control of the school and partly because the school has only recently fully recognised language development in English as crucial to raising standards. The school now has good plans for improvement; for example, management of this provision is now a key responsibility of the deputy headteacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual development is excellent and for moral and social development good. It is very good for cultural development and this is because the unique value of each child is recognised and celebrated.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Provision for the care, welfare and guidance of children is very good. It is grounded upon the strong values of the school and complete commitment to helping each child to achieve and flourish.

Parents value the school highly and are very supportive; this has been a major reason why the school came through bad times and is now so keen to become outstanding. There is a real and practical partnership between home and school. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and for religious education. The school has made support for children learning English as an additional language a top priority and managers realise that all staff need further training. The school also recognises that support for children with special gifts and talents requires further improvement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are strong. At the heart of the school's leadership is the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and empowered by governors. The senior management team and subject leaders follow their good example.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities with commitment, care and efficiency. They provide clear and effective direction for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	From governors through to the most junior member of staff everyone reflects upon and evaluates performance. They then find ways to meet ever more challenging targets.
The strategic use of resources	The governors have ensured that the school's improvement is based upon secure finance and prudent yet wise investment.

There are adequate, qualified staff to meet the demands of the curriculum even though the school finds recruiting staff very difficult. Learning resources are good. Through the hard work of staff, the accommodation provides a safe, attractive and stimulating place in which to learn but this goes only some way to compensate for poor buildings for reception and Year 1 classes, unsatisfactory accommodation for music and Year 2, and lack of space for provision such as a library. Leadership and management are strengths of the school and all managers seek best value through rigorous comparison with standards elsewhere, by seeking the advice of others, and by challenging each other to find better ways to meet their aims.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are keen to learn • Behaviour is good and their children develop well as caring and aware young people • Teaching is good and their children make good progress • The leadership of the school is strong • They feel there is an equal partnership between home and school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons • The recognition and celebration of specifically English culture alongside other cultures • The relationship with homes where parents may not speak English • Accommodation

Inspectors agree with the positive views of the parents. The range of activities outside lessons is broadly typical of primary schools nationally but the quality of the activities is enhanced because of the high quality of the coaching. Inspectors agree with the other areas of concern identified by some parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment overall has improved significantly since the last inspection and staff have the determination, commitment and skills to continue this very positive trend. Most children join the nursery and reception classes with very low attainment but quickly make good progress. Even so, many do not achieve their 'early learning goals' by the end of the reception year.
2. In 2001 tests and assessments at the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing, mathematics were well below the national average, although above the average for reading in similar schools, below this average in mathematics and science, and well below in writing. Results for 2002 suggest that standards have continued to improve in reading and science but have remained depressed in writing and mathematics.
3. This rather mixed picture has several reasons. Firstly: most children join the nursery with very low levels of attainment, especially in speaking and listening. Secondly: more than half are either learning English as a new language, have English as an additional language or speak a type of English that is different from their teachers' language. This means they need time to catch up with children elsewhere who have average attainment and do not have English language needs. Language development of the type that many pupils at Christ the King need, does not begin to show benefits in raised standards across the curriculum until at least Year 4. For these reasons, attainment when compared with the national average will tend to be low at the end of Year 2, especially because pupils will have to make extremely good progress to achieve the higher level 3.
4. The benefit from more developed English skills shows clearly by the end of Year 6. Although results in national tests in 2001 were well below the national average in mathematics, they were better though still below average in English and science. Overall, they were below the national average. Compared with similar schools, they were well above average in English, and in line in both mathematics and science. Results overall were above the average for similar schools. Results for 2002 show that this improving trend continues although there was a decline in English. Even so, standards were well above the average for similar schools in mathematics and science, and above the average in English.
5. By the end of Year 2, attainment in English, mathematics and science is still below national expectations. Attainment in information and communication technology, art, and geography meets national expectations. Although it is slightly below in design and technology, history, and physical education, it is above expectations in music. By the end of Year 6, attainment matches national expectations in all subjects except for English where it is slightly below and in music where it is again above.
6. The above shows that pupils as a whole make good progress. In the main girls and boys make equivalent progress. Able, average and slightly below average children make good progress, but the very able sometimes do not find the work sufficiently challenging – as one such boy said, 'The work's easy'. Although this boy found the thinking easy, his language development held him back from expressing his very sophisticated ideas and even though his reading was technically very skilled, he found it difficult to express in words his high comprehension and understanding. Pupils with

special educational needs make only satisfactory progress even though they are well supported. This is because they find it difficult to use words to work out their ideas and still find it difficult to understand what they hear. Similarly, pupils who are learning English or live in a world of several languages, have similar problems when trying to understand and express what they learn. Teachers are not, as yet, sufficiently skilled at helping these pupils learn to use the form of English they need in school. Consequently, although they make rapid initial progress in their acquisition of English, their learning of English slows when acquiring the more complex language they need, especially at school.

7. The above paints a complicated picture, but also shows an effective school fast becoming a very effective school with pupils making good progress by the end of Year 6. This is because teaching is good, management is efficient and effective, and pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes to school are good and these begin in the nursery and reception classes. They are proud of their school that they rightly view as being a friendly place and a community that is secure and caring. Most are punctual at the start of the school day and their eagerness to learn is reflected in how quickly they settle to work. They show a good level of interest in lessons, and the majority of older pupils take part in activities after school, which they thoroughly enjoy.
9. Behaviour is good in classrooms and around the school. Pupils are courteous towards each other, to adults who work in school and to visitors, and they behave very well on school trips. There have been no recent permanent exclusions. Pupils treat the grounds and buildings with respect because they value what they have in their school. They keep their classrooms tidy, and the playgrounds are almost entirely free of litter.
10. Personal development and relationships are good. Pupils quickly gain and then build their self-esteem and confidence as they progress through the school. They are confident when talking to inspectors and are always keen to share their very positive thoughts about the school. They revel in their cultural diversity and show themselves as being 'all God's children'. They become creative and enjoy performing. There is very little oppressive or racist behaviour because pupils learn to appreciate others. They gain high moral awareness that they apply in their own lives and their excellent spiritual development brings a deep sense of meaning and purpose to their lives. Although they become socially skilled and aware, opportunities for independent learning and developing initiative are too limited and this means development of independence is less rapid. Even so, pupils carry out small, allocated tasks such as being classroom and dinner monitors, diligently and with a sense of responsibility, and this contributes well to the smooth running of the school.
11. Attendance is satisfactory, being broadly in line with primary schools nationally. This is a considerable achievement given the disrupted lives many of the families face.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Teaching is good throughout the school and this helps the pupils to make at least satisfactory, mainly good and often very good progress. It is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection and teachers teach the various subjects equally well. This is because leadership of subjects is better and because senior managers work successfully to help teachers improve the way they teach. This good teaching creates

an orderly, enjoyable and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and the commonest reply when pupils are asked what they like most about their school, is 'Our teachers'.

13. Teaching in the nursery class is never less than satisfactory and often good. In reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes it is good most of the time and sometimes very good. In the reception and Year 1 building, however, the poorly designed accommodation hampers the teachers' capacity to use their skills and the children find it more difficult to listen and concentrate on their work. Teaching overall across Years 3 to 6 is very good with especially good teaching in Year 5 and excellent teaching in Year 6.
14. Teaching is good because the school makes good teaching and learning top priorities. Teachers are very keen to find ways to make their good teaching outstanding. They do this by thinking first about the way their pupils learn and what they need in order to learn faster and more securely. The very good teaching has the following features:
 - The intentions for the lesson are crystal clear and well understood by pupils.
 - The teachers' planning is detailed and provides very well for each level of ability.
 - The teachers manage their classes very well, and lessons bowl along with pace and excitement.
 - The teachers use open questions to force pupils to think for themselves and speak about their answers carefully.
 - The teachers assess the pupils' learning continuously and show them why they succeed or meet problems and what they need to learn next.

When teaching is only satisfactory the reasons are again clear:

- The teacher has relied too much on planning from elsewhere and has not taught the way they know would be better.
 - They have not been able to keep the pupils on task.
 - They are held back by problems with the accommodation.
 - They have not recognised and, therefore, addressed the complex problems that face pupils for whom English is an additional language or English speakers who have not yet acquired the speaking and listening skills they need at school.
 - They have dominated the learning and so restricted the pupils' ability and need to manage and evaluate their own learning and this, in particular, hinders the learning of the very able pupils.
15. Pupils are keen to learn, to work hard and with care, to listen and to carry out their tasks to the best of their ability. They attempt to listen to their teachers, but often find they cannot quite understand what they hear. Even so, they work co-operatively and often collaboratively, and are eager to finish work on time. Most complete homework tasks conscientiously. Working with their teachers the ethos in classrooms is warm, caring, based on strong relationships and values, and underpinned by the teachers' high expectations. The teaching assistants make a major contribution and when they are not available, the learning slows significantly.
 16. Areas for improvement all centre around the better development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, and what follows explains why many do not learn as quickly as the generally good teaching would lead one to expect. The majority of pupils do not possess English language skills normally expected of their age. There are many reasons for this and these include learning English as a new language, living their lives in a world in which there are several languages or speaking English in ways that are very different from the English their teachers' use. The teachers are not always sufficiently aware of how to help pupils to acquire the type of English they need at

school, for example, recognising the key understanding of words needed in a particular lesson and creating an overall understanding that allows pupils to bridge from what they do know through their own language to the new ideas they need to gain and express in the English needed at school. In an example of good practice, a teacher very carefully planned work on rivers for pupils who had little experience of rivers, and certainly did not have the words and ideas to understand what they were expected to learn. The teacher introduced the context by building pupils' awareness through story and picture, using words they did have, and then introduced new words and ideas that pupils could learn to understand and use. This is to be followed by a visit to a river where pupils will try out their new skills and language. This is excellent teaching.

