

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY AND ST EDWARD'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Birkenhead

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105086

Headteacher: Mrs E McGunigall

Reporting inspector: Mr J J Peacock
25344

Dates of inspection: 25-28 November 2002

Inspection number: 246441

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Price Street Birkenhead Wirral
Postcode:	CH41 8DU
Telephone number:	0151 652 3366
Fax number:	0151 653 7248
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brendan Magner
Date of previous inspection:	05 June 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25344	Mr J J Peacock	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Science Geography Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
10329	Mr B Sampson	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31914	Mrs C Gribble	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Special educational needs English as an additional language Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
28320	Mr R Willey	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology History	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This Voluntary Aided Catholic infant and junior school caters for pupils from four to 11 years of age and is smaller than other schools, nationally. There are 168 pupils on roll, 96 boys and 72 girls in seven single-age classes. Pupils mostly live in the immediate area and nearly all attend the pre-school group established in 2000. This is successfully helping to raise levels of attainment. However, the attainment of most when they enter the Reception Class is below average.

Just over half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. The school has 50 pupils with special educational needs and this is also above the national average but the number with a statement of special educational need is low. The number of pupils from a minority ethnic background is low when compared to all other schools. No special provision is necessary as all have a good command of English and are fully included in all lessons. The number of pupils who arrive at or leave the school during term has reduced in the last three years and is now similar to most other schools but the cumulative effect means that only 13 of the 22 pupils in Year 6 last year were in the infant classes.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The drive and determination of the headteacher to raise standards in all aspects of school life have resulted in many significant changes for the better. With the full and active support of the Governing body and staff, standards and the quality of education have improved markedly over the past three years and as a result, a higher proportion of pupils are achieving the levels expected of them in the national tests. This is an effective school where pupils show a very good attitude towards their learning and behave very well both in and out of lessons. However, there are still some areas which require improvement, the most important being the below average attendance and punctuality of pupils and the quality of teachers' lesson planning. When all these factors are taken into account, along with the above average costs per pupil, the school is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are a strength of the school. The conscientious school governors and all staff support her very well.

All pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards in art and design are well above average and there has been a big improvement in computer skills due mostly to the very good teaching in these two subjects.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Classroom support assistants make a major contribution, enabling all to meet the targets set for them.

The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. It contributes effectively to pupils' very good attitude towards school and their very good behaviour.

The level of care for individual pupils is high helping to create an orderly and supportive learning environment where every pupil is valued.

Parents' views of the school have greatly improved. The partnership with parents and the Catholic Church community is strong.

What could be improved

Attendance, which is below average and punctuality, which is poor. Both have an adverse effect upon pupils' progress.

The quality of teachers' planning so that work in lessons is more closely linked to pupils' ability levels, especially the most and least able.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the third inspection the school has had in two years. The full inspection in June 2000 reported serious weaknesses in several areas, which were impeding pupils' progress. In July 2001, a further short inspection found that the school had made good progress in addressing two of the three previous key issues for improvement and reasonable progress with some good features in the third.

Standards in information and communication technology were improving and the curriculum provision for the Foundation Stage was benefiting from links with colleagues in a nearby Beacon School. Teachers in 2001 showed a willingness and commitment to improve.

The rapid pace of change on all fronts has been maintained. A marked improvement to most aspects of teaching has meant that the proportion of good or better teaching now matches that seen in most schools. The school is efficiently organised and there is a strong determination shown by all who work there to raise standards. Their efforts are beginning to take effect as all pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The tremendous improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour, reported previously, has resulted in the creation of a caring and supportive learning environment where pupils can thrive.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	D	E	B
Mathematics	D	C	E	C
Science	D	C	E	C

Key

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

The relatively small number of pupils taking the tests means that each pupil represents about five per cent of the total. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs partly accounts for the weak performance in 2002. Comparisons with pupils' performance in the tests for seven-year-olds are unreliable because of the number who have moved in or out of the school. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum point scores for English, mathematics and science since 1998 is broadly in line with the national trend, showing a steady improvement in standards. In 2002, school records show that pupils aged 11, including those with special educational needs, achieved well in relation to their prior attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, achieving the targets set for them and in some cases exceeding them. Pupils are on course to achieve the targets set for them in English and mathematics in 2003. Inspection evidence shows that standards, by the age of 11, are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils do very well in art and design and standards in information and communication technology have improved rapidly and are now in line with those expected. Standards in all other subjects meet national expectations.

The small numbers involved each year similarly affects pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds. Pupil absence is also a factor here too. Inspection evidence shows standards for this year group in art and design are well above those expected and also above expectations in information and communication technology. In English, mathematics, science and all other subjects they are in line with those expected for this age group. All children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and are set to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of their curriculum before they transfer to Year 1 with the exception of a group of five or six lower attaining children in communications, language and literacy and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like school and are very enthusiastic in almost everything they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. All are extremely polite. The ten fixed-term exclusions were for appropriate reasons and were effective.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils really care for one another. All readily accept responsibility when it is offered.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Learning is often interrupted by latecomers as instructions have to be repeated and attendance figures are below the national average. As a result, pupils' learning is adversely affected.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection and in the questionnaire were full of praise for the much improved quality of teaching for their children. Inspection evidence supports the high opinion they have of the teaching staff, who are keen to raise standards. Inspectors also rate highly the very good level of educational support provided by classroom support assistants. In the last full report in June 2000, teaching was found to be unsatisfactory with significant weaknesses. The level of improvement since then has been very good in some aspects such as teaching basic skills and class discipline and the quality of teaching is now satisfactory for most subjects. In art and design and information and communication technology, teaching is very good.

Teachers share targets for learning with pupils and basic skills in Literacy and Numeracy are taught well, showing that the National Strategies have been carefully and thoughtfully implemented. Teachers' planning is unsatisfactory as, in many lessons, the same tasks were given to all pupils and some of these lacked challenge for more able pupils. In addition, there were few planned opportunities to make use of computers to support learning. The quality of learning is satisfactory, overall. Whole class sessions meant that in some year groups, pupils had limited opportunities for independence or to take responsibility for their own learning, particularly in mathematics and science. All pupils do work hard and invariably produce neat work, due in part to the support from learning support assistants.

Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and receive very good support, helping them to achieve very well. Higher attaining pupils are always provided with additional work if they finish tasks early. In the Foundation Stage, all the lessons seen were good, very good or excellent. Better procedures to promote independent learning, however, need to be developed.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Statutory requirements are met and French is added to the curriculum. Better use could be made of computers. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Very good links exist with a Beacon School.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Individual targets are clearly defined. High quality support is available from well-trained specialist staff and the classroom support assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. The Catholic faith is central to the ethos of the school. Pupils' very good conduct is influenced by the examples set by the adults around them. It is recognised and rewarded in special assemblies. Provision for cultural development is good, but more emphasis could be given for pupils to learn about different cultures and faiths.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. School is a very caring and secure environment for all pupils. Assessment procedures are very good for English, mathematics and science. They are satisfactory in most other subjects.

Parents are very supportive and many help in lessons. This aspect is a considerable strength and the successful partnership considerably enhances pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has successfully motivated staff and created a shared sense of purpose and direction. As a result, standards are rising and there is a renewed optimism amongst parents about the future. The complementary skills of her deputy ensure a very good leadership team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors are active, committed to improvement, knowledgeable and well informed. Their role as 'critical friend' is performed very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. New subject co-ordinators need to include the monitoring of teaching as part of their subject evaluation. Staff work well as a team to identify strengths and weaknesses in standards and teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The finances are managed very well. Best value is sought in all expenditure.

The accommodation is satisfactory. Staffing is good with support staff making a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Resources are good, overall, being better than average in ICT, art and design and for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They are satisfactory in other subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils like school and make good progress.• Behaviour is good and school helps pupils to become more mature.• Pupils get the right amount of homework.• Teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard.• The school works closely with parents and they are well informed about how their children are getting on.• The school is well led and managed.• Parents feel comfortable about approaching school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside normal lessons.

The response rate was high at 61 per cent and nine parents in every ten agreed or strongly agreed with every statement, but one. This is a high level of satisfaction. Inspectors agree with all the positive comments above. At the meeting for parents it was also clearly apparent how pleased parents were with their choice of school. About ten parents disagreed with the statement on the range of activities outside normal lessons. Inspectors judge the provision of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory for a school of this size and type.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Everyone at the school is totally committed to ensuring that every pupil achieves their full potential. Children are assessed carefully when they start in the Reception Class and those with special needs are identified quickly. Staff work very well together as a team, treating each child as an individual with their own particular talents, strengths and needs. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and parents appreciate what the school is doing for their children. All those who responded to the questionnaire agreed that pupils make good progress and almost every parent agreed that pupils have to work hard. Inspectors found evidence for this in:
 - the enthusiastic teaching by class teachers ably supported by the learning support assistants;
 - the way pupils enjoyed being in school and their keenness to learn.
2. Attainment on entry to the Reception Class is below average. The lack of pre-school provision was limited at the time of the June 2000 inspection but the headteacher was determined to fill this gap and a pre-school group was formed. Almost all children in the Reception Class have attended the pre-school sessions which are held in the school. This provision was inspected separately and was found to be very effective in preparing children for school. All children settle quickly into the Reception Class routines. All benefit from the detailed lesson planning which effectively covers the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The quality of teaching is good and as a result, most make good progress in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics. However, because of the low starting point, a group of five or six children will not attain all the Early Learning Goals in these two areas before the end of their reception year. All are expected to achieve the Early Learning Goals set for them in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development and in their personal and social development before they are ready to transfer to Year 1. Children listen well to all adults, respond well to instructions and work well on the tasks set for them. In their physical development, good use is made of the outdoor play area with equipment such as a large sandpit and wheeled toys for children to push or ride. The caring and supportive approach in school and very good relationships with older pupils helps to give children the confidence needed for them to do well.
3. Pupils' performance in the national tests for seven-year-olds varies from year to year in each subject area because of the relatively small numbers in each year group. In 2000, for example, pupils achieved standards in reading that were above average but in 2002 they were well below average. This variation is often caused by no more than one pupil failing to reach the expected level as each pupil equates to as much as five per cent of the total. Pupils overall performance in national terms shows a steady rate of improvement in all subject areas from 1998 until 2001 when it dipped. This was partly to do with the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group but absence during the test period was also a contributing factor. In 2002, overall standards in reading and writing continued to fall for the same reasons. No pupils, for example, managed to achieve at the higher Level 3 in writing. Pupils did manage an increase in standards in mathematics. Compared to all schools, standards in reading were well below average, in Writing they were below average and in mathematics they were in line with the average. When the results are compared to those of similar schools, it is clear how well pupils are doing at this school. In reading, pupils' results are above average and well above in writing and mathematics. All pupils performed well in relation to their prior attainment. This shows that pupils are making good progress.
4. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards show a similar pattern of steady improvement from 1998. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum point scores for English, mathematics and science since then is broadly in line with the national trend,

showing that there has been a steady level of improvement. Comparisons with pupils' prior performance in the tests for seven-year-olds are difficult because over the years, there has been so many pupils arriving at or leaving the school. This flow of pupils has slowed recently. An analysis of school records for those who did the tests as seven-year-olds shows that all have made substantial gains by the age of 11. As with younger pupils, absence rates during the test period have marred the school's overall performance. In 2002, standards in the national tests were well below average in English, mathematics and science when compared to all schools. Although many achieved the level expected of them, few achieved above it. No pupils, for example, attained at the higher Level 5 in mathematics and only five per cent did so in English and science. There was no appreciable difference in the performance of girls and boys. When the results are compared to similar schools, pupils' performance was above average in English and in line with the average in mathematics and science.