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

17. The curriculum for pupils at the Foundation Stage and aged six to eleven is good, being balanced, broad and relevant to children's present and future lives. It provides a good programme of learning based on national guidance for learning in nursery and reception classes, the National Curriculum and guidance published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school ensures that there is careful planning to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school. The implementation of the National Literacy and National Numeracy projects is very good and this forms a good foundation for improvements detailed below. This is an improvement for literacy since the last inspection. Even so, currently, the teaching of the curriculum does not sufficiently support the acquisition of the form of English many of the pupils require, and this restricts their ability to access all that is taught.
18. The time allocated to each subject is sensible. Almost 10 per cent is used for religious education but this well constructed curriculum also includes personal and social education and the study of two major religions other than Christianity. Careful planning ensures that such areas as sex and drugs education are considered in depth. Certain subjects, for example design and technology, are planned as blocks of time; although this allows study in depth it is at the cost of losing ways to build steadily pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Even so, a strength of the way the school plans the curriculum is that the first session in the day helps pupils to see how all their learning fits together. The curriculum for information and communication technology has recently improved significantly and is good, but has not had time, as yet, to enhance sufficiently the learning in all subjects.
19. The strong values of the school help it strive to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils. Even so, there is room for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported but teachers do not always address their individual needs in their planning and support teaching assistants are not always available though needed; this restricts the ability of these pupils to access the curriculum. The school is not as yet sufficiently skilled at helping pupils acquire the form of English needed at school. Therefore, although they appear to be accessing the curriculum, for example listening intently and working hard to finish their work, they do not fully understand the work covered. The curriculum is challenging as well as interesting, yet the school has yet to consider with sufficient precision the needs of gifted and talented pupils, for example completely different work carefully designed to meet their needs.
20. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory with some very good features. Pupils aged six to eleven have the opportunity to attend after-school clubs including cricket, football and basketball led by professional coaches. There is an excellent gospel choir. Pupils make regular trips linked to their lessons like that to Sutton House

to study the Tudors. Some of Year 6 go on a residential course in Dorset. A wide variety of visitors come to the school. Even so, this curricular provision is not sufficiently wide to help pupils see a much wider world than their own, and so raise their aspirations and expectations of life.

Provision for personal development

21. Provision is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Strong values and the excellent personal example set by staff, provide sure foundations for further improvement. Senior management are considering ways to make this happen.
22. Provision for spiritual development is excellent. Staff give pupils many opportunities to reflect quietly on the meaning and purpose of life. The worship life of the school, for example class prayer, assemblies, worship in the local church as well as religious education, helps pupils to grapple with their own emerging faith and belief, and transfer these to the ways they manage their own lives.
23. Provision for moral development is good. There are clear expectations of right and wrong throughout the school, and each class agree their own rules. In a Year 6 class, they have agreed to be 'supportive leaders', modelling their behaviour on their class saint, St Raphael. Teachers help pupils to understand why things are right or wrong and how to do what is right even when this is difficult. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to discuss moral dilemmas, for example during 'Black History' month.
24. Provision for social development is good. Pupils learn to be young citizens by playing their part in an orderly, purposeful and caring school 'family'. They are helped to learn how to co-operate, collaborate and respect others, and why this is important. Consequently, they revel in difference, valuing and appreciating the rich variety of cultures in the school. Contact with people from outside the school, for example the police, helps them transfer what they learn in school to the wider world. The school is considering how to increase the ways in which pupils can play a greater part, for example through a school council and through more ways to investigate and research on their own.
25. Provision for cultural development is very good. The school provides many ways of celebrating and learning about other people's cultures, and displays show pupils human achievement and creativity in all these cultures. Although rightly centred upon the Catholic mission of the school, pupils also learn in depth about other faiths, for example Islam and Judaism. Pupils learn about achievement and creativity in English culture, although at times this needs greater prominence. Some parents are concerned that English culture, for example the Jubilee, may not have appropriate appreciation. Senior management are considering ways to improve the balance, recognising that the school is already good at recognising and celebrating the pupils' achievements in their home communities.

Contribution of the community

26. The school's links with the community are good. The police liaison officer provides excellent teaching of citizenship, and the award of certificates and an activity day at the local police station reinforce this learning. Music benefits greatly from the leader of a gospel choir and pupils display such enthusiasm that over 50 of them regularly attend after-school practice. Good links with local sporting organisations, such as Arsenal Football Club, lead to the enrichment of the physical education curriculum as well as providing high quality sports coaching in after-school clubs. Help from a garden design company has improved the grounds and stimulated parents to undertake further improvements. Links with partner institutions are very good. The close ties with the parish church very powerfully enrich pupil's spiritual development. There is a good and beneficial working relationship with the Education Action Zone, although there is still room for further development. Pupils also benefit from the placement of student teachers from the Institute of Education, and from other students from local colleges who are engaged in work experience.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school takes very good care of pupils. All reasonable procedures are followed to maintain a safe environment. Child protection is particularly secure because the school's policy is clear and comprehensive, and all teaching staff are kept up-to-date by regular training, which is provided by the local education authority.
28. The majority of pupils have good attendance. This is well supported by regular monitoring, analysis, and reminders about the importance of good attendance in newsletters for parents. Despite term-time holidays, and the disrupted lives of some pupils, including those being re-settled into the area, attendance overall is being maintained at a level which is broadly in line with other primary schools.
29. Behaviour management is very good and is a strength of the school. Pupils contribute to framing school rules and accept responsibility for their own behaviour. They are clear about the rewards and sanctions and say that they expect and receive fair treatment. All, and especially the younger ones, respond positively when their achievements are recognised. The caring family ethos promotes very good relationships between pupils and staff and amongst the pupils themselves. This effectively maintains an environment that is almost free of unacceptable and oppressive behaviour. Every class teacher maintains a behaviour book, which is frequently monitored so that any emerging problems are swiftly resolved. Good behaviour leads to undisrupted lessons and so very little teaching time is lost. This keeps pupils coming to school, staying in school and liking school.
30. The monitoring of personal development is very good. All teachers keep updated 'pen pictures' of their pupils, which track their personal development. Success is regularly recognised through mentions in school newsletters and by headteacher's awards. This is part of the school's overall commitment to helping all its pupils succeed and feel valued. The new co-ordinator for special educational needs has made a very good start and is working with senior management to make the support more coherent and central, highlighting the individual needs of all pupils and then meeting them. These include the personal and English language needs of those recently entering the country, those with special gifts and talents, and especially those who speak other languages at home and forms of English different from the English their teachers use

in class. The provision for the support of pupils learning English as an additional language is currently inadequate and lacks sufficient expertise.

Assessment

31. Procedures for monitoring and supporting academic progress are good. In the great majority of lessons, teachers make pupils aware of the learning objectives for the lesson and remind them of their individual targets for their learning in literacy. This is because the school has good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and staff use this data effectively to guide planning. These include precise assessment of pupils attainment when joining the school, and progressive assessment of pupils with special education needs. The assessment of pupils' English development needs and progress in acquisition of English is insufficiently focused and precise. Overall, however, assessment has improved significantly since the previous OFSTED inspection. The school provides good, effective support and relevant advice for its pupils, informed by the monitoring of their academic progress and personal development.
32. A very important development in the school has been 'formative' assessment. This means teachers make the intentions for each lesson very clear and help pupils understand what they will look for in their work. At the end of a lesson or through helpful marking, teachers and pupils assess where and why they succeed or meet problems, and what they need to teach or learn next. This development has significantly improved both teaching and learning.
33. Teachers use assessment on a short-term, day-to-day basis, very effectively, sometimes sensibly involving teaching assistants who make notes on pupils' progress in lessons. The school carries out all the statutory assessments of its pupils, and assesses their attainment when they join the school and at the end of the reception year. This allows managers to measure and evaluate both the progress of each child and also the effectiveness of teaching, and then to set the school, classes and individual pupils targets to achieve. They enhance this monitoring of learning with national English and mathematics tests at the end of each year. Staff keep a 'tracking sheet' of individual progress in reading, writing and number work and this helps them act immediately if learning slows. A particularly good feature of the school's assessment procedures is that there are now fledgling systems in place to record progress in all the 'foundation' subjects as well as the 'core' subjects. These systems are all relatively new and have yet to bed down, but the school has made a very good start.
34. The significant amount of information now gained from testing is used well to identify and support pupils needing additional support or challenge. This 'in-house' analysis is further augmented by the very detailed analysis provided by the local education authority. The school uses this thorough analysis of its data, including comparative data on levels of attainment by gender and ethnicity. Teachers give pupils individual and regularly-reviewed targets for literacy. The school carefully analyses pupils' answers to test questions to identify common errors and weaknesses and to see trends. Among the practical results of this analysis has been the well-targeted provision of additional extension groups for pupils needing support in literacy, for example a phonic development programme in the lower school. There is a good range of additional literacy strategies for older pupils and support for pupils needing a 'boost' with their numeracy skills and confidence, for example 'Springboard Maths' booster classes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. A high percentage of parents returned their pre-inspection questionnaires, which is illustrative of the high level of interest that they take in their children's education. Parents recognise that teaching is good, that the school encourages their children to work hard and do their best, and helps pupils become mature and responsible. They believe that the school is well led and managed and works closely with parents. Behaviour in school is regarded as good, and children make good progress. All of these positive comments are confirmed by the inspection. The main area of significant concern amongst parents centres upon the range of interesting activities available outside school. Certainly after school clubs cater mainly for older pupils, but inspectors judge the provision of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory and comparable with what is seen in primary schools nationally. The expertise of teachers and outside coaches adds considerably to the quality of these activities.
36. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. This includes weekly newsletters and termly curriculum maps for each year group. Three meetings a year are arranged for parents to discuss their children's progress and to understand the levels that they are achieving. Target setting is consistently included as part of very clearly written and informative pupils' annual reports. Notice boards, which are placed close to the main school entrances and in the nursery, carry topical and relevant information. The only weakness is that of accessibility for parents who have very little understanding of English because they are not adequately supported with translations or interpreters. Parents of children who have special educational needs get satisfactory support. Individual education plans are clearly written and parents are appropriately involved. The governors' annual report to parents is very informative, especially when advising them on the progress being made on the school's action plan.
37. Links with parents are, in the main, very effective. They are encouraged to come into school when dropping off and meeting their children, and this automatically helps to break down any potential barrier. Some parents feel that there needs to be a better working relationship with parents from other cultures and both governors and staff recognise the need for improvement. This inspection highlights this need. Even so, most parents regularly and diligently maintain the home/school reading record, and support for their children's homework is good. All parents sign the home/school agreement and do their best to ensure that their children arrive at school ready to learn, and attend school regularly. Between 20 and 30 parents help in school in various ways, for example by hearing readers, helping on school trips, and assisting with school productions and the Christmas concert. Others help by supporting the Friends of Christ the King, which raises money for the school, and by maintaining the outside environment. Parents are effectively consulted on a range of issues, most recently concerning the new school uniform.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. Leadership and management are good and in many areas very good; they drive and underpin the way the school is improving. The headteacher provides very strong and inspiring leadership both for staff and for children. He shares his vision of what is possible, and consequently people believe they should and can move on from being good to becoming outstanding. The deputy headteacher works closely with the headteacher, each balancing the other's strengths and weaknesses. This team helps other staff believe that the pupils are 'smart enough if the adults can be good enough'. This creates an ambitious school that not only works hard but also seeks to learn how

to convert that hard work into even better learning. Consequently, strong staff development is at the core of the school's effective management. The leadership centres upon spiritual development yet is firmly grounded in the realities and practicalities of everyday life. This leadership, backed by effective and efficient management, has brought about significant improvement since the last inspection. This is because other staff have become effective subject leaders and managers, and the senior management are becoming a powerful heart to the school's drive to improve. This senior team is intelligent and reflective, seeing what needs to be done today but with a clear vision and direction for the future. The staff come across as an ambitious, determined and learning team, committed to strong spiritual values and to helping each and every pupil succeed – as someone said, 'they go to 'unreasonable' lengths for every child'.

39. None of this would have been possible without the strong leadership and vision of the governing body, exemplified in the leadership of the chairman. Their determination and vision have brought the school out of bad times and governors have a clear direction for the future, as one said, 'We are going to be a Beacon School'. The governing body works efficiently and effectively through well-selected sub-committees. They are involved throughout the planning cycle and each governor takes responsibility for and monitors discrete areas of the school, for example visiting 'their class'. They are not afraid to be innovative, but make certain their feet remain on the ground. They have ensured that the school's finances are secure and that they seek best value by comparing rigorously the school's performance with other schools and seeking the guidance of others.
40. The school improvement plan provides a clear direction, agreed priorities centred upon teaching, learning and improved attainment, and a strong commitment to the Catholic mission of the school. The school's mission statement is highlighted throughout the school, reminding every one, child and adult alike, of what kind of school Christ the King is and what it needs to become. The mission and values of the school drive everyone each day to make the school even more inclusive, recognising the unique 'specialness' of each pupil's value and needs, while seeking better ways of recognising the unique value of each of the communities from which pupils come. As a result, governors have acted to strengthen the leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and, most crucially, those learning English as a new language.
41. It is a rigorously self-evaluating and reflective school. Management now realise the need to work with even greater precision on the teaching skills required to support more effectively the needs of, for example, pupils learning English as a new language. This inspection highlights the need to recognise and address the considerable language problems facing most pupils because so many have complex English language development needs, including those who speak a different type of English from the form of English that teachers use in school.

Staffing

42. The school has a strong team of teachers, teaching assistants and other staff, for example, caretaking and administration. This achievement has not come easily since the school has considerable difficulties recruiting staff. It manages recruitment well but now needs to see this task as using a greater range of strategies, for example being a school that enables new staff to gain qualified teaching status. Induction for new staff is very good as witnessed by the good teaching observed, even though many staff were new. The senior managers help all staff to work more successfully through firm, systematic and very responsive staff development and guidance. Performance management effectively supports all staff whether teachers or support staff. Everyone has a direction for improvement and the support to learn ways to achieve agreed objectives. There is a perceptive and well thought-through programme of training. Even so, there remains a significant gap in relation to the complex English language needs of pupils. The very successful training in formative assessment shows the way that focused training improves the quality of the school's work significantly.
43. Management deploys staff well but are seeking ways to bring even greater coherence to the way learning support staff are managed and trained to support both class teachers and pupils. Since learning slows when teaching assistants are not available, this suggests the school needs more, and the English language problems of pupils suggest that these new assistants will need further and specific training in helping pupils gain the English language skills they need at school. Governors have decided to manage the funds available to support pupils learning English themselves and have given the deputy headteacher responsibility for leading and managing this essential aspect of the school's work. This forms a good platform for much needed improvement, including additional specialist staff and much increased training for all staff.

Accommodation

44. Even though the school is an attractive, safe, secure and stimulating place in which to learn it has considerable weaknesses. The building for reception and Year 1 classes is dingy, ill-planned and in a poor state of repair. Classrooms in the main teaching block lack carpets and this makes them noisy, even though, as the pupils say, 'it isn't naughty noise!'. The school has no place for a library. All these factors hold back learning especially speaking and listening development, and learning how to work independently. The governors have well advanced plans to correct this situation and realise its urgency.

Learning resources

45. Resources are of good quality, range and quantity. This is because management has placed priority on giving adults and children the tools for achievement. They are accessible and well cared for, but inadequate accommodation still restricts their use, for example the computer suite is small and there is no central library or learning resource area. Currently the resources to support pupils who speak different languages are insufficient; they do not offer the range of texts and equipment that are needed.

Efficiency

46. Governors have overseen a rapid improvement in the school's finances and captured their vision for the school in a detailed, prioritised, costed, and well focused school improvement plan. Working closely with the local education authority, and by employing a part-time bursar, a deficit budget has been turned into a surplus without impinging on the resources necessary to provide pupils with their full curriculum entitlement.
47. Financial management is greatly improved. Good use of new technology has led to accessibility of financial information, which gives governors and the headteacher the opportunity to closely monitor expenditure against their budget and ensure that designated funding is spent appropriately, for example for special educational needs and support for pupils learning English. Small departmental budgets are agreed with co-ordinators, who are now included in the budget process. The knowledgeable and friendly school secretary efficiently provides all levels of management with relevant information. Accounting procedures were found to be satisfactory in the most recent audit. Monies intended for such as the support for pupils with special educational needs are used effectively and properly.
48. Governors are well aware of the principles of best value; they rigorously compare the school with other schools, take decisions over the provision of services such as school lunches and cleaning, and seek advice by consulting the diocese and local education authority on major projects such as the proposed rebuilding project. They are very open with parents, especially in their annual report, and welcome their comments.

Value for money

49. Considering the low average attainment of the children when they join the school and their good progress and personal development, balanced by the high revenue the school receives, the school offers good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection, despite considerable problems over the recruitment of staff. Governors have ensured that the school is well lead and managed and they have secure control of their finances. The headteacher has focused upon teaching and learning, and consequently, teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Staff have created a school with high expectations, strong values and a core concern that all pupils develop as reflective and responsible young people, keen and able to play their part in the success of themselves and their school. With these strong foundations already in place, the school has the opportunity to build even better provision. The key threat to success is the lack of effective provision for the English language development of those who, for many reasons, do not have the English language skills they need to succeed at school. What follows should be seen as parts of a single improvement plan.

51. To continue to raise standards, governors and staff should:

- (1) Ensure that all teaching focuses on improving pupils' low speaking and listening skills and, subsequently, their writing by:
(The best way of understanding this section as a whole is to read paragraphs 66 – 77)
 - ensuring that planning for all teaching includes ways to improve these essential speaking and listening skills, linking them subsequently to writing;
(Paragraphs 69 and 77)
 - agreeing clear policy as to how these skills can be improved and linking this to training for all staff;
(Paragraph 42)
 - improving accommodation, especially for the reception and Year 1 classes, to provide a better environment in which development of speaking and listening can occur.
(Paragraph 44)

- (2) Make the overall support for pupils with individual learning needs more coherent and central, whether this is because they are very able or because they find learning difficult, by:
 - bringing present policy, expertise and support staff together to create an integrated learning support team focused on supporting learning in class and playing a more explicit role in raising standards;
(Paragraph 30)
 - enabling this team to identify and then support the wide range of learning needs, tracking and evaluating individual progress so that timely improvement to teaching can occur. These needs will include behavioural needs, language needs, specific learning needs and the particular needs of the gifted and talented;
(Paragraph 30)
 - increasing the number of teaching assistants so that they are available in all lessons to meet specific needs, for example those of pupils learning English as an additional language;
(Paragraphs 43 and 89)
 - ensuring that all teachers are trained so that they can plan for and implement better ways to help pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
(Paragraph 14)

- (3) Improve provision for pupils learning English or who speak other languages as well as English through better training for staff and working in even closer partnership with their parents by:
 - increasing through training, staff's knowledge and understanding of the needs of these pupils and how these needs can be met;
(Paragraph 42)
 - providing additional specialist support for class teachers, for example teaching assistants trained to help these pupils and guide teachers;
(Paragraphs 43 and 89)
 - finding ways to work even more closely and productively with parents of these pupils, for example learning mentors who create a better bridge between home and school;

(Paragraph 37)

- increasing the range of resources to support these pupils, for example bilingual books and learning resources.