5. Inspection evidence, based on lesson evidence, an analysis of pupils' completed work, display in classrooms and discussions with pupils shows that attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is in line with the national average for seven-year-olds and for eleven-year-olds. This represents a good level of improvement for pupils by the time they are ready to leave the school. The very effective way the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced and a marked improvement in the quality of teaching is helping to ensure that standards are improving. Inspection evidence also shows that a significant level of improvement has taken place in two other subjects. The standards pupils achieve in art and design throughout the school are well above those normally seen and in information and communication technology by the end of Year 2, standards are above national expectations. Improvements to the resource levels in information and communication technology and the creation of a computer room have ensured that the school has been able to correct a significant weakness in standards identified in the previous inspection. The improved expertise of all teachers and use of the computer room has not yet had time to make an impact on standards for Year 6 pupils but standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 6. All teachers show expertise in art and design and the school has obviously benefited from the local artists who often visit to work with pupils.
6. In English, pupils are provided with some opportunities to express themselves in class discussions. However, in some lessons, pupils are given too few opportunities to collaborate, discuss and work independently. Too many are focused on whole class teaching, which leaves only limited time for pupils to extend their skills. In spite of this, most make good progress in their speaking and listening skills because of the support of their teacher and learning support assistants. Reading is valued and on the whole, taught effectively, allowing pupils to develop their technical skills well. In the infant classes and Year 3, however, some pupils were reading texts which were far too easy for them. All have good strategies, however, to try and read unfamiliar words. Most read with understanding. The close liaison between home and school, with parents regularly hearing their children read and the efforts of classroom support assistants with children who need additional practice, is helping to improve standards. Older pupils require more demanding and challenging texts to help them to improve how they infer, predict or research facts.
7. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to write in most subjects. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson, pupils record their results following investigations into separating household materials such as rice, salt and sugar. In Year 5, they record findings from research about famous scientists like Edward Jenner who discovered an immunity for small pox. The daily literacy sessions successfully introduce skills that pupils can use when writing in other subjects. For example, junior pupils produce quite lengthy pieces of writing and their work covers a wide range of writing styles and topics. They research historical information about the Tudor period from books or the Internet, which requires them to make notes. The standard of their spelling is average. All pupils demonstrate a fluent joined style of handwriting when completing handwriting exercises and remember to use the same style neatly in their exercise books.
8. The formal structure of Literacy and Numeracy sessions is having a beneficial effect on standards throughout the school. Detailed lesson planning, well chosen texts and teachers' skills in teaching reading, supported by parents at home, helps most pupils to meet nationally expected standards. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to write in a wide

range of contexts and styles. However, not many make effective use of computers. There were, for example, few examples of pupils recording the results of science experiments or creating graphical representations of results.

9. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. This is mainly because of the clear structure of lessons which closely follows the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy, the quality of teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes. In the best lessons, teachers matched work to pupils' capabilities, ensuring those higher attainers were fully challenged and lower attainers understood their tasks. All pupils enjoy the challenge of finding answers to number problems and most can competently explain how they worked out an answer. By the age of seven, pupils successfully count in twos, fives and tens, halve and double numbers and competently add and subtract numbers to fifty. All have a very good knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils in the junior classes are quick to calculate the answers to number problems involving two- and three-digit numbers. However, in some sessions, the same work is set for all pupils and pupils of lower ability have to rely heavily on classroom support assistants to enable them to complete their work. By the end of Year 6, all show a good knowledge of fractions, decimals and negative numbers. Pupils collect, record and process data well, drawing graphs showing the results of science investigations or favourite foods. Not many of these were produced using the class computer, however.
10. Teachers' planning in science lacks sufficient emphasis on investigative work and often fails to provide appropriate tasks for pupils of different ability levels. As a result, pupils often have identical work in their books. A lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils was reported for a number of year groups in the last inspection. This aspect remains as an issue for science teaching and most other subjects. However, additional work is always available for those who finish classwork early. By the time they are age seven, pupils have studied electricity, magnets, sounds, light, materials and living things such as plants. Pupils in the junior classes have some opportunities to investigate and conduct experiments independently of their teacher, for example measuring the temperature as liquids cool and growing plants in different conditions. All are well motivated and work hard in lessons to complete a copious amount of work in their books. Some examples of topics covered include: monitoring how materials change when heated or cooled, plant growth, food for a healthy lifestyle, sound, light and electricity. Year 6 pupils were able to link pulse rate to exercise and knew about the function of the heart and blood circulation. Girls and boys of all abilities achieve equally as well in science, as they do in English and mathematics.
11. Teachers' expertise in information and communication technology has improved a great deal. This is having a beneficial impact on standards, which the last inspection noted were rising rapidly. Pupils of all ages use the very good supply of computers confidently and competently. Year 2 pupils were able to load programs into the computer unaided and were familiar with the functions of the various keys. They could change font size, use capital letters and print their work. Even children in the Reception Class demonstrated good control of the mouse when moving a ladybird from flower to flower on the screen in a mathematics lesson. All pupils make good use of a digital camera to take photographs of school events and are able to select and scan one of these into the computer. All use data gathered on temperatures recorded from cooling experiments and present it accurately in a variety of graphical forms.
12. In design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards are in line with those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. The lack of different tasks to match the capability of pupils was a noticeable feature not only in lessons involving these subjects but also in the scrutiny of pupils' books. In design and technology, there was an emphasis on making, rather than designing and assessment of pupils' progress was not consistent from class to class. This slowed pupils' progress as the continuity of learning was affected.
13. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The determination to help each pupil to achieve their potential means that they are well supported in most classroom activities. The skilled support provided by the extremely conscientious classroom support assistants helps all pupils to achieve the challenging targets set for them. All pupils are fully

included in all aspects of school life, with teachers ensuring equality of opportunity for all. As a result, by the time they are ready to leave at the end of Year 6, these pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make very good progress towards the targets set for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils have very good attitudes to their school. These attitudes are a strength of the school and have improved considerably since the previous full inspection of June 2000. These attitudes contribute considerably to the success and quality of pupils' learning. Pupils are very enthusiastic in almost everything that they do and their interest and involvement, both within lessons and other activities help all to make good progress. It is obvious that they like coming to school. This was well displayed when some Year 2 children, being interviewed, said they wished that the school opened on a Saturday. During both a whole school assembly and an infant one, on Golden Book awards, everyone was very keenly involved, whether it be in singing, proudly reading out personal achievements or receiving a well-earned certificate.
15. The behaviour of pupils is also very good and goes a long way to ensuring success in their learning. This has become another strength of the school and has continued to steadily improve during the last two years. Pupils are extremely polite. They stand back and open doors for you to go ahead and regularly say " Good morning". In some lessons, particularly where the teachers' discipline is effective and the teaching is stimulating, behaviour is often excellent. At lunch and playtimes, although most pupils are quite naturally boisterous, the general standard rarely falters. Between lessons, such as returning from play or going to physical education in the hall, pupils line up and then walk through the corridors in an orderly fashion. Within the previous reporting year the school has had ten short-term exclusions. This is indicative of the determination by the headteacher and all her staff to maintain the high standards of behaviour which now exist in the school.
16. The school has no record, other than very isolated and minor incidents, of any form of oppressive behaviour and this is very good. All of the parents and staff interviewed confirmed this and no semblance of an incident was witnessed during the whole inspection. The pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong. They realise that not all people are as fortunate as themselves and show consideration towards one another.
17. The personal development of the pupils is very good. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and the adults in the school contribute well towards pupils' progress. This aspect is yet another example of the school's many strengths, and relates directly to the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The children really care for each other. Several times, for example, pupils were seen putting an arm round a sad friend or consoling someone who was hurt before taking them to receive first aid. All staff know their pupils personally and the effectiveness of the extremely conscientious classroom assistants enhances the care that pupils receive. Pupils realise that they can relate well to the adults, who are all good role models. This affection was clearly illustrated by a group of Year 2 pupils, who stated that, when they left school, most of all, they would miss the teachers! Pupils show great respect for their school. It is a tidy place and during the whole inspection not one incident of graffiti or vandalism was witnessed. However, currently, the school does not engender sufficient opportunities for the children to show initiative and responsibility. This is particularly noticeable in lessons where opportunities to collaborate in group activities was rarely seen. Existing opportunities to take responsibility are satisfactory. Selected children do collect and return attendance registers and help the secretary distribute photocopied documents around the school. Also, some older pupils do act as lunchtime monitors, looking after younger pupils and arranging things such as seating for assemblies. Nevertheless, these are usually under the supervision of an adult. The school would benefit from a 'buddies' system or school council. Many other schools use these to effectively promote a sense of responsibility amongst pupils and to raise individual pupils' self-esteem.
18. Attendance at the school has fallen since the previous full inspection in June 2000. It is a significant weakness of the school as the attendance rate is below the national average for this type of school. The level of unauthorised absences is above national figures. In addition, punctuality is so poor as to be entirely unacceptable. For those pupils who get to school on

time most lessons usually commence promptly. However, their learning is often disrupted by classmates arriving late. Teachers often have to repeat instructions and take time to give latecomers individual attention so they can do their work. Overall, standards in the national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds are drastically affected each year because a significant number of pupils fail to turn up on the day of the tests. The poor attendance rate and punctuality of some pupils is therefore not only having an adverse effect on their progress, but it is affecting the performance of the school when it is compared to others nationally.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. In the last full inspection in June 2000, inspectors judged that there were serious weaknesses in the quality of teaching with almost one-quarter of all lessons being unsatisfactory. A short inspection in July 2001 reported that there was a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, which was satisfactory, overall.
20. A few areas for further development were identified in July 2001 such as the marking of pupils' work, lesson planning linked to accurate assessment procedures and consistent behaviour management. The level of improvement since then has been good, and in some cases, very good. The quality of teaching in art and design and in information and communication technology, for example, is now very good and effective use is made of classroom support assistants. Marking is more thorough but some teachers still do not give sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve their work further. Behaviour has become a strength, with pupils showing a very good attitude towards their work and assessment procedures are good. However, the overall quality of teachers' planning remains unsatisfactory. Few teachers plan work for pupils of different capabilities, often setting the same task for all. This is less apparent in English and mathematics but very obvious in subjects like science, history and geography. As a result, some tasks lack challenge for higher attaining pupils and they are too difficult for less able pupils. Classroom support staff are kept busy having to support pupils experiencing difficulty in completing work. They do a very good job but it means that pupils are dependent on them and have few opportunities to work independently. As a direct consequence, pupils achieve higher standards in classes where they are given work, which is well matched to their ability level and where the tasks set are challenging and interesting. Additionally, teachers' planning, in most cases, does not clearly identify opportunities for computers to be used to support pupils' learning.
21. In this inspection, the quality of teaching was found to be good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the infant and junior classes. In almost half of the 50 lessons seen, teaching was graded very good or excellent. Well over half of these were seen in Years 2 and 4 but almost all teachers produced some lessons of this high standard. Good or better teaching was seen in three-quarters of all lessons and this matches the average found in other schools nationally. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This shows that there has been a remarkable improvement in the overall quality of teaching since the June 2000 inspection. All teachers show enthusiasm for their work and a strong commitment to raising standards. Teachers share targets for learning with pupils, giving them a sound understanding of what is expected in each lesson.
22. Where teaching was very good or excellent, teachers' energy, enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge, along with their well planned and challenging activities, successfully motivated pupils. Pupils gained much from these lessons and the quality of learning was high. One excellent example of teaching was seen in the Reception Class where the teacher demonstrated a sense of fun using a glove puppet called Meg, the chicken who kept getting her numbers wrong! Computers in the computer room were also used effectively to reinforce children's knowledge about directions and the correct vocabulary to use. Splitting the class in half and using the learning support assistant to teach one half increased the level of attention for individual pupils and helped to keep all the children totally engrossed. In a Year 4 English lesson on written instructions, the excellent use of resources such as individual whiteboards coupled with the teacher's very good subject knowledge and skilled questioning, enabled all pupils to make good gains in their learning.

23. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been carefully and thoughtfully implemented. As a result, the quality of teaching in the literacy hour is good and the standards achieved by virtually all pupils in reading and writing are improving. The teaching of mathematics in numeracy sessions is also good, throughout. Most teachers teach mental mathematics well, closely following the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils are developing a good understanding of mathematical concepts. All, for example, confidently explain how they arrive at answers to mathematical problems. In Literacy and Numeracy sessions however, insufficient use is made of computers in some classes. Teachers generally do not plan to use the satisfactory range of computer programs available to support pupils' learning in their lessons. A Year 2 lesson on consonants and vowels, for example, was one of the few seen where opportunities for pupils to use computers was planned. Most teachers effectively use the skills that pupils have learned in Literacy and Numeracy sessions when teaching other subjects. In Year 5, pupils use their reading and writing skills in history for example, writing accounts about Henry the Eighth's break from the Church of Rome by extracting information from some quite difficult texts, or in Year 4, explaining the reasons for Queen Boudicca's revolt against the Romans.
24. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory. Pupils have some opportunities to carry out scientific investigations for themselves, often working with a partner or within a small group. Learning is effective in these lessons as pupils discuss their work using the correct scientific terminology and the practical approach helps them to remember important facts. The school has identified this as an area for development and evidence shows that some teachers are including more opportunities than others for pupils to work independently and carry out their own experiments and investigations. The good resource levels mean that all pupils are able to benefit from first-hand knowledge by using scientific equipment themselves.
25. In ICT, the quality of teaching has improved markedly since the previous inspection and is now very good throughout the school, reflecting the big improvement in the level of resources and teachers improved subject knowledge following some effective in-service training. Most teachers confidently use the available computers and new interactive whiteboards, showing a secure knowledge of modern technology. However, they need to plan more opportunities for pupils to use them in lessons. All teachers frequently use overhead projectors, videos and CD players to add interest and variety to their lessons.
26. Teachers' confidence varies in music but, overall, teaching is satisfactory. The expertise of people with specialist knowledge in music is used effectively to enrich pupils' musical experiences and ensure all classes fully cover the statutory curriculum. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout in physical education. All pupils enjoy taking part in physical education and their positive attitudes and the good range of activities contribute to bring standards in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven.
27. The quality of teaching in art and design is a strength of the school. In Year 6, for example, the teacher had high expectations of pupils and they responded by taking great care to produce masks of a very good quality. In Year 2, photographs were taken of last week's drawings made in the style of artist Van Gogh so that pupils could comment on different aspects. The views expressed were very advanced for the age of the pupils. The very attractive displays throughout the school reflect the advanced skills of pupils in this very well taught subject. In design and technology and geography, teaching is satisfactory. The school's approach to alternating history and geography on the timetable meant that relatively few lessons were seen. Some classes, for example, were covering a history topic, leaving geography to another time. An analysis of completed work along with the few lessons seen confirms inspectors' judgements on the quality of teaching in these subjects. Evidence of good work in history in the infant classes shows that the quality of teaching is good. However, evidence was harder to come by in the junior classes as only half were doing history. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching was satisfactory.
28. The quality of learning reflects the quality of teaching to be found in each section of the school. All teachers work hard to establish a calm working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Some are more successful than others. Classroom support staff are normally used extremely well to support individuals or small groups of pupils in lessons. When used effectively, their

contribution is instrumental in raising standards. The school regularly arranges training sessions to improve the effectiveness of support staff. Most teachers have developed good strategies to maintain class discipline and ensure that pupils maintain their level of concentration. This ensures that all pupils, whatever their ability, are fully included in class activities. In most classes, for example, pupils are given strict time limits to finish tasks and are rewarded with frequent praise. Pupils obviously enjoy the calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons and most behave well, showing a very good attitude towards their learning. Most concentrate fully and are keen to do well for their teachers and themselves.

29. The class teachers know who the very able or talented pupils are in their class and usually make special provision for them in lessons. It is firmly a part of the school's ethos to ensure that every pupil is valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Parents, at the meeting prior to the inspection, had no criticisms to make about very able pupils being suitably challenged or being given interesting work. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons and plan additional work for the most able of their pupils when they have finished common tasks set for all. This helps to maintain most pupils' interest and level of concentration. However, if the work for these pupils was more challenging and demanding in the first place, it would mean that they wasted less time waiting for additional work to be given.
30. The judgement about the quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage covers their time in the Reception Class. It is good. All the lessons seen were good, very good or excellent. Children are given a very good start to their learning as the experienced teacher and talented learning support assistant work together most effectively to provide a lively, interesting and challenging learning environment. Their caring approach helps children to settle in quickly and make very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in their personal and social development. Their hard work and dedication enables all children to make good progress and attain the Early Learning Goals in a further three of the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum; physical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. This is a good achievement, considering the generally below average level of attainment on entry and weak linguistic and numeracy skills of many children. Despite the best efforts of their teacher, a group of five or six children do not attain the Early Learning Goals in communications, language and literacy and in their mathematical development by the end of their reception year but progress overall in these areas is still good.
31. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Classroom support assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of the pupils they support, whether in small groups or in withdrawal groups. Most use their initiative well to ensure pupils participate in the lessons. In most lessons, for example, the classroom support assistants work alongside pupils making sure that they understood questions and can answer them. Teachers know the specific individual targets for pupils as they help to prepare their individual education plans. Most teachers include these targets in their lesson plans, helping pupils' progress towards achieving them. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are usually well managed, to prevent other pupils' learning being disrupted and to help them gain self-control as quickly as possible. There was a noticeable improvement from the previous inspection in the behaviour of pupils in the lower junior classes. Only one pupil spoke English as an additional language but had such a good command of the language that it was not a barrier to their full involvement in lessons.
32. Parents, in their responses to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection, were happy with the amount of homework their children are expected to do. Inspectors judged the amount and frequency of homework to be in line with that normally seen in other primary schools. The school's policy statement gives clear guidance to teachers and parents on homework. Teachers are generally making satisfactory use of homework as part of their commitment to raise standards. As a result, homework effectively supports pupils' learning.

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

33. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils. In the Reception Class (Foundation Stage), the quality and range of the curriculum is also good, showing that the school has thoroughly addressed one of the key issues from the June 2000 inspection. It is firmly based on the recommended Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning. For those pupils who have special educational needs, the provision is very good. Classroom support assistants play a major part in ensuring these pupils are fully included in all lessons. There is a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which is in line with statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection when provision for information and communication technology failed to meet requirements throughout the school and insufficient time was devoted to lessons in the junior section.
34. There is very good attention paid to inclusion and equal opportunities in all classes, irrespective of pupils' gender or backgrounds. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been carefully and thoroughly implemented and are proving to be very effective in the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy skills. Teachers are working hard to increase the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects, but few opportunities appear in some teachers planning. There is now a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities that include links with the community, where parents can attend sessions to learn how to help their children or computer skills.
35. Since the last inspection, a great deal of work has been undertaken to address the areas highlighted in the report as weaknesses. There is a good range of schemes in place, based mainly on national guidance, and pupils also benefit from a very well supported learning environment, which builds on what they are able to do and understand. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to collaborate in small groups in some classes and this has an adverse impact on their speaking and listening and independence skills. The lack of a school council also reduces the opportunities for older pupils to assume positions of responsibility within whole school initiatives.
36. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They benefit from a very good range of learning opportunities and make very good progress towards the targets set for them. Pupils' needs are identified early in their school career and they receive appropriate help as outlined in the new Code of Practice. Planning for these pupils is very effective and there is high quality support available from the well-trained specialist support assistants, classroom support staff and outside agencies such as the educational psychologist. Pupils' statements are regularly reviewed. The school's special needs co-ordinator works closely with the specialist assistant to ensure that there is a very efficient system of planning, assessment and evaluation in place, thus providing valuable information to all staff. However, the adaptation of work to match pupils' abilities in some classes is lacking in some teachers' planning.
37. Strategies for whole school behaviour management, identified as a weakness previously are now very effective. Outside agencies offer a co-ordinated approach within the school on a regular basis. They liaise with staff to support the assessment process and offer advice and additional learning resources, provide training and attend meetings when appropriate. There are sessions of 'circle time' within most classes. In these pupils often sit in a circle and share views on different topics such as bullying or being kind with one another. These contribute positively to pupils' self-worth and ensure that everyone feels included. Individual education plans (IEPs) are well written and very effective for pupils with special educational needs, and there is also a register of pupils who have been identified as gifted and talented. Pupils who have outstanding skills in music, art, sport and other curriculum areas feel valued and their achievements are celebrated at every opportunity.
38. All pupils have access to the whole curriculum. There are no specialist adaptations to accommodate wheelchair users, however. In order for all pupils to have access to their own computer, classes are divided. There are French lessons from a visiting modern foreign language specialist to coincide with some of these sessions. As a result, older pupils feel confident in greeting visitors, answering the register and saying some prayers in French.

39. Additional activities are available during lunchtimes and after school. They are planned for and provide a satisfactory range of extra-curricular experiences for a school of this size and type. All pupils can access a range of sports such as football and netball and there are dance, drama and exercise classes, such as 'Kids Excel'. Competition is fierce as boys and girls play in arranged football matches with neighbouring schools. There is a Rosary group during lunchtimes and Sacramental preparation for religious celebrations take place out of school time. The gardening club is very popular. Pupils talk avidly about the sights and smells of the herb garden, for example, as they escort visitors outside to see their work. There are many trips out to various local places of interest such as the doll museum, parks and theatre. A trip to see the recent Harry Potter film was enjoyed by the whole school. Pupils also visit a local home for the elderly, and talk about the warm welcome they receive on these visits. No residential trips are arranged currently but this is under review. Pupils have benefited greatly from visits by artists in residence who have spent time working with them on a range of projects now displayed in the hall. The church is fundamental in providing additional curriculum experiences and the priest is often in school, supporting pupils, and contributes a lot of time to help pupils benefit from the range of extra-curricular activities.
40. Provision for pupils personal, social and health education is good and supported by other subjects on the timetable such as French speaking for Year 6. There are clear guidelines for health and hygiene issues, including sex education and drugs misuse. Pupils benefit from a range of visitors to school, including 'On track' advisers who are invaluable in their support of pupils and their families. Their work is complemented by visits from the school nurse, police, fire and other essential service providers.
41. Local schools and colleges provide useful support to the school from which pupils benefit. Relationships between the Beacon Schools, other Catholic schools and the church are strong and meetings take place regularly involving a cluster of local schools.
42. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. This is evident from acts of worship and also in and around the school in all curricular areas. This provision is seen as a focus for pupils' personal development. It enriches the curriculum and is central to the aims of the school.
43. Pupils' spiritual awareness and development are very well established within their Catholic faith. Learning experiences are designed to provide some opportunities for reflection and contemplation. When older pupils pray before they start the morning, they spontaneously offer prayers for friends, family and world situations. One pupil even wanted to pray for the inspectors! This quiet time is very moving and allows for all their cares and concerns to be shared. Their faith is central to the ethos of the school and is then extended into their view of the world. Circle time is a very important part of their spiritual development. It allows for quiet time in a communal setting, without fear of reprisal and pupils benefit very much from these sessions. In lessons such as art, music, literacy and history, pupils study other faiths and traditions. Their spirituality is also enhanced by stories, poetry and creativity. Many classes are quiet places and pupils experience peace and tranquillity, and they are encouraged to share news about special events in their lives. In assemblies, pupils take a full part in appreciating the wonders of the world and showing gratitude for their personal gifts and skills.
44. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. All pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Their very good conduct is influenced by the examples set by all the adults around them. Staff take every opportunity to promote these values. Throughout each day, pupils are reminded of the strict moral code, which governs their school community, and they learn very early on how important it is to value and consider others. Stories in assembly also promote the value of morality. Pupils show their respect for truth and justice in discussion, and the atmosphere in the school confirms that they value the behaviour principles set out in school, and this is confirmed every day by their very good behaviour in lessons and around school.
45. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. They take responsibility for their actions and share resources, taking turns and showing good social skills. They are polite and well mannered. Older pupils help younger children at lunchtimes and break times. The merit

systems operating in the school to reward pupils' efforts reinforce the message that it is good to show consideration for others. Pupils smile readily and greet fellow pupils, staff and visitors with genuine warmth and are socially adept. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to resolve their differences in a mature and responsible manner.

46. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and faiths in lessons, and a number of books in the library support this. Pupils' understanding about the diversity of ethnic groups is being further developed by work on food from other countries and visits to a range of cultural centres. Pupils regularly visit the theatre, church and attend community gatherings. They also go to clubs and activities outside school. Visitors to school have also enriched their cultural experiences, such as artists and performers. Pupils regularly go on school trips and photographs chronicle their cultural experiences on these outings.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of its pupils. This is a standard that has been maintained and in some aspects improved upon from the previous full inspection of June 2000. This aspect is a significant strength of the school.
48. The headteacher is both the trained child protection and health and safety person. The deputy headteacher is also fully child protection trained. In addition all members of staff have been on relevant familiarisation courses. The school maintains up to date, detailed, separate, written child protection and health and safety policies. All new staff have both aspects as part of their induction training. Very good liaison is maintained with the local educational authority child protection team and any relevant documentation is securely locked away in school. Although the local authority has ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of the school site, the school's conscientious health and safety governor and the caretaker make regular checks around the building. All school equipment is tested thoroughly and regularly. Risk assessment procedures are carried out, as required and are in date. The school has a comprehensive safety policy.
49. There are very good procedures for dealing with accidents and the administration of medicines. Several members of staff are trained first aid persons. Very good use is made of outside professional staff such as: the educational psychologist and specialist, drug problems teams. The police and fire brigade make regular visits to talk about their work.
50. Although procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory, they are not, at present, proving to be effective in improving attendance or punctuality. All classes maintain a well-kept register, which is returned to the office both morning and afternoon. However in a minority of cases reasons for absence are not always filled in. The school phones home, when children are unexpectedly late or absent, on the first morning of that day. The school maintains a very tight lateness routine and records incidents in detail. Certificates and shields are awarded for very high, individual and class attendance. More emphasis needs to be given to existing procedures in an effort to bring about improvement. Parents should be made aware how much learning pupils miss in even one days absence and how difficult it is for their children to keep up with other pupils as a result.
51. Both procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating that of an oppressive nature, are very good, and directly account for the very good behaviour witnessed during the inspection. Such procedures are another strength of the school. The school's detailed written behaviour policy contains clear and relevant rewards and sanctions of which children are well aware. Teachers also have a classroom management policy. Currently, all staff are receiving assertive discipline training run by local educational psychologists. Any pupil with a particular behavioural problem has details put onto their individual educational plan. Individual behaviour cards are also carried and have to be signed at each lesson whilst some children also have specific, personal targets stuck to their desktops. The children are given

confidence to report any bullying incidents by talking about them in assemblies, circle time and religious education. All staff are well aware of what to look for in potential incidents. The school has a separate, written anti-bullying policy.