(Paragraph 45)

While addressing the above, the governors should implement as a matter of urgency their plans to improve accommodation overall. (Paragraph 44)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	91
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	20	43	20	3	0	0
Percentage	6	22	47	22	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	400
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	185

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	144

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	85

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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
	2002	32	27	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	20	27
	Girls	28	19	21
	Total	52	39	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (78)	66 (65)	81 (82)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	22	24
	Girls	23	21	26
	Total	51	43	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (77)	72 (72)	85 (78)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	26	24	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	19	24
	Girls	21	17	21
	Total	35	36	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (77)	72 (60)	90 (81)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	14	18
	Girls	23	11	20
	Total	24	25	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (62)	50 (66)	76 (77)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	118	1	0
White – Irish	60	1	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	57	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	23	0	0
Black or Black British – African	100	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	11	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	26.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	218

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	17
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16.1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	7
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	1163622
Total expenditure	1093699
Expenditure per pupil	2675
Balance brought forward from previous year	102328
Balance carried forward to next year	172251

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	400
Number of questionnaires returned	146

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	24	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	35	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	29	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	38	4	1	1
The teaching is good.	72	25	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	37	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	26	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	20	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	58	39	2	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	74	24	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	27	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	38	16	3	11

Other issues raised by parents

- Some parents felt English culture needs greater recognition alongside recognition of other cultures.
- A few parents were concerned with the way they were treated following alleged racial behaviour by children in the nursery.
- A parent felt that parents who could not speak English received inadequate support.

Inspectors followed up all these concerns. They find that the school recognises that all three areas of concern deserve further investigation and this will be part of their plans to improve provision and training for staff concerning overall support for children in a school representing so many cultures.

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

(Provision for early years learning at the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) covers six areas of learning. To prepare for work within the National Curriculum, children are expected to progress through three steps and achieve early learning goals in each area of this learning. Guidance for this stage expects learning to be a balance between focused work in groups and structured play with a purpose.)

52. Provision for learning in the nursery and reception classes is good. Although most children join the school with very low levels of attainment they make good progress. The quality of provision has significantly improved since the last inspection. Areas for further improvement include the accommodation and the way adults need to intervene in the children's play to move their learning forward.
53. Daily opportunities for parents of children in the Foundation Stage to talk with the teacher promote harmonious links between home and school. Colourful class displays and notices help to explain the early years curriculum to parents.
54. Most children enter the nursery at three and a half with low levels of language development. In addition, many are at very early stages of learning English. All children attend the nursery full-time, and at the time of this inspection, almost half the children in the reception year had just joined the school. After three terms in nursery, children transfer to the reception classes to complete the Foundation Stage of education. Children are making good progress overall and most are likely to reach the early learning goals set nationally for the end of the reception year in personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development, and in most aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. Because of their very low starting points, most children are unlikely to reach the goals set for communication, language and literacy and for mathematical development. Girls and boys usually make equivalent progress, as do children of different abilities. The children at an early stage in acquiring English make the slowest progress because they do not receive a sufficiently high level support in learning English.
55. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal development. They are keen to come to school, arriving eagerly each morning. Even the youngest approach the school day with a confidence that belies their short time in school. Children in both nursery and reception classes are interested in the wide range of practical activities and settle quickly to their tasks. They behave well. They enjoy playing and working with each other, for example to make the water wheel go round or play roles in the 'baby clinic'.
56. The quality of teaching for children in the nursery and reception classes is good overall. Teaching is very good when teachers approach ideas from different angles, as in a reception class when working on 'more' and 'less'. A brisk but unrushed pace holds the children's attention and stimulates their learning because activities are well selected. Other strengths in the teaching lie in the wide range of practical, relevant and enjoyable activities that teachers provide, based on their good understanding of the active way that young children learn. Occasionally, however, activities are too prescriptive, hindering children's learning, ideas and creativity rather than enhancing them. Teachers are well organised and use a good range of strategies to motivate and reinforce learning, for example through the use of puppets who regularly 'get things

wrong', and through music and rhyme. Good questioning skills encourage children to remember and use what they have learned, for example about senses. Skilful and persistent questioning draws out children's thinking, as in finding words to describe the shape of their eyes. Planning is good and covers the six areas of learning. What children are intended to learn is clear. Regular on-going written observations ensure that staff have a good knowledge of how each child progresses but these do not always lead to relevant planning for the next steps in learning. The nursery nurse and teaching assistants contribute well to children's learning because they focus the work with small groups and individual children. All adults manage children's behaviour in a consistently positive way and as a result children almost always work and play harmoniously. Staff often visit children in their chosen activities but they do not enter into the play enough and so miss opportunities to develop the children's ideas and stimulate their imagination. The balance of adult-led activities and those that children initiate for themselves is appropriate but offers an area for improvement; children need more opportunities to learn for themselves.

57. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers provide a good range of appropriate and interesting activities that reflect national guidance and also the early learning goals set for the end of the reception year. The appropriately high priority given to personal, social and emotional development, especially in the nursery, underpins work in all other areas of learning. Daily priority is given to the development of communication, language and literacy skills through focused activities. Teachers suitably encourage the development of talk but, for these children, the emphasis is not always high enough. The provision for mathematical development is good.
58. The good range of readily accessible resources for the Foundation Stage is effective in encouraging children to be independent when selecting equipment and tidying it away.
59. Provision for outdoor learning for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Nursery children have good access to a spacious and well equipped outside area that includes challenging climbing equipment and a covered area for use in inclement weather. Governors have recently upgraded the outside area for the reception classes. This bright and sunny spot with trees and the only usable grassed area in the school is being used to good effect, although the children's access is restricted because it does not lead directly from the indoor teaching areas. Space for riding bikes is limited to pathways. Although the nursery provides good indoor accommodation, the teaching accommodation for reception classes is poor. It is too small, ill designed and dingy and this damages the children's learning despite the teachers' attempts to make the rooms attractive and stimulating.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. Very good provision in this area of learning underpins all aspects of the children's work and play. Good teaching helps them to progress well and to be on course to reach the nationally expected goals at the end of the reception year. New children are settling well into the nursery and becoming aware of routines, encouraged by the caring, secure and welcoming environment in general, and the focused support of the nursery nurse in particular. Children across the Foundation Stage settle confidently to their tasks and select things to do moving about all parts of the teaching areas, inside and outside. They are able to play independently and some concentrate for extended periods on activities, for example looking at books. Children enjoy playing and working together. With explicit reminders, they are learning to share and take turns and be part of a group. Staff have a good rapport with the children and manage them in a consistently positive way. Consequently children almost always behave sensibly.

They help each other, for example giving reminders to put on aprons to play in the water tray. Staff are consistently encouraging and positive, and as a result children are pleased with their achievements. With sensitive encouragement and imaginative strategies, most children are sufficiently confident to speak before the class group. Teachers foster children's self-esteem effectively, for example through the 'Special Me' topic in the nursery or 'Treasures' work across the school. Teachers use the children's rich and diverse cultural heritage to very good effect and children show real interest and enjoyment when learning about their own and other cultures, as when nursery children proudly dressed in traditional African clothes. Teachers and other supporting adults are developing effectively the children's sense of well-being.

Communication, language and literacy

61. The school provides well for this area of learning, giving daily priority to the development of early literacy skills. Teaching in this area is good and, as a result, children make good progress. However, because of low starting points and with many children at the early stages of learning English, most children are unlikely to reach the nationally set goals by the end of the reception year. Nevertheless, with gentle encouragement and a nurturing atmosphere, children are keen to talk, albeit with limited vocabulary and grammar. They offer relevant comments and talk sensibly to each other in their play. Teachers encourage the children to speak using a variety of imaginative approaches, such as 'Peggy' the rabbit or puppets. 'Barnaby and Betty Bear' go home each afternoon to stimulate talk the following day about his or her adventures. Parents are supportive so that there is indeed something for their child to talk about the next day. Teachers seek to extend the children's knowledge and understanding of words such as 'rough', 'smooth' or 'newborn', in focused sessions in particular, but they do not talk often enough with individual children or small groups in an extended way. Children enjoy stories and listen attentively. They love to join in with repetitive parts. Through good access to books as well as direct teaching, children across the Foundation Stage handle books with care. They tell the story from the pictures and turn the pages appropriately. Older children are familiar with book terms such as 'author' and 'front cover', and are beginning to recognise some basic words. Children with the potential to attain at higher levels are beginning to read a simple text, but do not always fully understand the meaning. With daily direct teaching and regular reinforcement, many children are becoming familiar with letter names and sounds. Some four and five-year-olds are beginning to use this knowledge in their own writing. They try hard to write their names and many write strings of letter-like shapes. Some higher-attaining children act as 'writers', making quick up and down marks to represent cursive writing. They are aware of full stops, sometimes using them after every word! Teachers provide good access to writing materials, and although children across the Foundation Stage write freely in their play, their independent writing is not always evident enough in adult led activities.

Mathematical development

62. Provision in this area is good overall. Children make at least satisfactory progress and are taught well but most are unlikely to reach the expected goals by the end of the reception year because of their low starting points in this area. Across the Foundation Stage, teachers place a high priority on counting in a wide variety of ways, for example during class sessions and small groups and during cooking. They make appropriate use of number rhymes, such as 'Five little ducks' and 'Ten clever children', to motivate and reinforce learning. They use routines effectively to practise the children's counting skills, as when counting numbers of boys in the nursery. Many older children can count to ten, and some beyond. They recognise numerals to ten with support. Staff

work hard to find different ways to promote mathematical learning, counting beyond one for the youngest children, for example, or understanding concepts such as 'more' and 'less' in the reception classes. Through intensive small-step questioning, many four and five-year-olds are beginning to understand 'one more' and to identify which of two groups has 'more' objects. With support, younger children talk about which clothes would fit a baby. Many children are familiar with basic shapes such as squares and triangles and some can record them in drawings, for example of a house. Teachers provide a suitable range of mathematical activities, for example filling different sized boxes with conkers, or experimenting with balancing objects. There is too little evidence, however, of adults choosing exactly the right time and way to help children in their self-chosen activities using number.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. The school provides well for this area of learning. Teaching and learning are good. Most children are on course to reach most of the expected goals by the end of the reception year, especially in information and communication technology. A high level of support, direct teaching and very good individual access to computers helps children to approach a computer with confidence. They practise and improve 'mouse skills' and move images about the screen. Many children draw recognisable pictures of faces; some change the colour and on one occasion the brush size as well. In science work, children make good use of their senses to touch and observe different fruits, for example. Their progress in talking about what they are doing, however, is hindered by low language skills, as in distinguishing 'rough' from 'smooth'. Teachers promote children's sense of the passage of time and change effectively through topics such as 'Special Me' and 'Autumn'. Children are aware of the pattern of the days of the week and months of the year. Older children talk about the turning seasons in a simple way and younger children collect leaves and conkers. Children are confident to use all parts of their learning environment. Older children are becoming familiar with aspects of the locality through weekly visits, to the library and the park, for example. In their play, children are gaining an understanding of place and position with equipment such as play maps and small vehicles. Teachers provide a suitable range of construction activities and children enjoy building, putting interlocking bricks together, cutting and sticking.

Physical development

64. The school makes satisfactory provision overall for children's development in this area. Teaching is satisfactory and children make at least satisfactory progress. Good provision in the nursery with a wide selection of equipment, readily available, encourages energetic play effectively. Children use the climbing equipment with confidence, climbing, crawling, and being up high. They ride wheeled vehicles and push prams, making full use of the spacious area. Provision for children in the reception classes to exploit their physical skills is limited by the lack of direct access to the outside and by a single timetabled hall session that is not always used to best effect. When staffing permits, reception children can be energetic in the garden, riding bikes and scooters for example, often for prolonged periods but confined to the pathways. They try hard to improve their skills and are careful to avoid collisions. A weekly visit to the local park to use climbing and other equipment gives a further opportunity for children to practise their physical skills. Teachers provide a wide range of suitable activities to encourage children to use their hands and fingers with dexterity. Most children hold pencils, crayons, and paintbrushes effectively. They use their fingers well, for example to thread beads, to cut, roll, and mould dough, and when playing with small equipment such as play people. Younger children press rollers hard

to apply paint in large sweeping movements. Many children cut paper effectively as a result of careful, direct instruction by staff. Standards in this area meet national expectations overall with most children on course to reach the expected outcomes by the end of the reception year.

Creative development

65. Provision for learning in this area is good. Teaching is good and children make good progress; they are on course to reach the set goals by the end of the reception year. Across the Foundation Stage, teachers provide a good range of creative activities overall, although occasionally they are too prescriptive and so restrict the children's ideas. Children print with different implements, for example with pieces of fruit or with their hands. They make collages using a good selection of materials including natural things such as leaves. They paint freely with a bold use of colour, and older children are beginning to experiment with small brushes and with different techniques such as 'dabbing'. Many children draw recognisable pictures and some make careful observational drawings, for example of flowers. In music, encouraged by the teacher's specialist expertise, children sing a repertoire of songs and rhymes tunefully. They make good attempts to tap the beat using a variety of instruments. They listen quietly to 'whale music'. In imaginative and role play, children often become involved and play for extended periods. Staff, however, miss opportunities to join in the play to develop ideas further.

ENGLISH

66. Provision for learning is good. Standards in English have improved steadily since the last inspection and current standards by the end of Year 6 compare favourably with those in similar schools. Results in national tests and assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were above the average for similar schools. At the end of Year 2 in 2002, standards in reading matched the national average and were well above the average for similar schools. Standards in writing, however, remained well below the national average and that for similar schools. This improvement is a significant achievement given that children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average, particularly in the area of speaking and listening skills and, as a consequence, writing.

Strengths include:

- Well-planned teaching with clear learning objectives;
- Good advice to pupils on where and why they succeed or meet problems and what they need to learn next;
- Perceptive, effective and relevant implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

Areas for further improvement include:

- Design of a clear policy on developing speaking and listening skills to guide teaching in all subjects so that pupils acquire the form of English they need in school;
- Further training for staff so that they understand more fully the learning needs of pupils who are learning English, speak English alongside other languages or speak a type of English different from the form of English used by their teachers.

67. Although pupils make good progress during Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading skills, attainment overall in English by the end of Year 2 remains below, and in a significant proportion of cases, well below national expectations. Good progress in reading relates to the introduction of a very effective and systematic programme to improve pupils' ability to use phonics. Even so, although their 'mechanical' reading skills by the end of Year 2 are approaching satisfactory levels, their ability to understand and explain what they have read is below expectations. This is because teachers do not sufficiently focus on developing speaking and listening skills. This means they do not prepare the way sufficiently well for teaching of writing and, consequently, approximately one-third of pupils in the previous year's cohort did not attain nationally expected levels. This is because if their speaking skills are not well developed, they cannot write well, and because when even when listening intently they cannot understand what they have to do.
68. During Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, their attainment overall compares favourably with that of pupils in similar schools and is approaching the national average, even though their speaking, listening and writing skills still remain below national expectations. In the previous year's national tests approximately one-third of pupils did not achieve expected levels in writing and a lower proportion than nationally achieved above-average results, although the very high level of pupils with special educational needs in that particular cohort was a significant factor in the overall level of attainment.
69. When considering these judgements, it is very important to understand that a large majority of pupils join the school, frequently other than in the nursery, without the English language skills normally expected of their age. The attainment of these pupils, many of whom have to learn English as a new language or a form of English with which they are not familiar on joining the school, is, understandably, well below national expectations and, in a significant proportion of cases, very low. The high level of mobility (pupils joining the school other than in the nursery) is a factor having a significant effect on the attainment of pupils in English. Given these factors, most pupils make good and often very good progress from the time of their entry to the time they leave the school at eleven. By Year 6, most pupils are on-line to attain close to nationally expected standards in English.
70. This good and often very good progress is due to a great extent to the good quality of teaching, which is good overall and very good in a number of instances. The school

has implemented the National Literacy Strategy very well. Teachers have benefited from relevant training in teaching literacy and have a secure knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. Their lesson plans and lesson format conform to those recommended for the strategy. Teachers new to the school are provided with up-to-date literacy training. Both assessment procedures and the use of this data to modify the curriculum are very good. The school has recognised a weakness in the standard of writing and has implemented a number of whole-school strategies to improve it. Pupils' speaking skills are not well developed and yet the school lacks written policy to rectify this weakness. Although this weakness becomes less evident as pupils move through the school, a significant proportion of them are hesitant to speak and need skilful encouragement from teachers to make spoken contributions to lessons. In the best cases, individual teachers, who systematically encourage pupils to talk and put forward their ideas during lessons, provide good opportunities for speaking and listening. However, these opportunities do not always address the underlying cause. This is a crucial area for improvement because such expert teaching is not currently developed systematically throughout the school and across the curriculum.

71. Pupils throughout the school regularly practise forming their letters and standards of handwriting and presentation are often good by the end of Year 6. They learn spellings taken from the 'most frequently used' word-list in the literacy strategy and have weekly spelling lists to learn for homework. Most make good progress, although their standards of spelling remain below that expected at each age.
72. Pupils read a variety of texts appropriate for their age and ability and show a developing enthusiasm for books. 'Big Books' and 'group readers' used for shared and class reading include a good range of fiction with stories from a range of cultures, traditional stories, poetry and factual books. As they progress through the school, the majority of pupils acquire a love of books and develop a range of strategies and skills to enable them to tackle new words and understand text. Adults hear pupils read regularly during literacy lessons and 'ERIC' ('Everyone Reading In Class') sessions, and pupils take their reading scheme books home regularly. All classes have a class library with an appropriate range of fiction and non-fiction, augmented by the local education authority's library service. Following conversion of the previous school library into a computer suite, however, a significant weakness in the school's provision for the development of higher reading and referencing skills is the lack of such a resource.
73. Although the writing of most pupils in Years 1 and 2 demonstrates a developing understanding of sentence structure, their use of an appropriate range of vocabulary and their ability to spell simple words correctly is below expectations for their age. A significant number need considerable adult help and support in order to achieve this level of work. Their frequently poor speaking and listening skills are a determining factor in the quality of the writing produced. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were reading simple phrases from the book 'Dan the Flying Man', most of those in the 'above average' group were speaking in extended sentences but only a minority were using the clearly structured language and some were merely nodding to signify understanding. Throughout the school, pupils' good behaviour and attitudes hide from their teachers their poor language skills. This is because although pupils appear to 'listen' well, in that they maintain eye contact with the teacher and do not talk when he/she is talking, they do not understand fully and, therefore, a significant number do not volunteer answers to questions and remain passive during lessons. They have very limited understanding of what is being said and lack of the confidence and skill to ask questions that will help them to understand. These observations highlight the areas in which teaching fails to adapt sufficiently to meet pupils' needs, for example

introducing new words and ideas visually. In Year 2, pupils devising and writing simple instructions for making a glass of chocolate milk required a considerable amount of skilled support and practical 'hands-on' experiences from the class teacher and teaching assistant. Only a very small minority of pupils were able to undertake this Year 2 literacy activity well, because the teacher did not find ways to help them to fully understand the task and there was not enough support when they were trying to complete the task on their own.