52. Overall, procedures for assessment and the use made of assessment information are good. There are very good procedures to assess pupils' progress through tests and to track their achievements year by year in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science against national standards. This gives the school reliable data upon which it can set pupils' individual targets. Individual targets, however, are not often reflected in lesson tasks as often all pupils are set the same work. This is an area for development. The exception is in the targets within individual educational programmes for pupils with special educational needs. Here pupils are well supported to achieve these. In some other subjects of the curriculum, assessment is only just satisfactory.
53. Analysis of data enables the school to determine subject strengths and weaknesses. This is effectively used to focus on areas of subject weakness. The school is currently developing a commercial computer-based assessment package to enhance procedures and this is a good feature. In other subjects, however, the picture is not as strong. Subjects such as history, geography and music have no established procedures beyond those which identify levels of success for groups of pupils. In most subjects, many of these procedures have only recently been introduced. There is, consequently, a lack of data upon which to track pupil progress or to set targets. The exception to this is in art and design, where a collection of examples of pupils' work illustrate the range of work covered and the levels that pupils achieve. The school is aware of the lack of effective assessment in some subjects and plans already exist to develop this area. Overall, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in these subject areas are currently satisfactory and improving.
54. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are also very good and yet another strength. The teachers and classroom assistants know their pupils very well and full details of personal development are sent to parents in their child's formal report. Any personal achievements are rewarded, at special assemblies by, either the Golden Book, for the infants or a specific merit certificate for the juniors. Overall, the school provides a very caring and secure environment in which the children can really enhance their learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. From views expressed at the parents' meeting, questionnaires returned and from speaking to parents during the inspection, it is abundantly clear that they believe this to be a very good school. For example, a very high percentage considers that the leadership, management and the quality of teaching are very good and that their children like coming to school. Almost all are happy that pupils make good progress and they, as parents, feel well informed of that progress. Parents are adamant that behaviour in the school has improved dramatically. A few felt that the school could provide more activities outside of lessons. Inspectors agree with all the positive views but disagree with the small group of about ten parents on extra-curricular provision. This is satisfactory for a school of this size and type. The school, with parents' help, would like to widen the range.
56. The school provides very good information for its parents. Each family receives an up to date copy of the Prospectus, a Governors' Report and an annual academic report for their child. Both the current Prospectus and Governors' Report have minor omissions, of which the school is now aware. The right to withdraw from assemblies is not clearly stated and in the AGM Report, progress towards the action plan is omitted along with facilities for the disabled. Pupils' reports are very good. They comply with all statutory requirements, say what pupils can do and set realistic targets. All parents spoken to, agreed that they could recognise their child from the tone of these reports.
57. Parents receive interesting weekly newsletters and a written copy of behaviour and homework policies. Educational evenings have been held on reading, helping your child with mathematics and entry to secondary school. There are three, 'meet the teacher' evenings per year and all

parents enjoy very easy access to the headteacher and staff throughout the year. The school runs excellent adult educational classes for national qualifications in literacy, numeracy and computer training.

58. At school and at home, parents' contribution towards pupils' learning is very good. The headteacher has sufficient volunteers during the day time to enable her to allocate parents to specific classes, where there is a need. The parents help specifically with, reading, writing, swimming, other sports and visits. At home the parents greatly appreciate the home/school reading books, listen to their children read and sign the books. Others, where they can, help with projects and topics, particularly by taking their children to the local libraries for research.
59. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. In addition to helping with their child's education many provide support in Summer and Christmas plays, prize day, harvest time and Easter and at all liturgical events. Although the school does not have an official parent, teachers association parents group together and raise considerable funds, for pupils' education, from sponsored events.
60. Overall the impact of the school's links with its parents is very good. This aspect is a considerable strength of the school and has improved upon the already existing successful links noted in the previous, full inspection of June 2000. Such links enhance considerably the successful learning of pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The school is very well led and managed. The very good leadership of the headteacher, appointed in January 2000, has renewed the optimism in the school and within the local community. She has forged a strong team of teaching and support staff and has gained their commitment and willingness to continue the programme of improvement. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and together their complimentary skills ensure a very good leadership team. They are, additionally, very well served by an active, committed and well-informed governing body. The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil the role of the school's "critical friend" effectively. They discharge their responsibilities, including their statutory duties, very well. The marked changes in the school have set a very positive tone and parents at the meeting with inspectors were quick to recognise it and to praise the headteacher, whom they see as having "turned the school round".
62. The 2000 inspection reported leadership and management to be satisfactory, overall with some strengths and weaknesses. It recognised that the guidance of the headteacher had enabled the school to develop significantly in the six months since her appointment. By the time of the inspection in 2001, it was clear that she had gained the confidence of the governors, staff and the Local Education Authority. She had eradicated the serious weaknesses in teaching by taking some decisive action to resolve some difficult staffing issues and raised standards. Further progress could be seen during the current inspection and, although there are still improvements needed in the monitoring of teaching, it is clear that the school is moving purposefully forward.
63. The headteacher is very successful in motivating the staff and creating a shared sense of purpose and direction. Her purposeful, determined approach together with her competence in developing others' skills and expertise has been the key to the sense of shared purpose and shared responsibility. All who work in the school show the same high level of commitment to Our Lady and St Edward's, the pupils and to making things even better.
64. The headteacher's pragmatism and very good organisational skills were highly evident in the detailed preparation for and during the inspection. She has been effective in developing shared management of the school. Her very good partnership with the deputy headteacher keeps the school running smoothly. All staff are consulted about major issues and encouraged to voice their opinions. This has been crucial in agreeing informally the aims and values of the school

and in establishing consistent systems throughout the school to raise standards in pupils' behaviour and the routines and practices to create a positive learning atmosphere.

65. However, there are some gaps in strategic planning and in the leadership and management skills now needed to raise standards further in all subjects and in particular those outside the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Although there has been a good focus on monitoring the latter subjects, concern about aspects of matching work to the abilities of all pupils and providing appropriate challenge to extend learning, particularly of higher attaining pupils, have not been effectively met. Although the headteacher and senior staff do much to monitor teaching and pupil achievement, it is not rigorous enough to ensure that work in lessons is structured to suit different abilities and that the quality of marking is successfully geared to improving pupils' work. Arrangements to ensure that subject co-ordinators play a full role in monitoring colleagues planning and performance are in place for some subjects. Subject co-ordinators have not all taken the initiative to drive up standards. They have a general view of what needs to be done in their subject, have revised subject schemes of work in line with the latest national guidance and organised resources. However, they are not monitoring the quality of teaching and learning well enough to be able to identify precisely where changes need to be made and how best to achieve them. Support from the Local Education Authority's advisors has been effective in introducing good models in English, mathematics, science and ICT. These now need to be applied to all other subjects of the curriculum. Improvements in the implementation of monitoring are included in the performance management targets of subject co-ordinators. The links between standards and other factors, such as attendance, punctuality, length of time in school and with teaching and learning, have not yet been explored fully.
66. The school has developed very effective performance management strategies. The headteacher is the appraiser of each teacher and her own performance is evaluated by an external professional organisation. Procedures for supporting staff new to the school are also very good. This is equally true for all staff whether teaching or non-teaching.
67. The school's improvement planning is linked closely to appropriate priorities for school development. There is a four-year plan and a very detailed year plan in its support. This is linked well to costs, has identified criteria for success and realistic time scales. A structured rolling programme of subject review is being implemented to ensure the role of co-ordinators is successfully developed further.
68. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and highly effective. Although only recently in post, the special educational needs co-ordinator has identified the need for further support for staff in classes with a higher than average proportion of pupils with special needs. The governors add considerably to the allocated funds and this provides a good level of support staffing particularly in English and mathematics lessons.
69. The headteacher and governors have a sound awareness of the principles of best value for money and are able to illustrate that they have used them in purchasing computer equipment as well as in tendering for plant replacement..
70. Current financial management is very good. The high balance currently being held by the school will reduce to acceptable limits once bills are paid for the modifications to the computer room and the programme of general refurbishment for some classes is completed this year. Access to finances on the school's computer system is limited to the headteacher and the school's administrative officer for security reasons. Both are familiar with the software used and handle the data efficiently. They are supported through regular monthly meetings with the Local Education Authority's bursar, who also meets with the chairman of the governors' finance sub-committee. The Governing body receives regular reports upon the state of school finances. These provide the basis for effective monitoring. The most recent audit identifies no significant concerns in the financial management of the school.
71. Day-to day administration and financial control are very secure. A very capable school secretary ensures that day to day matters of finance are well addressed and up to date. She is well supported by the headteacher, school bursar and the governors' chair of finance. They

rightly regard her work highly. She has a good command of computer procedures in relation to finance and is very involved in the development of a computer-based, commercial package for pupil assessment.

72. The school's accommodation is satisfactory but lacks a school playing field. This is compensated for to some degree by use of an adjacent, public grassed area. Classrooms are adequate for the size of classes using them. There are two well stocked school libraries, one on each of the two floors giving pupils good access to books.
73. The school has a good number of teachers and support staff, given the number of pupils, and the governors' recent appointments have effectively strengthened subject and curriculum expertise. Overall, resources are good. The quality and range of learning resources is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and reflects the high focus on these subjects over the last two years. Resources are also good in art and information and communication technology. In other subjects resources are satisfactory.
74. When the quality and standard of education for all pupils is considered, along with the good level of improvement and above average costs per pupil, the school is providing good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. The last inspection report in July 2001 reported that progress in addressing the three key issues identified in the full inspection report of June 2000 was good in two cases and reasonable with some good features in the other. Parents at their meeting prior to the inspection were full of praise for the marked improvements they have seen since the appointment of the current headteacher three years ago. Many aspects such as parents' perceptions of the school, the level of care, provision for pupils' personal development and pupils' attitudes and behaviour have become recognised strengths. In order to continue to raise standards, the headteacher, governors and staff need to;
 - (1) improve the rate of attendance and pupils' punctuality by;
 - raising the profile for a limited period of existing rewards for individual pupils and whole classes.
 - Seek more effective ways of improving attendance and punctuality such as including a category that recognises improvement for some pupils
 - seeking more involvement of the education welfare service with some families
 - providing information for the Local Education Authority to initiate legal proceedings against the parents of the worst offenders and
 - organising a breakfast club in an attempt to reduce the number of pupils who arrive late for school.(Paragraph references 3,4,18,50.)
 - (2) substantially improve the quality of teachers' planning by;
 - taking better account of assessment information to ensure pupils' work in lessons is more closely matched to their ability level, particularly in respect of the most and least able.
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in all subjects.
 - giving pupils more opportunities to work independently, particularly in science and mathematics.(Paragraphs 8,9,10,12,17,20,23,24,25,27,29,52,65,111,116,117,121,124,128,129,30, 132, 133,142,145,149,154-160)

It should be noted that all of these aspects have already been identified for improvement by the school and most feature in the current school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	19	14	12	0	0	0
Percentage	10	38	28	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	168
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	95

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	50

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.0

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	12	6	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	13	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (94)	83 (83)	94 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (89)	89 (94)	89 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	8 (89)

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

Separate figures for boys and girls are not included as fewer than 10 girls took the tests.