74. In a Year 3 lesson, approximately one-half of the pupils were able, independently, to write a setting to a story using four descriptive phrases and were beginning to organise their writing into paragraphs. The remainder of the class required considerable step-by-step support and were working below and in some cases well-below expectations for their age. This was because the task set was beyond their understanding and, therefore, they required considerable one-to-one support. In a Year 4 lesson children appeared to be listening well to the teacher's reading of a passage from 'Carrie's War' but when questioned by the teacher afterwards, their answers showed their low understanding. Assessment had not identified that the text was well beyond the children's language development and, therefore, the teacher had not sufficiently adapted the teaching to meet their needs. For example, when asked by the teacher when the book was set, the first response was 'Manchester' and when the class was asked, 'When was the Second World War?' the response was 'Hundreds'. Other responses were typically one-word or unstructured and a significant proportion of pupils did not volunteer any answers. In a Year 5 lesson, less than half of the pupils were able to create written instructions for making a cup of tea independently and with well structured, and clear sentences. This is because they could not 'say' the instructions clearly or use 'English language in their heads' to order their thoughts; when this was investigated many said they could do the task but not using the words the teacher uses. Despite very good teaching and intensive input by adults, a significant proportion of pupils in Year 6 describing a person from different perspectives are working below expectations for their age, and this is for the same reasons. Given the very high quality of teaching provided in both Year 6 classes, pupils are likely to make at least good progress during their final year. However, given the high proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, it is likely that although overall attainment for the cohort will compare favourably with schools in similar situations, it will remain below national expectations.
75. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in English lessons are good overall, although there are exceptions. Most are enthusiastic and eager to learn and work well at their allotted tasks without the need for constant intervention by the teacher. They respond enthusiastically to their teachers, do their best to contribute constructively to lessons and, in the best cases, answer questions enthusiastically and appropriately. Where attitudes and behaviour were judged to be unsatisfactory, this was due to a small group of pupils who were making slow progress and their consequent behaviour caused the teacher to bring them back on task frequently.

76. Teaching in English lessons is good overall across all years, but lacks the skills and perceptions to make it very good. Teachers have a good rapport with their pupils, use questioning well and skilfully to guide and assess learning and move the lesson along at a good pace. Although additional support for lower-ability pupils is generally of a good quality, it is insufficient in quantity in some lessons, especially when the proportion with English language problems is high. In the majority of lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge, good planning and good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy enable them to teach the subject effectively. Teachers have implemented the strategy well and plan literacy lessons well, organising them in detail so that resources are readily available. They help pupils to understand 'learning intentions' for each lesson and in the best cases, teachers return to the learning intentions throughout the lesson and particularly at the end, helping pupils usefully discuss what they have learned. In the best cases teachers use skilful and effective questioning techniques to consolidate and guide the children's learning and to develop their speaking and listening skills; however, this technique plays too little part in some lessons. Marking of work is frequent and regular and, in the best instances, offers pupils positive encouragement and advice on how to improve their work. Due to the good or very good quality of teaching in the majority of lessons and pupils' positive attitudes to their work, they make good progress in lessons and over time, but for the reasons detailed above, too few make very good progress.
77. Resources for English are satisfactory overall, although there are too few texts in the languages many pupils speak at home. Recently, a new whole-school reading scheme has been purchased and the class libraries contain a good range of colourful and attractive books with stories from a wide range of periods and cultures. The two subject co-ordinators have made very good progress in developing and improving the standards in English and have a very good overview of progress and attainment, especially in reading and writing but less so in speaking and listening. They use analysis of data obtained from the end of key stage national tests very well to identify weaknesses and, as a result, both the curriculum emphasis and teaching methods have been improved. For example, a strong emphasis on improving writing is a particular feature of English and other lessons. Teachers give individual pupils targets for literacy, which they and their teachers work hard to achieve; these are reviewed regularly. Teachers 'track' the progress of individual pupils and act when learning slows, for example with modified or additional provision such as 'PIPS' (Phonics in Progression) lessons for younger children and 'booster groups' for pupils not making the expected rate of progress.

MATHEMATICS

78. The school provides well for learning in mathematics. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain the nationally expected standard. Results in national tests in 2001 were below national averages, with a lower than average number of pupils attaining at the higher levels. Results were close to those in similar schools. In 2002 more pupils attained the expected and higher levels by the end of Year 6, even though there was a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the group. These results were well above the average for similar schools. Results have fluctuated over the past five years but are improving. The improvements are due to a number of factors:

- Good use of information from school and national tests to track and monitor pupils' attainment and progress.
- Very good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.
- Consistently good, and frequently very good, teaching.
- Carefully planned 'booster' groups to help some pupils raise their level of attainment.
- Pupils' good understanding of the targets set for them in numeracy.
- Good marking of pupils' work, which informs them of what they need to do next to improve.

Areas for improvement are:

- More use of information and communication technology in the subject, particularly in data handling.
- Involving teaching assistants more effectively in group and practical activities in lessons.
- More emphasis on the inclusion of targets for pupils with special educational needs in teachers' planning.

79. Achievement in mathematics is good and the majority of pupils make good progress. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls. Lower-attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language, make only satisfactory progress. This is because teachers do not fully meet the needs these pupils to extend their understanding of English language; therefore, they take longer to build on previous learning. Where they have additional support, practical tasks are better matched to their abilities and needs, and this helps them work effectively and gain confidence. Higher-attaining pupils are usually given suitably challenging work. Teachers help them to achieve at a higher level and extend their thinking skills.
80. Examples of this good progress are: children in Year 1 order numbers to 15 and have a basic understanding of addition and subtraction; lower-attaining pupils are happy with numbers to 9 and higher-attaining pupils work confidently with numbers to 15; in Year 2, pupils count competently to 20 in twos and recognise coins to the value of 20p; higher-attaining pupils know the value of coins to £1.00 and complete addition sums for the purchase of several items accurately.
81. The use of the 'Easiteach' mathematics program with interactive white boards enables pupils in Year 3 to see shapes clearly, and sort and move them around the board. Pupils find it difficult to count edges, vertices and faces of three-dimensional shapes, but gain a basic understanding of the words they are to use. At the end of the lesson, they say that they have learned 'to group shapes in different ways', and 'that rectangles have right angles'. A higher-attaining pupil says that he has learned that parallel and non-parallel sides can group some shapes. In Year 4, pupils consolidate their understanding of the properties of various shapes, using correct terms accurately to describe shapes to the class. Most pupils in Year 5 write numbers to 100,000 and order them correctly to place them on a number line. They find this challenging. The teacher ensures that lower-attaining pupils succeed because they do the task last, gaining the maximum number of clues from the work of others. Most pupils in Year 5 have a basic understanding of improper and proper fractions, and those with higher prior attainment complete their written work confidently. Pupils quickly learn how to work out equivalent fractions for one-half. Higher-attaining pupils challenge themselves to work out equivalent fractions for one-sixth. They enjoy using large

numbers. In Year 6, they know how to round figures to one, two and three decimal places. Higher-attaining pupils set challenges for the rest of the class to decide whether their answer is true or false. They do this very successfully.

82. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils enjoy mathematical learning because teachers are enthusiastic and make learning fun. For example, they present many activities in the form of games and ensure that pupils feel actively involved in their own learning. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and questioning extends pupils' answers and thinking. Planning is good so that activities match the wide range of abilities in the groups, although teachers do not always match their teaching to the targets of pupils' individual education plans. Teachers plan more advanced activities for higher-attaining pupils and, therefore, they do not waste time. Teachers usually give lower-attaining pupils work that helps them to consolidate their learning. They mark work regularly and show pupils what they need to do next to improve. Children and adults relate well because teachers make their expectations of pupils' behaviour clear. Teachers work effectively with teaching assistants, but there are occasions when details of their role are not clear. Teachers involve pupils well in discussion of what has been achieved in the lesson so that they are clear about any new learning.
83. Pupils enjoy numeracy because teachers plan well and prepare interesting lessons. They are keen to contribute and settle well to work because they know teachers expect them to organise themselves quickly. They learn to work without direct supervision and concentrate on their tasks well because they want to learn and succeed. They copy headings from the board accurately and quickly, and present their work well.
84. The structure of the daily mathematics lesson is used very effectively. Teachers use the initial mental mathematics sessions effectively to sharpen thinking and prepare pupils for the main activity of the lesson. Teachers use visual clues and numbers to help pupils use and understand mathematical terms precisely and, consequently, they learn to use them in their work. For example, in Year 5 pupils talk confidently about the different types of fractions and in Year 4 they talk about the properties of shapes.
85. The subject is well led and managed. As a result, the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well and numeracy is used effectively across the curriculum. The recent introduction of 'white boards' (interactive use of information technology) has stimulated the interest of Year 3 pupils and been managed thoughtfully; further use of information and communication technology is not sufficiently widespread, for example data-handling. Mathematics makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development because they learn to co-operate and compete with each other in a friendly atmosphere.

SCIENCE

86. The school provides well for learning in science. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is in line with national expectations but attainment in Year 2 is below expectation.
87. In the 2001 National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, standards were below the national expected level. Results in national tests of 2001 at the end of Year 6 were the same as those for similar schools but below the national average. There was an improvement in 2002, when results were in line with national expectations except for the proportion reaching the higher level 5, which was below national expectations. These results were well above standards in similar schools, despite having a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the year.

Results have fluctuated over the past five years when girls have usually performed better than boys, but the trend is an improving one because there is:

- Very good coverage and planning of the science curriculum throughout the school.
- Always satisfactory, and often good or very good teaching.
- Sufficient time given to teaching science.
- An emphasis on practical investigations and well organised recording.
- Very good and detailed management from the subject co-ordinator who left in July 2002.
- Good marking of pupils' work that shows them how to improve it.

Areas for further improvement include:

- Developing pupils' questioning skills and their use of scientific language in discussions.
- Ensuring there are teaching assistants to support investigative and practical sessions especially in Years 1 and 2.
- More use of information and communication technology.