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	12	10	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	16	14	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73(70)	64(65)	100(91)
	National	75(75)	73(71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	13	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68(74)	59(70)	86(100)
	National	73(72)	74(74)	82(82)

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

Separate figures for boys and girls are not included as fewer than 10 girls took the tests.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
166	10	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
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)	8.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	464,358
Total expenditure	447,243
Expenditure per pupil	2,866
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,197
Balance carried forward to next year	44,312

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	168
Number of questionnaires returned	103

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	21	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	25	1	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	35	3	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	43	3	1	7
The teaching is good.	81	16	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	72	26	1	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	19	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	21	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	69	28	1	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	82	17	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	23	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	36	8	3	12

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

76. The previous inspection report in July 2001 evaluated the progress being made to address the weaknesses in this area of the school identified in the June 2000 inspection report. Good progress was reported in addressing the key issue; to improve the curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage. It was found that the links with colleagues in a nearby Beacon School had resulted in an all round improvement in teaching, learning and the quality curriculum provision. The links with the Beacon School are being maintained and it is clear that the school has continued to make good improvements since the 2001 inspection.
77. The Foundation Stage is made up of 25 children in the Reception Class. The pre-school nursery, formed just over two years ago, is run separately from the school. Its effectiveness was recognised this year when it was routinely inspected. Children begin school in the Reception Class in September of the school year in which they become four years old. Children are assessed shortly after they start school and the result of these assessments show attainment on entry to be below average. Without the effective pre-school group, which virtually all children attend, this would almost certainly be lower.
78. The accommodation and resources are good, with sufficient space and equipment for a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. The 25 children in attendance at the time of the inspection have made a good start to their education, as they have settled well into a calm and caring learning environment, well supported by the two staff. The involvement of parent helpers and students means that children often benefit from individual tuition. This helps to improve their communication skills as well as helping to raise confidence and self-esteem.
79. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, with well-organised learning opportunities that give good emphasis to skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. All the lessons seen were judged to be good or better. Where teaching was very good or in one instance, excellent, the class teacher made effective use of the obvious talents of the learning support assistant, planned work which was challenging and enjoyable, made very good use of computers and employed skilled questioning to keep interest levels high. The investigation into the waterproof properties of materials, for example, promoted good scientific practice in an enjoyable way and in the excellent mathematics lesson, children gained valuable computing skills as well as learning new mathematical terms. The use of a remote controlled car on a large homemade street plan added interest and enjoyment for groups of pupils.
80. Detailed planning ensures that the experiences children have are based on the Early Learning Goals which make up the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. As a result, children make a very good start to their education and make good progress in all the areas of learning. An outstanding feature is the very good relationships between staff and between staff and children. The teacher and learning support assistant work together very effectively indeed. Assessment records are concise and accurate and used to ensure that the work presented to children takes account of their prior attainment. The only aspect, which the teacher acknowledges needs improving, is to develop better procedures which will promote independence for children. Many of the activities seen during the inspection, for example, were led by an adult giving children little choice of materials to use or who to work alongside.
81. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage, children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in most areas of learning. Given the below average attainment on entry this represents a good level of achievement, overall. In their personal, social and emotional development, children make very good progress. This reflects the good standard of teaching and the high quality of support provided by the learning support assistant. This effective partnership enables children to be taught in small groups and they respond equally well to both adults. Due to the often poor level of linguistic skills on entry, a group of five or six children will not attain the Early Learning Goals in communications, language and literacy or in their mathematical development.

Personal, social and emotional development

82. Teaching is very good in this area. Children are provided with a calm, orderly and happy atmosphere so that, by the time they leave the Reception Class, most are likely to reach or exceed the Early Learning Goals. This shows a very good level of achievement and reflects the care the teacher and her assistant take when planning this aspect of learning. The provision for a wide range of practical activities ensures that there are good opportunities for children to learn through play and develop their social skills. Behaviour is consistently very good and reflects the high expectations that staff have of all children throughout the day.
83. When working in groups, children help each other to concentrate well, always trying hard to achieve successful results. When playing together they are considerate to each other. In 'Price Street Toy Shop', for example, they take turns and help each other take on different roles. Relationships between children and staff are very good.
84. Children have a range of simple opportunities that give them the chance to show a sense of responsibility and they undertake routine tasks with considerable enthusiasm and maturity. The class teacher is aware of the need to place greater emphasis on promoting pupils' independence and is slowly introducing systems and procedures which will encourage children to become more aware of their own learning. Children know, for example, that they must wear a blue band to play in the sandpit and that there are only four bands.

Communication, language and literacy

85. Many children join the Reception Class with poor communication skills. The excellent rapport that the teacher and learning support assistant have established with the children encourages them to speak and they are keen to offer contributions and answer questions. The teacher has created a very exciting learning environment in which the contribution of every child is valued. Question and answer sessions are lively and most children speak confidently in front of the class. When asked why a character in the story of Sonny's Wellies needed to soak her aching feet, one boy replied, 'because they stink.'
86. Teaching is good. Stories are read with expression and children are fully attentive. After just a few months in school, they have learnt that books are a great source of fun, wonder, enjoyment and information. The teacher also has a good singing voice and children readily join in with a wide range of nursery rhymes, songs and poems that help to develop their vocabulary. The teacher's speech is an excellent role model for children and the clear and calm delivery enables all children, including those with special educational needs and any who speak English as an additional language, to take a full part in all activities.
87. There is a daily, modified literacy session during which children are introduced to the importance of initial letter sounds and children's skills in this area are developed well. The learning support assistant is used very effectively to provide work for children of differing ability and to support those with special educational needs who have difficulty in speaking or understanding English.
88. Almost all children understand that print conveys meaning and they handle books with considerable care. The teacher encourages a 'have a go' attitude to writing and children have made a good start in this area of learning. Although many recognise individual letters and write them accurately, few are able to write simple familiar words correctly.

Mathematical development

89. Children's understanding of mathematical concepts is often weak when they start in the Reception Class. However, a wide range of games, songs and activities that encourage children to develop their knowledge and understanding of numbers leads to good progress and most children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the school year. All children already demonstrate confidence in counting forwards to ten and backwards from ten, for example.

90. The quality of teaching is good. Strengths of teaching are the wide range of suitable activities, effective use of modern technology and the purposeful atmosphere throughout mathematical sessions. The teacher takes every opportunity to develop children's mathematical vocabulary, as in a session on directions where children were taught not only the correct terminology but also how to use the computerised whiteboard in the information and communication technology (ICT) room. Their skill in using the mouse control was also developed as they used the computers in the room, working in pairs to move a ladybird from flower to flower on the screen. Most children correctly identify two- and three-dimensional shapes such as triangles, cubes and pyramids. Very effective use is made of humour to engage children's interest, as when the teacher used a glove puppet called Meg, the chicken who frequently got her numbers wrong. Children were quick and took great delight in spotting her mistakes!
91. As in other areas of learning, songs are used to great effect to engage children's interest and introduce new vocabulary in an exciting and relevant fashion. Children already know by heart a good range of songs involving numbers and counting and enjoy singing them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

92. Children have a below average knowledge of the world around them when they start in the Reception Class. However, the well-planned activities and good teaching mean that all make good progress and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the school year.
93. During their first term, children were learning about the body and many were able to name different body parts with confidence and accuracy. They know the seasons and what happens in Autumn. All show a good understanding of the different properties of materials and are encouraged to predict the outcome of investigations before carrying them out. The investigation to illustrate the effectiveness of waterproof material, for example, had children stepping into a bowl of cold water with one foot covered by a sock and the other in a wellington boot and small groups working closely with their teacher, testing different materials stretched over a glass flask with teddy inside.
94. The good quality of teaching in this aspect places considerable emphasis on the development of early religious ideas and children progress well in this area of learning. Children explore the textures of different materials such as red salt dough and wet and dry sand using a range of suitable tools to cut, shape and pour them. Most were able to respond in French when the register was being called.
95. Computers, both within the classroom and in the ICT room are used to good effect and children are adept at using the cursor to control what is happening on the screen. All have a good level of knowledge about modern technology and confidently describe how to make a hot drink, use the telephone and video or tape recorder.

Physical development

96. The quality of teaching and learning in this aspect is good. The spacious outdoor area with its adventure play equipment effectively enhances learning opportunities for all children. For example, they have the chance to use a range of large wheeled toys and have access to a variety of climbing frames, balance planks and stepping-stones.
97. Good use is made of the school hall for regular physical education lessons. In the one physical education lesson observed, teaching was very good. This lesson was extremely lively and much enjoyed by all the children, who made good progress in terms of finding different ways of travelling, using different parts of their body. Good links with literacy were made as the teacher used a poem called 'Wriggling William' to illustrate a variety of movements.
98. Children have a good range of opportunities to use equipment that encourage cutting and rolling as well as painting implements. Red salt dough was provided, for example, for children to make a pair of red wellington boots, linking creative activities with a story read in a literacy

session. There is a good range of small construction kits that enable children to develop their manipulative skills effectively.

99. The good range of opportunities in this area of learning mean that all children are well on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in their physical development.

Creative Development

100. Teaching is good. A wide range of stimulating opportunities is provided such as baking gingerbread men and hand printing. All children are well on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the school year.
101. Children play imaginatively in the role-play area and enjoy the chance to paint. They use a variety of three-dimensional materials such as play dough and handle crayons and pencils well. The very good quality of displayed work in the attractive classroom reflects the range and variety of learning experiences planned for children.
102. A significant strength in this area of learning is the quality of teaching and learning in singing. The teacher sets a good example giving children confidence to join in and this in turn helps them to learn the words to songs quickly. Standards of singing are already above those normally seen for children of this age.

ENGLISH

103. Standards in English are in line with the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement from the last full inspection in June 2000 when reading was above average but writing was below for Year 2 and standards were below average at Year 6. National initiatives are well established and good use is made of additional funding from Family Literacy support groups.
104. Overall, pupils throughout the school are making good progress, particularly in spelling and writing, including handwriting. By Year 6, the school's tracking records show that individual pupils make good gains in their learning in English as they progress through the junior classes. Speaking and listening skills and reading skills are developing more slowly and should remain a high priority for future improvement. This has been recognised through national testing and by school assessments. New schemes are in place to focus on these key areas.
105. Pupils with special educational make very good progress in relation to their individual targets. The arrangements in school for additional support for these pupils have resulted in improved performance and gains in confidence and self-esteem. This is evident in their written work and also when they take part in discussions and drama activities. Standards for pupils with special educational needs are now improving as a result of the additional training undertaken by staff to detect Irlens Syndrome, for example and the use of specific schemes to improve language development such as 'Talking Partners'.
106. Speaking and listening skills are below average for many pupils in the infant classes but by the time they reach Year 6, almost all achieve the standard expected. There is good support now available to work on these particular aspects. Listening skills are improving because of the approach by teachers and support staff, pupils' good attitude to work and the very good behaviour during lessons. The large number of pupils with special educational needs make very good progress but the standard of their work remains below the national average. Pupils listen attentively to stories, plays and poetry but there are too few opportunities currently for them to discuss the feelings evoked. In a very good Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils squealed with delight when the big book story of Red Riding Hood was enhanced with the use of good quality puppets. They were then given opportunities to take turns in handling the puppets and their individual responses when acting out the parts of the characters and retelling the story is excellent evidence of emerging articulation and use of dramatic technique. Year 2 pupils are very competent in listening to instructions on how to make a fruit 'smoothie' drink in a lesson on consonants and vowels and the use of irregular verbs. Their oral contributions are

below the standard expected for their age group, but they show great enthusiasm and confidence. All pupils participate in retelling the method and add their own ideas, replacing the strawberries in the recipe with amazing concoctions of fruit. The fact that their vocabulary is limited does not hamper their own efforts. They respond to the sensitive approach of the teacher and classroom support staff, and the level of encouragement given results in all pupils extending their own ideas on how to make exotic drinks in the future. Every effort is being made to improve standards and there is good role modeling by staff. Speaking and listening skills are considered as a key focus for future improvement.

107. By the age of eleven, most pupils achieve satisfactory speaking and listening skills, although a number of pupils are still below expectations. Too many lessons are focused on whole class teaching, which leaves only a limited time for pupils to work in groups and extend their speaking and listening skills. Where pupils are given specific tasks to perform, such as working in groups to identify the features in a text on how to make potato prints, there is a lively and interesting debate between all pupils who try out new words and explore their meanings. Pupils feel relaxed and speak clearly and attempt to use more description in their speech. Younger pupils in the junior section of the school do not collaborate in groups as frequently, which limits their opportunities to discuss and share ideas. When children are given additional support, they blossom visibly, appear more relaxed and chat, leading to improved use of listening skills. Pupils in Year 5, for example, used sophisticated language when they worked in groups to re-enact a short sequence in a play they are working on. By Year 6, there are some pupils who can articulate well when being questioned by other pupils on their moods and feelings during a reading from the novel ' Goodnight Mister Tom' by Michelle Magorian.
108. Standards in reading in Years 1 and 2 are in line with those expected but some pupils are not reading widely enough or from sufficiently challenging texts. Basic reading skills are taught well and most pupils gain a secure knowledge of letter sounds and attempt unfamiliar words in a text. All pupils are included in reading sessions and reading is valued. They take their books home with pride and have very good support when changing their books in school, and when reading aloud to adults. Most pupils can talk about the books they have read and know their way around books when locating the author and index. Some pupils do not read widely out of school and when they do take books home and have encouragement, their reading skills improve, as does their thirst for knowledge. There are some higher attaining readers who read widely and know which books they prefer, choosing both fiction and non-fiction for appropriate purposes. Older pupils in the junior section build effectively on earlier skills. Those pupils receiving additional support make good progress in relation to their attainment. Most pupils can read accurately at given levels, but require more demanding and challenging texts to improve how they infer, predict and research in their reading. There are separate library facilities for infants and juniors on each floor giving good access to books of the correct level of difficulty. Some pupils visit the local library and the most able pupils talk with conviction about the authors they prefer, with Harry Potter being a firm favourite!
109. Standards in writing are improving steadily throughout the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 copy or write sentences to convey meaning. They can sequence logically and have improved their use of capital letters and full stops. Most pupils can now spell simple words accurately. Their letter formation and handwriting is becoming increasingly legible as they write for different purposes across the range of subjects. Higher attaining pupils write their recipes for fruit smoothies using clear, well-formed sentences. Pupils with more complex needs are given very good quality support when forming letters and writing captions. Their spelling skills are improving well as they write irregular words connected to the language of time. The practice they get in both year groups is showing in their written work. Merit awards are given for work generally and many pupils talk about their sense of pride and achievement as they 'show off' their work. For most pupils, in both key stages, even those with limited vocabulary, there are now improved opportunities for extended writing.
110. Junior pupils, in particular, higher attaining pupils, have improved their writing skills through increased experiences in lessons. For those pupils who are unable to sustain ideas long enough to write extensively, there is high quality support and encouragement available from classroom support assistants and class teachers. As a result, most pupils in the junior classes have produced some satisfactory writing in their books in a range of styles. They have written

narrative, factual writing and scripted dialogue, which has increased their knowledge of writing for a specific purpose. Year 3 pupils, for example, write well in their narratives based on a set text to form a scary story. They spend time exploring appropriate vocabulary before recording their individual efforts in neat, well-formed script. Pupils in Year 4 use evidence from history, tracing the events of Boudicca to cross-reference events and produce well-written class profiles. They use reference books to produce satisfactory standards of written work. They show interest and enthusiasm for the task. In Year 5, pupils transfer their increased knowledge of dramatic conventions into writing their own scripts. Their performances are dependent on their legible and dramatic prose. Some pupils re-enact these very effectively. Year 6 pupils work on reviews of 'Goodnight Mister Tom' and enhance their writing by transferring it onto computer. There is insufficient evidence of older pupils drafting and re-drafting work to improve the quality of their writing. However, standards in spelling for pupils of all ages are satisfactory. This is due to the wide range of strategies being used and the high quality support given to individual pupils to improve spelling and the very good standard of work provided for pupils with special educational needs.

111. The quality of teaching in English is good, with some very good aspects seen throughout the school. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils are making progress because of the consistent approach to building pupils' confidence, good subject knowledge and use of different teaching methods such as whole class and group work. This shows that the National Literacy Strategy has been very well implemented. Management of pupils in lessons is a strength, with an emphasis on praise and encouragement. The high quality additional support provided is targeted very well to promote and included in all aspects of classroom organisation. Where teaching is less effective, there is insufficient use of different tasks to match the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs, including higher attaining pupils. Basic reading and spelling skills are taught effectively. Lessons are well planned and pupils know what is expected of them. This fosters good relationships which leads to very good behaviour in most lessons.
112. Resources are varied and advice is sought from outside agencies to ensure that new purchases are relevant and well used in most classes. However, resources such as worksheets are not always matched to the wide range of ability in some classes. Pupils' work is marked regularly but more comments, which point the way to improvements or outline what needs to be done next need to be added in some classes. There are some areas where literacy could be improved across the curriculum such as in history to extend research skills and ICT in the classroom, when pupils writing could be done using a computer.
113. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory, overall. The subject is led and managed by a dedicated member of staff who has identified the areas for improvement well. Monitoring of teachers' planning and practice is developing as the co-ordinator begins to support the headteacher in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the curriculum and the quality of teaching. Planning is now in place to improve the subject's impact even further with the help of outside agencies.

MATHEMATICS

114. Standards match national averages for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. National tests in 2002 indicate that standards in Year 2 are well above those in similar schools. Year 6 results matched those of similar schools. There are signs of a positive change in pupils' attitudes towards mathematics. These changes reflect an improvement since the previous inspection in the range of resources and in the quality of teaching, which is now good.
115. A majority of Year 6 pupils reach the level expected of eleven-year-olds in using number and other aspects of mathematics. There were no pupils reaching a higher level in 2002 national tests but none were expected to from this particular year group. Analysis of the tests indicates that poor reading skills restrict understanding and the interpretation of questions. Ultimately, this also inhibits pupils' attainment. Most Year 2 pupils reach the level expected for their age and the proportion of pupils achieving a higher level is close to the national average. The impact of literacy skills in terms of restricting progress is less marked than with the juniors.

116. Pupils enter school with below average number skills and a distinct lack of mathematical vocabulary. Infant pupils are making good progress overall and often good or very good progress in lessons because of much good teaching. Although the same concepts are taught to all, the teachers pitch the task to reflect the pupils' ability and make good use of support staff to work with groups of pupils. In particular, pupils with special educational needs are supported very well by classroom support assistants. As a result, pupils with special education needs often make very good progress. However, there is little work of an investigational nature to challenge pupils, particularly higher attainers. In other mathematical areas, Year 2 pupils know about number techniques such as doubling and are more confident in mentally handling and manipulating numbers to 20. Their attainment is typical of pupils of their age. They know about hundreds, tens and units, recognise odd and even numbers and know multiplication facts relating to 2, 5 and 10, but higher attaining pupils are not always challenged enough. Much work is linked to a commercial scheme and the wide use of worksheets restricts opportunities for pupils to develop presentational skills in setting out their work and this is a relative weakness.
117. Although the teaching seen was frequently good in Years 3 to 6, the lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils and no adaptation of tasks to enable lower attaining pupils to succeed restricts progress for both groups of pupils. In some classes expectations are too low and in others too high. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, a common task was too easy for the higher attaining pupils and in a Year 5 class, the task was challenging for all pupils but conceptually too difficult for lower attaining pupils. However, by Year 6, pupils have attained a secure mathematical vocabulary and understand terms such "lines of symmetry", "squared numbers", "negative and positive numbers" and "axis". Pupils knew and gave lucid explanations for "inverse operations" and were able to give examples of this. Most pupils have a good knowledge of computational skills, including tables, and have a quick recall of number facts.
118. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils have positive attitudes in lessons, even though some find mathematics difficult. Many junior pupils said it is their favourite subject and commented that they now feel safe to answer questions without fear of being ridiculed when they get answers wrong. This is well reflected in lessons where pupils are always attentive and sustain concentration well. Where teaching is innovative, as in a Year 1 lesson where the teacher introduced the term "estimate" through a series of wrapped presents for the class puppet, pupils respond enthusiastically. Teachers ensure the involvement and full inclusion of all their pupils in lessons. This is a good feature as it keeps pupils attentive and interested. Greater use of individual pupil marker boards, available in classes, would make lessons even more inclusive.
119. The work of the current Year 6 pupils shows that they are making satisfactory progress overall and pupils with special educational needs are very well supported to help them attain numerical targets set within their individual educational programmes. Higher attaining pupils have too few opportunities to use and extend their number knowledge in practical situations. In a Year 6 lesson on two-dimensional shapes, for example, the focus on, and use of, vocabulary was good. However, the investigational element contained insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils and did not draw on other mathematical knowledge in order to extend pupils learning. Pupils have a good understanding of lines of symmetry, for example, and challenging pupils to investigate whether or not all quadrilaterals have the same number of lines of symmetry would have applied secure knowledge to a more open-ended investigation.
120. Most Year 6 pupils have developed sound strategies for manipulating numbers mentally and have a secure understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. A majority know multiplication facts to 10 and can multiply four-digit by two-digit numbers, add and subtract decimals up to two decimal places and carry out the process of long division and multiplication. Many Year 6 pupils have a sound working knowledge of shape, space and measures and a good recall of associated vocabulary and metric terms.
121. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well. As a result, the overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good. Seven lessons were seen during the inspection and six were either good or very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during this inspection, which is an improvement from the last full inspection when some were reported. This is a

significant improvement upon previous inspections. Teachers' subject knowledge is at least good and often very good. In the most effective lessons, the teachers used questioning techniques well to promote quick recall of number facts and to enable pupils to explain the mental strategies they had used to solve questions. This is not always carried over into the marking of pupils' work. Much work is generally simply ticked and left devoid of comment. In too few cases do the teachers write encouraging comments and advice to help the pupils improve. The use of computers to support pupils' learning varies and is satisfactory in the junior classes.

122. Management of the subject is very good. The strong leadership and management of the co-ordinator, actively supported by the headteacher, are setting a clear direction for the subject. The previous co-ordinator, in conjunction with the headteacher, had successfully implemented the national strategy, worked effectively to improve teachers' subject expertise, developed very good procedures for recording and assessing pupils' progress and for tracking and setting individual targets for pupils as well improving resources. Resources are now good. The new co-ordinator has been in post only since September but is aware that she has inherited the leadership role of a developing and improving subject.

SCIENCE

123. In the previous inspection, the standards attained by both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were in line with those expected. As in mathematics, it was found that pupils often were not challenged and were not provided with many opportunities to follow their own lines of enquiry to solve complex problems. Inspection evidence shows that standards have been maintained in Year 2 and Year 6 and it was evident from an analysis of completed work that more opportunities are being provided for pupils to investigate and conduct experiments. However, during the inspection, only pupils in Year 4 were given the opportunity to work in groups to conduct an investigation into separating different materials.
124. Strengths in the subjects are:
- the good level of resources which enabled pupils to carry out investigations and experiment for themselves and gain from first-hand experience;
 - pupils' attitudes to the subject and
 - the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Year 4.
125. Pupils in all year groups produce a good quantity of neatly presented work, showing that the science curriculum is covered well. The main areas for development are:
- the monitoring role of the subject co-ordinator so that the quality of teaching and learning can be evaluated more effectively;
 - resources in information and communication technology so that pupils can use computers to gather data such as temperatures and
 - teachers' planning so that work is matched more closely to individual pupils' capabilities.
126. The present Year 2 class is well on course to improve upon the performance of last year's pupils when teacher assessments showed that the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 or above was below average. One-third achieved the higher Level 3. During the inspection, the very good behaviour in lessons involving pupils of all ages was a strong feature responsible for the improvement along with the very good support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs provided by classroom support assistants and teachers.
127. Standards for Year 6 pupils have risen rapidly since 1999. However, the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs last year resulted in a slight drop in overall standards compared to all schools. This was anticipated by the school. When the performance was compared to similar schools, it was in line with the average. Although every pupil achieved the required level, few pupils in this low attaining group of pupils managed to achieve the higher Level 5; five per cent compared to 38 per cent nationally and this was the main reason for the weaker overall performance. A comparison of pupils' performance when they were age seven

compared to how well they did at age eleven is difficult as only two-thirds of pupils were in Year 2. Tracking individual pupils' performance shows that every pupil made good progress throughout the junior classes. This is mostly due to the impact of the additional adult support available in classrooms. Pupils generally make good progress throughout the school.

128. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand the principles of scientific investigation as they watch how materials such as ice, wax butter and chocolate change when heated or cooled. They know how to label parts of a plant, or describe the dangers of electricity or harmful substances. Younger pupils can describe the sounds from different musical instruments, classify animals and conduct plant growing experiments. They record their results using diagrams and pictures to describe how plants grow and what they should eat to have a healthy diet. The good use of a theme to connect various areas of the curriculum helps pupils to understand why learning about science is important. By the time they are seven, pupils know the properties of materials found around the home, describe forces and know how to make an electrical circuit.
129. Pupils in Year 6 show a very mature attitude towards science. The challenging questions posed by their teacher about separating a mixture of soil, gravel and water aroused their curiosity. All showed a good knowledge of scientific procedures and were able to use the correct scientific terms when describing solutions and filtration techniques. All could explain the different parts of plants and their functions, give explanations why certain animals were most suited to their habitat and appreciate the work of scientists such as Edward Jenner who discovered a vaccine for smallpox. Further evidence of the relationship between the pupils' interest and enthusiasm was seen during the lesson in Year 4, when pupils were conducting a scientific enquiry in groups to find the best way to separate a mixture of household materials. Their skills in predicting the results and suggestions about the outcomes were aided by the use of a microscope linked to a laptop computer. This enabled them to see the relative size of rice grains and salt and sugar crystals in order to decide which sieve to use and in what order. The teacher supported pupils carefully, especially those with special educational needs, by ensuring they worked with the aid of a support assistant to complete the investigation. Effective links are made with a healthy lifestyle. In Year 5, for example, pupils showed a good understanding of healthy and unhealthy foods and completed some challenging worksheets demonstrating their knowledge of the harmful effects of smoking and taking drugs.
130. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. Weaknesses are apparent in the approach and emphasis some teachers place on the investigative nature of the subject. Teachers invariably prepare their lessons well, making good use of the resources, which are good. Planning, however is unsatisfactory at present as many teachers do not plan work, which closely matches the ability level of pupils, often setting the same work for all their class. The same worksheets are also provided for all pupils to complete. In a Year 5 science lesson where two graded worksheets were given to pupils, all filled in each with exactly the same answers, some of which were dictated by the teacher. Furthermore, there is little evidence in teachers planning of computers being used to support pupils' learning. Little evidence was found of computers being used to record data or report on investigations, for example. In addition, the school does not have sufficient sensors, which can be linked to computers to measure temperature differences. However, pupils in Year 5 did construct bar graphs to show favourite foods and used their mathematical knowledge to interpret the data from their pulse rate investigation. All teachers insist on pupils using scientific vocabulary and most set challenging questions for pupils, encouraging them to find out the answers for themselves. Pupils use their Literacy and Numeracy skills well, recording their findings and taking measurements.
131. The good use of questions and the information teachers provide ensures that the majority of pupils fully understand how to conduct a scientific experiment and make any testing accurate. However, more opportunities need to be provided for pupils to develop their independence and organisational skills by working more in groups to devise their own experiments, record results and reach their own conclusions. The support assistants are clear about their role in the support they give to pupils with special educational needs. This ensures that all are fully included in lessons and the rate of learning and progress by all these pupils is very good. The marking of pupils' work by teachers is thorough. However, some teachers need to give pupils

more guidance on what they need to do in order to achieve better results or improve the quality of their work.

132. An analysis of pupils' books indicates that pupils cover all aspects of the science curriculum, meeting statutory requirements. Good procedures exist to assess pupils learning at the end of each teaching unit and the results are used well to identify areas, which need further development. It is a pity this information is not used to effectively match work more closely to the ability of individual pupils.
133. Teachers' planning is detailed and the co-ordinator is able to take an overview of what is being taught throughout the school through monitoring their planning. However, most set work for all pupils and this means that class support assistants have to closely support lower attaining pupils in order that they can complete classwork. Higher attaining pupils all too often find work too easy and undemanding. The results of annual tests are analysed in depth to identify any gaps in pupils' learning. It was through this monitoring that weaknesses in investigative techniques have been noted and staff are responding by raising the emphasis on this aspect. The co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor lessons and evaluate the quality of teaching. The headteacher is undertaking this role until newly appointed subject co-ordinators become better established in the school.
134. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Although the subject has featured recently as a priority for development in the school improvement plan, there are still significant inconsistencies between classes because of less effective teaching, mostly of investigative science. The co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject and to support colleagues through specific guidance on investigative techniques. She is aware; for example, that all teachers need to plan better use of computers to support pupils' learning in science and ensure that tasks are more effectively matched to pupils' capabilities.

ART AND DESIGN

135. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in art and design are well above those normally seen. This is a great improvement from the June 2000 inspection when standards for pupils in Year 2 were judged to be below the level expected nationally, and in line for those in Year 6. Teachers' knowledge of the subject, their enthusiasm and use of a wide range of resources all contribute to the high standards. Pupils are well motivated and keen to do well in art and design.
136. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 carefully draw what they observe using pencil, chalks and paint to very good effect. Good links are made with other subject areas. For example, they decorate pictures of their favourite stories such as James and the Giant Peach and Jack and the Beanstalk, and make a haunting winter display of stark trees in black and white, which shows their creative skills very well. These are all displayed to a high standard, linked by captions and relevant vocabulary, to create a vivid display. Year 2 pupils can explain their drawings very well. Their work on recording from imagination, for example, is prompted by a study of paintings by Van Gogh. They used creative language to compare and contrast some of his great works before they worked on extending their own pictures. This lesson demonstrated the high standards of both sketching and creativity of all pupils. Pupils listen avidly to each other's descriptions, are animated by the different views they get of his pictures and become fascinated by how complex line and form can be. They then develop their individual styles, photographing scenes out of the classroom to record their perspective of other images. Pupils use a very wide range of resources to complete their work. All around the school, there is very good evidence of their artwork using collage techniques to create different textures using a range of fabrics. Pupils have worked with an artist in residence for some of their projects and all talk with great understanding about the different techniques they have used in these sessions.
137. Older pupils make very good progress, building on the skills they have learned earlier. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils demonstrate a growing knowledge of the works of the great artists. They produce some outstanding paintings, having developed the skills of mixing and

blending colours. Their work is of a very high standard, showing individual style and artistic flair, whilst mastering the skills of showing movement and form. Their paintings show deep emotion as they represent the images of feeling and not just of fact. Work on mask making is progressing from its earliest conception of basic moulds to some amazing creations of fictional characters from poetry and prose. There are gifted and talented pupils working to a very high standard who set a very good example to their fellow pupils. Lower attaining pupils make very good progress because of the sensitive support from staff who encourage them and praise their efforts in design and modeling. The artists in residence have also given specialist support and there are examples of pupils' work in collage, models and paintings all around the school.

138. The quality of teaching is very good; reflecting the high standards of pupils' completed work. Pupils often evaluate their own work and that of others, in a constructive and supportive manner. The knowledge and enthusiasm of teachers when discussing work is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Planning takes into account the range of abilities. During lessons, there is a lively and industrious atmosphere. Teachers question pupils as they work and they respond with respect, reviewing and improving their work as they are encouraged and prompted. Very good support is offered but this is not intrusive and does not inhibit pupils' creativity. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and many show very good skills in this subject. Pupils use their sketchbooks effectively, transferring skills very well into works of art of very good quality, which are displayed beautifully around the school.
139. Management of the subject is very good. The enthusiastic co-ordinator demonstrates a high level of specialist knowledge of the subject. Resources are plentiful and used to good effect. Art and design is used well to promote aspects of personal development, including raising pupils' cultural awareness.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

140. Although few lessons were seen, an analysis of pupils' work shows that standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected. Pupils' progress overall is satisfactory but some of the shortcomings in standards and teaching judged in the previous inspection are still valid. As then, the focus in some classes lies more on the completion of products rather than the systematic development of pupils' skills in designing, making and evaluating what they do. Pupils' ability to evaluate the quality of their work remains weak in these classes and many lack commitment to good quality work. Year 6 pupils, who last year made an open box with a cam that made the figure move up and down, found it hard to report on their work especially as they followed the teacher's instructions to make one like hers. Such work reflects the lack of emphasis on the design process. For example, there is little evidence of pupils recording the different stages in their work using diagrams, sketches, accounts or photographs. Chances are missed to encourage pupils to apply and use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills during this aspect.
141. Pupils' ability to evaluate the quality of their work is developing satisfactorily. In Years 1 and 2 much of this is done verbally but the outcomes of these discussions are now being recorded. A good feature in Year 2 work was the involvement of a parent who records pupils' comments on how the work might be improved. This is a good means of ensuring a recorded outcome of the evaluation process. Subject specific vocabulary is used well. Pupils in Year 3 understand the term "design brief" and know that drawings need labels to identify parts and materials to be used. In designing a sandwich for a particular person, they also know the importance of hygiene in the preparation of food. Pupils in a Year 4 lesson were discussing the task of making a money container. Such terms as 'fabric', 'compartments' and 'containers' were used and understood by the pupils. Good resources were used to promote pupils' thinking about alternative designs and to illustrate teaching points. Pupils in Year 6 confirmed the good focus on vocabulary and possessed a secure knowledge of design brief, construction, testing and "improvements". They were, however, unfamiliar with terms such as "evaluation" and "finishing techniques".

142. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and make good use of materials. Classroom support staff are used effectively to support pupils and help prepare resources. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils and discipline is invariably good as pupils enjoy the practical nature of the subject and concentrate well to complete their work. Areas to improve are the feedback pupils receive on the quality of their finished work and more time to be spent on designing before making. Little evidence was found of guidance on how to further improve designs or models.
143. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. The co-ordinator has identified relevant aspects for development and is actively driving up standards. Although national guidelines for the content of design and technology have been adopted, they are not accompanied by clear guidance on how to teach the subject. Assessment of pupils' progress is undertaken at the end of each term but procedures are currently unsatisfactory as they lack a consistent approach from class to class. Little evidence was found of assessment information being used to guide curricular planning. The school is short of tools but has a suitable range of different materials including wood, plastic and paper of different thickness for pupils to use. Resources are satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

144. Standards are in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 6, with all pupils making satisfactory progress throughout the junior department of the school. All classes alternate the teaching of history and geography and history was the subject in focus for some classes. Consequently, few lessons were seen and inspectors' judgements are based on an analysis of past work as well as evidence from lessons. The position was the same for infant classes with only one lesson was seen. Standards at the end of Year 2 were judged to be in line with those expected. Standards have improved since the previous full inspection in June 2000, when they were below average throughout the school. Strengths of the subject are: the good use of resources such as atlases and the Internet and the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 6.
145. The subject is taught in the infant classes through a range of topics, which include using maps, photographs and visits around the local area. The topics are planned in detail and develop geographical skills on a continual basis. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to record the route they use to get from home to school. They are aware of the directions they need and can locate key features of the area on a local map. In the only lesson seen in Year 1, pupils completed challenging worksheets on the jobs and places of work in the local community. Good use was made of writing skills as pupils completed worksheets. Little evidence was found of computers being used for geography in the infant classes.
146. The subject is taught in Years 3 to 6 in blocks of time alternating with history. The analysis of completed work shows that statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. There was much evidence available from Years 5 and 6, but less from Years 3 and 4 who were following a history project this term. The examination of pupils' work reveals that pupils tend to undertake the same task and indicates very little difference between the abilities of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons and most complete tasks to a satisfactory standard. Pupils make good use the skills they have learnt in literacy to present their work. In Year 6, for example, they compile information that they have collected, writing about river features and the water cycle, for example. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are confident in using their research skills to locate information about the major rivers of the world from a variety of sources, including the Internet, reference books, maps and atlases. In the only lesson seen in Year 6, pupils were trying to explain why the source of rivers was usually in mountainous regions. All demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of river systems and were able to use the correct terminology to describe features such as a delta, tributary and river source. Overall, pupils in the junior classes make satisfactory use of computers in geography lessons.
147. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. In the few lessons seen teachers had a very good rapport with pupils and used praise effectively to raise pupils' self-

esteem. In addition they use a good variety of sources such as books, maps and photographs to identify the key geographical features. A strong aspect of the teaching was the teachers' good questioning technique. Questions to ensure that pupils have to think before responding and the insistence on explanations for answers successfully engaged pupils and extended their knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs were expected to add to the class discussion. Any pupil finding it difficult to understand was supported well by the class teacher or support assistants. Clear learning objectives and careful preparation of resources ensured that pupils' interest and involvement were maintained. In Year 1, for example, pupils were on the edge of their seats to see inside the box with different objects relating to people's jobs.