88. The curriculum meets the demands of the National Curriculum very fully. Clear planning identifies how skills and knowledge will be built one step at a time and teachers devote time to helping pupils consider scientific evidence and what it means to them in their everyday world. Achievement last year in Years 4 and 6 was good and it was always satisfactory in the other years. This was due to conscientious planning that overcame the problems of changes in teacher, especially in Year 5.
89. Lower-attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make only satisfactory progress. This is often because teachers do not ensure that these pupils can understand what they hear and gain the English language skills to express and think through their scientific knowledge and concepts. In a Year 1 lesson on materials the class teacher, who had no teaching assistant support, introduced the words 'hard', 'soft', and 'bendy' to describe rice, rubber etc and found she constantly needed to reinforce and explain these words to pupils who answered questions in single words rather than phrases or sentences. However, in a Year 2 class where a voluntary teaching assistant was present, this extra one-to-one support helped the pupils to make much better progress because the assistant helped them to understand the vocabulary of an electric circuit and gain confidence in its use. Teachers give higher-attaining pupils suitably challenging work to extend their scientific knowledge.
90. Examples of the good and steady progress are: during their study of sounds, pupils in Year 1 investigated and compared how well they hear with two ears, one ear, and one ear covered; the higher-attaining pupils understood how very loud noises could damage hearing; in Year 2, they understand key features of what seeds and plants and humans need to grow, construct a simple electrical circuit, and investigate how far a toy car will go down a ramp using different levels of force; the higher-attainers recognise the harder you push the car the faster it rolls; they use a wide variety of methods to relay scientific information, for example charts, written work, graphs and well-labelled diagrams.
91. During the Year 3 study of rocks and solids, the higher-attaining pupils conduct detailed research into the layers of sediment. In Year 4, they confidently use a wide scientific vocabulary when conducting many investigations, including one to find temperature differences in the classroom. The form in which they record results shows

that planning moves the learning on and so they become more and more skilled at carrying out 'fair test' investigations. In Year 6, all pupils produce very well organised work, selecting the appropriate method to record their scientific observations. In an experiment to show what happened to the length of an elastic band when different weights were added, all pupils were able to transfer this information to a graph, with the higher-attaining recognising the pattern and predicting the stretch factor for different weights accurately.

92. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, as seen in Year 5 when they learned how to maintain a healthy body and studied the effects of drugs upon the body, comparing the value of medicinal drugs with harmful drugs.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is always at least satisfactory and often good or very good. Teachers have a good and at times a very good understanding of science and use a wide range of appropriate activities to meet the needs of pupils. The introduction is brisk and challenging, and very clear learning objectives are referred to at the end of a lesson. There are good relationships between teachers and the class because pupils are aware of the high standards of behaviour their teachers expect. Pupils co-operate well together and the older ones collaborate effectively. Work is marked regularly and shows pupils what they need to do to improve.
94. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils rose well to the challenge set by the teacher to discover which of two circuits would generate the most power. The strength of this lesson was the questioning skills of the teacher that encourage pupils to clarify their scientific thinking and use previous knowledge and understanding to pose further questions themselves. This development of speaking skills was not evident in a satisfactory lesson on the same topic. Homework for the older pupils is relevant and well organised. Quality of leadership and management by the previous co-ordinator was very good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers include assessment sheets on every topic and analyse assessment results to raise standards. The very new and yet experienced science co-ordinator has a clear idea of the need to develop further scientific questioning skills and opportunities for independent research, and also to extend the use of information and communication technology; this is a good start. The resources are good.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Provision for learning in art and design is satisfactory. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with national expectations; a few pupils exceed this standard. Considering their low level of attainment, for example to draw pictures, when they join the school, pupils make good progress and teaching is at least sound and usually good or very good. Girls and boys of different backgrounds and ability make equivalent progress. The subject makes a strong contribution to the pupils' cultural development.
96. The well-qualified co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject but has a number of interesting and sensible ideas for developing it throughout the school. At the time of inspection, however, this planning was still at an early stage. Even so, teachers are able to teach a balanced and broad curriculum because they follow the school curriculum plan and the government-recommended scheme of work, adapting them perceptively to make the work more relevant to the pupils, for example the school-wide focus on African art to coincide with 'Black History Month'.

97. The art curriculum provides a satisfactory range of work in a variety of media well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. This range includes relevant opportunities for them to learn about and create work using two and three dimensions, to print using repeated patterns, to design and make collages, and to draw with a variety of media including chalk and oil pastels. They study the work of a variety of important artists and use what they see, discuss and learn to apply this learning to their own creations, making pencil studies of their friends and inanimate objects.
98. Progress is clear as pupils move through the school and most achieve well. Pupils in Year 1 draw well-observed self-portraits, although some have not developed the ability to draw figures that is normally expected of their age. In Year 2, they use information and communication technology with skill to make beautiful patterns inspired by the work of Piet Mondrian and attractive drawings of African artefacts and musical instruments. They show that they are able to discuss whether things are beautiful or not, and can decide how to improve their work, for example in a joint puppet project with design and technology. In Year 3, they grapple with 'Portraying Relationships' through art with considerable insight, learning from the work of Breughel and Picasso. In Year 4, they make good observational drawings, some of very good quality, for instance of two candles, using the demanding media of pencil and charcoal. Previously, they made collages of African scenes, looked at the work of Gustav Klimt and designed and made a chair – all of satisfactory and often good quality. In Year 5, they show they understand how the decorative arts can add another dimension to design by making boxes with African patterns, and papier-mache masks and headwear for a literary character. In Year 6, pupils investigate in depth different materials and techniques to help them create a design for a mask, basing their ideas on a study of African masks and, in so doing, learn to appreciate the skills and roles of craftspeople and designers working in different cultures. Year 6 pupils have visited 'Tate Britain' to study the landscapes of Gainsborough, Turner and Constable and used oil pastels to create imaginative and 'Impressionistic' views of a bridge over a lily pond.
99. Pupils like and enjoy art, and try hard even when they find it difficult. They respond well to practical guidelines and show pride in their work. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed ranged from very good to satisfactory and was good overall. Where teaching was very good, the teachers demonstrated very good subject knowledge, maintained a good pace throughout the lessons, resourced the lessons well, motivated pupils very well by providing very good input and stimulation and, through good one-to-one support, encouraged them to evaluate their work in progress. Resources for art are generally of satisfactory quality, are well utilised and are readily accessible.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Provision for learning is at least satisfactory and in some areas good. Teaching is good and most pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. By the end of Year 2, attainment is slightly below nationally expected standards but by the end of Year 6 it is broadly in line. Attainment by this stage has very good features. This completely satisfactory but rather muddled picture has two main reasons. Firstly, the design aspects of the subject require well-developed English language. This type of language gives pupils the words to express their ideas and with these well-understood ideas to order, arrange and express their thinking. Some pupils find expressing the thinking side of the subject very difficult even though they may be able to express their ideas in a language or form of English with which they are more confident. Consequently, they are much better at the making aspects of the subject because they find it easier to talk about. Secondly, there has not been continuity of subject

leadership and at present this responsibility has to be carried by the headteacher. Even so, there are a good policy and programmes of study which help teachers meet the requirement of the National Curriculum and, using their good general teaching skills, teach the subject effectively.

101. Previous work shows steady progress throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use simple tools adeptly to create objects to serve a purpose. For instance, they make attractive puppets that they decorate with thought for their final appearance and use. However, one would normally expect such puppets to be designed and made with moving parts and teachers do not develop these aspects of the curriculum to any great extent.
102. By Years 5 and 6, however, pupils have moved on considerably and can design boats with electric motors that show careful design, working through first ideas to testing and then to producing and evaluating the final product. This very good project shows the benefits of learning design alongside other subjects, for example science; this helps pupils develop their English language skills well; other examples include making hats to serve a theatrical performance and also moving forward from investigating and designing secure structures, to designing a Greek Temple. In these projects, pupils investigate very thoroughly the strengths of various materials and how they can form and join them to provide strength and rigidity in ways that serve the purpose. They develop their English language skills well by trying out new words to help solve problems and express their good design ideas. This good learning shows that teachers have good understanding of both the design and make aspects of the subject and through their good general teaching skills transfer these, alongside an enthusiasm for technology, to pupils. Throughout the school, the subject builds appreciation of other cultures through replicating craft from other cultures, and also helps pupils to develop their ability to collaborate. They learn to appreciate the importance of technological creativity in the world. This builds their evident interest in and enjoyment of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

103. The school provides well for learning in geography. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is in line with national expectations. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs or who learn English as an additional language, make good progress because they are well taught and their needs are met. In this subject, introducing new ideas visually helps pupils to develop their English language skills.
104. For example, pupils in Year 1 know how to use maps. One asks, 'Can you write a *beautiful* school?' as the class puts labels on a map of the area. They quickly complete a graph showing the ways they travel to school. In Year 2, pupils confidently identify the countries of the British Isles on a map and locate the Isle of Struay, explaining the difference between the physical and human features of the island. Pupils in Year 3 link appropriate activities and clothes to different types of weather. In Year 4, they use a survey about a local park to provide evidence for a letter to the council, discussing their findings enthusiastically. Pupils in Year 5 answer questions about life on the River Nile confidently because they remember what they have learned previously and because teachers ensure that they have a clear understanding of what they are to look for in, for instance, a video. This type of teaching builds the pupils' language skills and understanding, for example in Year 6 pupils listen to poems and then create their own imaginative poems that they read expressively to the class. They can then describe each other's work as 'interesting and good', 'amazing because of the language used'. They agree that poetry is a good way of making you *feel* the messages about pollution and poisoning of rivers.
105. Teaching and learning are good. There are good links with literacy, numeracy and science and teachers frequently check pupils' understanding of the purpose of each lesson. They use visual materials and texts that pupils can understand effectively to help them to understand new vocabulary. This practical approach to learning is very helpful, especially for pupils with special educational needs or who have a limited geographical vocabulary. Pupils' learning is better when there are teaching assistants to support it because support can meet individual needs in a highly focused way. Teachers use their evaluations of lessons to make certain that the next lesson meets the needs of all pupils.
106. Pupils enjoy the lively lessons that offer many interesting things to learn. They listen intently and keep their eyes open for ways to help them understand. Keen to learn, they settle to written work quickly.
107. The subject is well led and managed. The school is aware more use could be made of information and communication technology. Teachers plan valuable visits to extend, apply and enrich learning and awareness of the wider world. Geography makes a good contribution to personal development because pupils work together, go into the community and develop independent thinking skills.