148. Subject management is satisfactory and becoming increasingly effective. The co-ordinator is working hard to ensure that plans based on national guidance are relevant for the needs of the pupils. This gives clear guidance to support planning, teaching and learning throughout the school and helps to ensure adequate coverage of the curriculum. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and the standard of pupils' work throughout the school. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and the information gained is used well to plan future work. However, at present, only the headteacher has the opportunity to observe the quality of teaching in the subject helping and advising colleagues to identify strengths and weaknesses. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. The school makes good use of the local area to teach geographical skills.

HISTORY

149. As at the time of the last full inspection in June 2000, standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected. Pupils are still reaching the level expected for their age and the volume of work produced by them matches that produced by most pupils in schools nationally. History has not been a high priority for the school. Whilst the requirements of the National Curriculum are covered and the school is using the latest national subject guidance, not enough has been done in all classes to ensure that pupils acquire the skills of historical enquiry as well as facts about different periods in time.
150. An analysis of pupils' books shows a range of recorded work including both worksheets and free writing. In many classes, all pupils do the same work with no adaptation for those pupils with special educational needs or extension material for those of higher ability. Presentation of work is generally satisfactory, layout being good and handwriting neat. In the three lessons seen in the junior classes, most pupils made satisfactory progress.
151. Pupils from Year 2 knew that history was about people and things from the past and were able to sequence Guy Fawkes, Christ and today correctly. They knew the story of Guy Fawkes and how he is remembered today. They could also identify reasons for assuming that artefacts were old. When discussing work they had done on old toys they were able to identify that they were old because they were worn, damaged and that "bits don't work any more".
152. Pupils in Year 6 had a secure understanding of the passage of time and were able to place historical periods in chronological order. They were able to say which period they would have liked to live in and give valid reasons for their choices. Pupils had an understanding of how we know about the past and referred to artefacts and buildings that remain. They identified that things made of wood had not survived to the same extent as stone.
153. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, being good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the juniors. Four lessons were seen during the inspection. Three lessons were satisfactory and the fourth was a very good lesson. In a very good Year 2 lesson on Helen Keller, the imaginative range of tasks and good use of resources brought out the difficulties of life as a blind person most effectively. Pupils were able to empathise with the condition of blindness through well supported activities using blindfolds. Other pupils used a Braille typewriter with fascination. Rotating groups enabled all pupils full access to the experiences. Other lessons seen were well planned and, following appropriate introductions, pupils settled quickly to the tasks set. In two of the lessons the lack of good resources restricted the level of understanding pupils achieved. In the third, where resources were appropriate, opportunities were missed to

promote an investigational approach to the subject. Consequently, pupils did not make consistent progress in developing their skills in historical interpretation and enquiry. This is also affected by poor reading skills. On occasions, chances are missed to develop pupils' literacy skills through the history curriculum by not creating opportunities for pupils to explain their findings to other members of the class. Although teachers have a secure subject knowledge some place too great an emphasis on facts, events and dates rather than developing pupils' awareness of the uses of different sources of evidence such as the Internet, books or photographs as a means of learning about the past.

154. Curriculum planning has improved since the last full inspection. National guidelines have been organised for each year group and this has helped to ensure the coverage of all required elements. The management of the subject is satisfactory although as yet there are too few opportunities to exercise a leadership role. Resources are satisfactory in quality and sufficient to meet the requirements of the curriculum. Computers are little used currently to support learning in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

155. At the time of the inspection in June 2000, information and communication technology (ICT) was identified as an area for concern as national requirements were not being met. A year later, standards were still below average but it was recognised that progress was rapid and standards were improving. Standards of attainment are now in line with those expected in all schools nationally for pupils in Year 6 and above average by the end of Year 2, where pupils have not had to compensate for previous poor level of resources and weaknesses in teaching.
156. The training for staff provided by the new opportunities funding is now having an impact throughout the school as is the well resourced new information and technology room which has been in use for just over a year. These combine to ensure that pupil progress is now good throughout the school. As in all schools, when pupils have access to a computer at home, they make greater progress as they can spend longer rehearsing programme and keyboard skills.
157. Year 2 pupils are competent in the basic skills. They know how to click on different icons to select and change tools as they create pictures on screen. They are closely supervised as there are two additional staff as well as the class teacher working with sixteen pupils. This level of adult support is not unusual in the suite and is partly responsible for the improving standards. Pupils work individually or in pairs. When working in pairs they co-operate well taking turns to operate the keyboard. Pupils experience control technology through use of a directional device and control peripherals. The class teacher uses subject specific vocabulary well and makes good cross-curricular links with art and design as the object of the lesson is to produce a portrait. The interactive whiteboard, acquired in September, is already well used by most teachers as a valuable teaching aid and effectively helps to maintain pupils' attention throughout the sessions.
158. Pupils in Year 6 are able to access the Internet to research information for different subjects. They have an understanding of the format and uses of spreadsheets, and on multi-media presentations. They access work from and save work to their own files and floppy disks. Limited opportunities for the use of control technology equipment are supplemented in Year 6 when pupils visit the local secondary school and use their sensor equipment. This also provides a good link across the different phases of education.
159. The overall quality of teaching is very good. This represents a big improvement since the June 2000 inspection. Five lessons were observed during the inspection and four of these were very good and the fifth was good. All lessons are well planned, delivered at a brisk pace with a very good emphasis on subject vocabulary. Teachers are confident and show good understanding of the subject in demonstrations and in support of pupils. The pace of the lessons and the teachers' subject knowledge combine to keep pupil interest and motivation high. Adult assistants are very well briefed. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well motivated, enthusiastic and all make good progress in lessons.

160. Improvement since the last full inspection has been very good. Many of the staff now use computers and digital cameras to produce their own teaching and learning resources. Both infant and junior pupils make good use of computers and the new interactive whiteboard in the computer room. Pupils as young as those in the Reception Class, for example confidently used the mouse control to make a ladybird visit flowers as part of a mathematics lesson about directions. Good cross-curricular links are made when pupils are working in the suite. However, insufficient use of classroom computers is made to support other areas of the curriculum by some teachers. Classroom computers are in active use for less than one-third of the day. Teachers need to include opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in their medium-term planning. Four laptops have recently arrived in school and were very effectively used in a Year 6 numeracy lesson on two-dimensional shapes. Where classes are large, good arrangements are made to split the class so that one half works in the computer suite whilst the other half works in class on a different subject activity. The groups swap over for the second half of the session. This is particularly effective in ensuring very good, often individual, access to machines and is highly inclusive. This arrangement relies very heavily on the support of classroom assistants, who invariably do an excellent job with pupils in these situations.
161. The co-ordinator is effective and efficient and, with good support from the headteacher, other staff and school governors, has moved the subject forward rapidly. The high profile of the subject over the past two years has brought about accelerated subject progress. The school follows the latest national guidance in terms of subject coverage and development of an assessment and recording system to track pupil progress is being developed. The school has responded well to the subject deficiencies of the past two years and pupil progress and levels of attainment have risen sharply as a result of high financial investment, much improved teaching and a communal commitment to succeed. At one computer for every seven pupils, the level of resources is very good.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

162. French is taught to Year 6 pupils once a week by a visiting specialist teacher. The class is halved to ensure that all pupils are fully involved and gain the maximum benefit from being part of a smaller group. In the session seen, pupils concentrated well and showed confidence in greeting visitors, answering the register and saying some prayers in French. All know numbers to 20 and are able to respond to simple instructions such as stand up or sit down.

MUSIC

163. Standards in music are in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Examples of very good work in singing and instrumental work were observed during the inspection. These aspects have improved since the last full inspection in June 2000 and standards overall have been maintained throughout the school.
164. As few lessons were seen, judgements made in lessons have been supplemented by observations in school assemblies, discussions with staff and pupils and examining photographic evidence of concerts. Pupils throughout the school benefit from some detailed planning from good quality schemes and know the lesson objectives when questioned. Witnessing the pleasure and enjoyment on pupils' faces as they perform is evidence of the impact music has on their moods and relationships. The subject co-ordinator has ten years of experience and leads the subject with commitment, although monitoring of lessons is still developing.
165. Year 1 pupils select sounds and sound sources in response to a story. They show delight as they sing a song together, look at sound cards and then try to make the sound. This lesson builds on previous work when pupils used different instruments to represent sounds such as rain. They are working towards putting sound effects to the story 'Peace at Last'. Despite the cacophony of sounds as they work in smaller groups on set tasks, the children clearly enjoy music making. They work better in their circle, when they feel part of a larger 'orchestra'.

There are a number of pupils with complex needs who require a great deal of additional support in this group in order to access the instruments effectively. There is very sensitive support given to all pupils, and by the end of the lesson, pupils know how to differentiate between the sounds made by the good range of untuned instruments.

166. Year 2 pupils sing simple songs from memory and explore timbre, tempo and dynamics very effectively. They can recall what these terms mean very well, using good vocabulary to express the differences. The use of circle time to practise their rainstorm before they record their efforts on tape gives all pupils an opportunity to take part enthusiastically. As they rehearse 'I Hear Thunder' as a round, they are engrossed in watching and waiting for directions so that they can produce their best efforts. It is a delight to watch the concentration and then witness their triumphant smiles as the recording is played back. Pupils know how to sing with an awareness of other and use body sounds such as tapping and clapping to create the rainstorm very effectively. They show satisfactory standards of attainment at music making, and enjoy the lesson very much.
167. Older pupils perform, play and sing as part of groups. No lessons of music were observed in the junior classes but singers and instrumentalists took part in assemblies during the inspection, showing at least satisfactory standards of attainment.
168. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. It is variable from class to class, being at least satisfactory to very good, dependent on individual teachers' subject knowledge. There is a good level of enthusiasm from all teachers, whatever their expertise level and all plan and prepare for music lessons well. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Assessment is informal and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their performances at the end of lessons. More formal assessment is being developed to ensure pupils' progress against the National Curriculum standards at each stage. All pupils enjoy music and participate with gusto in singing, playing and composition. They are encouraged to perform and some very gifted and talented pupils have been identified in the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

169. At the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, attainment in physical education is in line with national expectations. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in all year groups and this is a reflection of the standard of teaching throughout the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Their very good attitudes and behaviour made a significant contribution to the quality of learning in the lessons seen. All were enthusiastic and on occasions patient when listening to lengthy instructions or waiting for their turn to take part in competitive team games for two teams.
170. Although the last inspection did not report on standards in physical education, standards have been maintained since the previous full inspection in June 2000. Significant improvements since then are that the school now has a clear and detailed scheme of work to guide teachers in their planning of work, procedures for assessment are in place and pupils behaviour has vastly improved in lessons.
171. As they progress through the school, pupils are given a satisfactory range of opportunities to acquire and develop new skills and apply them to their own performances. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show good body control as they run, jump and copy the movements of animals in a story they have heard in class or develop a dance sequence to taped music. They are able to perform simple actions with satisfactory co-ordination and willingly evaluate their own or others' performances. All know the reason for warming up or cooling down at the start and end of lessons.
172. By Year 6, pupils have been given regular structured opportunities to acquire and develop skills, techniques and ideas through dance, games, gymnastics, athletics and swimming. Almost all manage to meet the requirements in swimming, for example, before they leave school. Year 4 showed a good level of concentration when they worked hard in a gymnastics session to improve their sequences involving a balance position, movement and jump. Year 5 pupils were very competitive in the hockey team matches in a games skills session and Year 6

thoroughly enjoyed responding to pop music when dancing. Boys and girls were equally enthusiastic in this lesson and all were willing to demonstrate their actions for others.

173. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout. Good use is made of the resources available for this subject. Teachers' explanations are clear and enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to take a full part in all activities. There are, however, some aspects which need improving in lessons throughout the school. Pupils, for example, spend too much time waiting for their turn in some group activities and too little time being active. Although teachers use praise well to encourage and motivate pupils, they rarely give pupils a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of their performance and, as a result, pupils in some lessons do not have a sufficiently clear idea of what they need to do to improve further.
174. Physical education makes a positive contribution to pupils' social, moral and spiritual development. Levels of co-operation and collaboration in lessons are good and the various after-school clubs and competitive games of football or netball successfully develop a positive team spirit. Rules are understood by pupils of all ages and followed in a sensible and mature fashion. There are also good opportunities to take part in dancing in response to music.
175. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop a scheme of work to support teachers and to guide them in their planning. The school's plans ensure that the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum are followed in detail. No monitoring of teaching has taken place recently, which means that best practice is not shared amongst the staff. Assessment is being increasingly used to track pupils' progress in the subject, with the result that pupils systematically develop skills in games, dancing and gymnastics.