HISTORY

108. Provision for learning is good. Attainment in Year 6 is in line with national expectations but in Year 2 it is below. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress, although for some, low speaking and listening skills hinder their ability to understand and express new ideas.

109. In Year 1, pupils make good comparisons of old and new seaside holidays, extending their understanding by a trip to the seaside. Year 2 pupils learn to compare and contrast hospitals in Florence Nightingale's time with hospitals today. Higher-attaining seven-year-olds in their study of Samuel Pepys's, begin to assess the value of his diaries as an eyewitness account of the Great Fire of London. Pupils in Year 6 have a well-developed sense of chronology. They can identify reasons and justify their opinion as to why the life for women in democratic Athens was preferable to Sparta. Higher-attaining pupils can compare with deep understanding the rituals associated with the worship of Greek gods to ceremonies in the Catholic, Buddhist and Jewish traditions. This approach of imagine and think about, and then discover and practise using the best English words to express these thoughts helps develop pupils' English language skills effectively.
110. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6 it is good. The great strength of history teaching is very thorough planning by the teachers to ensure that the full range of the history curriculum is covered. Last year, when Year 5 had a variety of teachers, this ensured the quality of the teaching and learning was still satisfactory.
111. Most pupils produce well-organised and presented work. There are good links with literacy, numeracy, geography and art, such as writing letters as a factory child in Victorian England in Year 5, and constructing a timeline of major events since the Tudors. In Year 4, pupils drew skilled and well-observed archaeological drawings of an ancient Egyptian skeleton called 'Ginger' at the British Museum. This was one of the many trips taken by all classes to enrich their historical studies. For a Year 6 lesson with an eminent speaker, pupils had researched the life of Nelson Mandela using the Internet and books. Teachers mark work regularly and give valuable advice on what pupils need to do to improve.
112. History is taught in distinct blocks of time, alternating with geography. This has worked very successfully apart from in Year 2 when the time between modules was too long and has since been changed for the present Year 2.
113. The quality of leadership is very good, an improvement since the last inspection. The very enthusiastic and well-qualified co-ordinator has organised a whole school approach to Black History Month, including many visitors and events to the benefit of pupils' personal development. He is introducing a systematic assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. He has reorganised the good resources to make them more accessible and extended them very effectively with information about relevant websites.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

114. The school provides well for learning in ICT. Attainment by the ends of Years 2 and 6 is in line with national expectations and most pupils make good progress. Those with special educational needs or who learn English as an additional language frequently make good progress because of the good teaching and support from higher-attaining pupils. Areas for further improvement are:
- More extensive use of ICT across the curriculum.
 - Greater use of interactive white boards in numeracy and literacy.
 - A large screen for the computer suite.

115. Pupils in Year 1 build securely on skills learned in reception. They learn to use the 'mouse' adeptly to control what they do and to use a 'paint' program creatively. In Year 2, pupils use several tools from the paint program, drawing horizontal and vertical lines confidently to produce patterns in primary colours in the style of Mondrian. In Years 3 and 4, they develop further appropriate skills, learning about a range of functions, ways that computers can help them learn and solve problems and to use new programs. By the time they reach Year 5, they copy and paste skilfully, follow a series of complex instructions to rotate, order and resize shapes, printing delightful pictures in the style of Matisse. In Year 6, they confidently complete spreadsheets using formulae, and skilfully use the Internet for research. They access new information by using hyperlinks to select examples of bias in articles about Nelson Mandela. Pupils explain operations and functions clearly.
116. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are enthusiastic and confident. They make good use of the computer suite and this helps pupils to gain in confidence and to increase quickly their rate of learning. Teachers in Year 3 make good use of the white boards to stimulate interest and enhance learning in numeracy and literacy. This visual approach is very effective in sustaining pupils' concentration. Planning is good and there are good links with art and literacy.
117. Pupils look forward to their weekly lessons in the computer suite. They work together well and listen carefully to the teacher's instructions. If they cannot see the teacher's demonstration on the computer screen, they try to locate icons on the computer nearer to them because they are anxious to follow instructions when they start their work. In these lessons, pupils who feel they have not fully understood what they hear, use the more pictorial elements on screen to find the right words to sort out problems and express their ideas; this makes a significant contribution to their English language development. They are clear about the rules for working quietly and sensibly in the room.
118. The enthusiastic co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. The local education authority adviser gives her good support and, consequently, she is clear about future developments for the subject. Resources are being systematically improved and upgraded, and this is supported by the Education Action Zone. Training for staff is well organised. ICT makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through opportunities for sharing successes in working and planning together, and learning about the wider world and the part computers play.

MUSIC

119. The school provides very well for learning in music. Music is a strength of the school and is used to very good effect to enrich pupils' experience and personal development. Pupils of all ages enjoy working together to produce dynamic, rhythmic and lively performances. Older pupils respond to particular occasions with great sensitivity and reverence, and music is an integral and expressive part of the worship in the school. Music makes a very good contribution to their personal development, especially as to the spiritual and cultural aspects. They enjoy a wealth of music and song from different countries, at present from Africa in celebration of Black History month. Opportunities to explore African drumming techniques at the local museum catch their imagination and fire their enthusiasm.
120. Standards in music exceed national expectations across the school. Standards in singing, including in the gospel choir, are on occasion outstanding. On account of consistently high expectations, pupils, including those with the potential to attain highly,

progress well. Those with special educational needs generally make good progress. Standards have been maintained well since the last inspection.

121. By the end of Year 2, pupils sing tunefully and with good attention to simple dynamics and tempo. They hold a steady beat with confidence. They accurately play short repeated rhythms on musical instruments or by clapping. They know the difference between 'beat' and 'rhythm' and make good attempts to perform in two parts. They play instrumental accompaniments to a class song, for example Shay Shay Koolay, showing good awareness of playing as an ensemble. They listen carefully to recorded music and begin to identify different orchestral instruments. By the end of Year 6, pupils perform pieces such as Twelve Bar Blues, in five parts, using tuned and untuned instruments as well as voice. Careful practice of each part enables pupils to achieve a very good and musical performance, following the teacher's lead well. They listen critically to the recording and, stimulated by probing questioning, make meaningful comments.
122. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is often very good and sometimes excellent for older pupils where the music teacher's specialist expertise is particularly evident. These lessons are especially stimulating and inspirational. They capture pupils' enthusiasm and promote their musical learning very well. The challenge that each lesson brings motivates pupils highly. Carefully structured planning enables the specialist teacher to build very well on pupils' learning as they move through the school. She gives good attention to warming up children's voices at the beginning of sessions and emphasises frequently musical vocabulary such as 'crescendo', 'tutti' and 'ostinato'. Her well-managed routine practice of group parts increases pupils' confidence and improves their performance. The strong lively teaching holds pupils' attention well, especially older ones. It is not always best suited for younger pupils, however, because occasionally the lesson is too fast moving.
123. The informal but established co-ordination of the subject is adequate. Informal liaison with class teachers, especially of older pupils, ensures that they have a reasonable understanding of their pupils' musical learning but there is little contact with the two musical clubs, recorder club and the well attended gospel choir, as these take place when the music teacher is not in school. Opportunities are lost to share musical expertise so that, for example, singing in class is not as purposeful as it is in music lessons. Careful individual assessment procedures enable the music teacher to identify pupils' next learning steps. Information and communication technology is used appropriately, for finding out about famous composers, for example, or for performance, as when using the electronic keyboards. It is not used well enough at present for musical composition. It is largely due to the specialist music teacher that standards are good, despite poor quality accommodation that hinders comfortable music making, especially for younger pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Provision for learning is satisfactory. Standards in Year 2 are slightly below those expected nationally but by Year 6 pupils make considerable advances in their knowledge and skill and attain levels broadly in line with national expectations apart from swimming where the standards are below. Boys and girls reach comparable standards. Those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, reach the same standard as their peers.
125. In Years 1 and 2, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in relation to their earlier levels of skills because of timetable and curriculum issues because they only have a

single one-hour physical education lesson a week. Last year, swimming was taught only in Years 3 and 4, although this year swimming will also be taught in Years 5 and 6.

126. In Year 1, the majority of pupils dance rhythmically to music using a wide variety of body shapes. In Year 2, they develop these skills well, linking four specific movements and then repeating them to create a dance to music. Their expression, however, is restricted by the overly close direction of their teacher. In Year 5 basketball, pupils refine their large ball skills and shooting practice challenges the higher-attainers.
127. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and often good. The school had identified the need for more expertise in the teaching of physical education and so uses some of the funding from 'Awards for All' to employ sports coaches to work alongside teachers on a rotational basis.
128. The best lessons are well planned with a good balance of warm-up, stretch and cool-down activities, as seen in a very energetic and well-organised basketball lesson for Year 5, where pupils were encouraged to evaluate their ball control performance. After 15 minutes, pupils made a significant improvement in their skills as result of observing the coach and listening very carefully to instructions.
129. In Years 1 and 2, not all pupils can work co-operatively, but by Year 3 they have gained these personal skills. In Year 3, they work well in pairs passing the football and taking turns to shoot, all the time offering encouraging remarks to one other. Participation in events such as football, cricket and netball training teaches pupils about the importance of working effectively as a team. These opportunities enhance social development.
130. The subject is well led, an improvement since the last inspection, and is developing a higher profile within the school. The co-ordinator is well qualified and is making strenuous efforts to improve resources with extra funding from 'Awards for All'. She is aware of the need for further training for the staff. An assessment system is to be introduced. Pupils participate well in extra-curricular leagues for cricket and boys' and girls' football and this widens their experience of the world.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. Section 23 inspectors inspect this subject. The subject meets the statutory requirements for religious education.