

INSPECTION REPORT

Christ Church Pellon Church of England VC Primary School

Pellon, Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107535

Headteacher: Mrs J Priestley

Reporting inspector: Mr B Griffiths
2607

Dates of inspection: 30 September - 3 October 2002

Inspection number: 246685

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Sandbeds Road
Pellon
Halifax

Postcode: HX2 0QQ

Telephone number: 01422 350792

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs K Lovelady

Date of previous inspection: December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2607	Mr B Griffiths Registered inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19446	Mrs S Wood Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21045	Mrs S Walker Team inspector	Design and technology Geography History Provision for children in the foundation stage. Educational inclusion Special educational needs	How well are the pupils taught?
18344	Mr D Earley Team inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Art and design Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Christ Church is a smaller than average, Church of England, voluntary controlled primary school that serves an area a little over a mile from the centre of Halifax. It is attended by 204 boys and girls, of whom 30 are in the reception year. The great majority of pupils, around 97 per cent, are of white United Kingdom background; the remaining pupils include Kosovan refugee children and a very small number of children of Pakistani origin. For six pupils, English is an additional language; this is a higher than average proportion. At 20 per cent, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is around average. The proportion of pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs is around 13 per cent. The fall from almost double that number when the school was last inspected is linked to the school's adoption of the new national Code of Practice and is not caused by any changes in the school population. Eight pupils have statements of special educational need, which is above average. The school participates in a number of local and national initiatives, including Active Mark and the Healthy School Award. It is a member of the Halifax Learning Zone. When pupils start school their attainment is broadly typical for their ages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, at which pupils in Year 6 reach above average standards in mathematics, science, design and technology, history and religious education. In all other subjects standards are at the nationally expected levels. Pupils behave well and become responsible and mature. These good results stem from the teaching that is good throughout the school. In its turn, the good teaching owes much to good leadership and management, particularly the clear goals set by senior staff, especially the headteacher, and to effective management methods that focus on improving pupils' all-round achievements. Even though the costs of educating pupils at this school are above average, the quality of the school's provision and its results ensure that it gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in mathematics, science, religious education, design and technology and history.
- Teaching is uniformly good at all stages.
- The school is managed well by the headteacher, staff and governors.
- Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good.
- The curriculum is rich and varied.
- Relationships with parents are good and the community as a whole contributes well to the school's provision for pupils.

What could be improved

- Writing standards, especially of boys, should be better.
- The provision for outdoor play in the reception class does not promote learning sufficiently well.
- The use of homework is too inconsistent to make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1997. Since then it has improved at a good rate. It has consolidated its good practice and made a number of improvements to both provision and standards. Pupils' attainment has improved and, by the time that they leave for secondary education, pupils reach good standards in many subjects. Children in the reception class settle more quickly and happily; throughout the school, pupils' attitudes have improved to become good. These improvements have come about because teaching is now good at all stages and the

weaknesses seen five years ago no longer exist. The curriculum is now richer and much better documented. The monitoring of the work of pupils and adults was less than satisfactory and is now a strong feature of the school, contributing greatly to the improvements made. Governors make a strong contribution to the quality of the school's work.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the 2002 tests the English scores of Year 6 pupils were similar to those in 2001; in mathematics, overall scores were similar although more pupils reached well above average standards; in science, the high scores seen in 2001 were not maintained. However, this was a year group with an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs; many of these did well to reach average levels. In 2001, Year 2 pupils reached average standards in reading and writing and well above average standards in mathematics. The reading and writing scores were above the average seen in similar schools and in mathematics they were well above average. School-based assessments in science placed pupils above the national average. The 2002 test scores were very similar to those in 2001. The national averages are not yet available for either Year 2 or Year 6 so that comparisons can not be made. In recent years test scores have improved at a rate that matches the national trend. These improvements have been facilitated by the reasonably demanding targets that the school sets for pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science and which in most years are reached.

The work of the most recent Year 6 pupils (The current Year 6, who have only just begun their final year, and last year's) is average for their ages in English and above average in mathematics and science. In design and technology and history, standards are above nationally expected levels whilst in religious education they are better than as set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. In all other subjects, standards are at nationally expected levels. These standards are especially creditable as five of the 30 pupils in Year 6 have statements of special educational needs. Good progress has taken place in relation to Year 2, in which attainment is average in English and above average in mathematics and science; attainment is above the national expectation in design and technology and history, at the locally agreed level in religious education and in line with national expectations in all other subjects. Throughout the school, standards in reading are good. Whilst writing standards are overall sound, there are areas of weakness and older boys in particular could do better.

Reception year children's personal, social and emotional development is on course to be above average at the end of the year, whilst standards are on track to be at expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, physical development, creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have a keen interest in what they learn in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school is an orderly and friendly community in which pupils behave well both in lessons and around school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils develop into mature and responsible young people. Relationships are very good between all at the school.
Attendance	Good. The rates of attendance and unauthorised absence are better than national averages. Pupils arrive at school on time, allowing lessons to start promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good in all subjects excepting that in religious education in Years 1 and 2 and in art and music throughout the school, no judgements can be made as too little teaching could be observed. There are particular strengths in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Common strengths in the teaching are the effective methods used to manage pupils and this ensures that they sustain concentration well, the imaginative range of activities that make learning enjoyable and the well considered and clear organisation that ensures lessons run smoothly and efficiently. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally high and pupils invariably rise to them. Occasionally teachers miss opportunities to make the best use of time at the end of lessons to consolidate and remind pupils of what has been learned. There is some inconsistency in the way that homework is used. Teachers' planning is thorough and ensures that teaching meets the needs of all pupils, enabling them to learn at a good rate and so make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a very wide range of rich and stimulating learning opportunities. The curriculum is very well planned and balanced so that it meets the needs and aptitudes of all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. It is well managed and organised with effective systems to ensure that pupils gain maximum benefit. Pupils progress well because their learning is guided by thoughtful individual programmes that address their needs fully.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Sensitive and well-directed support ensures that they make the same good progress as all other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to deepen their spiritual awareness and to increase their understanding of the differences between right and wrong. The provision for pupils to take responsibility and to learn to live in a community is very good. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. The school provides a caring environment in which pupils of all ages and levels of attainment can and do learn. Procedures to monitor and assess the work of pupils are good.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Soundly. Parents are supportive of the school and its work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is a capable leader of a strong management team that is supported enthusiastically by other staff and governors.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. All statutory duties are fully met. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses; many have strong working links to staff and the day-to-day life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Pupils' performance is rigorously analysed in order to identify areas for further attention; very systematic monitoring of teaching and learning feeds very effectively into a programme of improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Spending is carefully directed at well-chosen priorities that enhance the progress made by pupils. All pupils benefit from spending, including that on pupils with special educational needs and from local and national initiatives. Great care is taken to ensure that the best available value is obtained from spending, so that pupils obtain maximum benefit.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Good. The school's policy to keep the staffing, particularly of teaching assistants, at good levels plays a significant part in the progress made by all pupils. Accommodation is adequate overall but some teaching areas are cramped and outside play facilities, especially for reception children, are limited. The quality and quantity of resources are appropriate to the teaching and learning programme.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy going to school and make good progress there • Children become mature and responsible • Teaching is good and staff have high expectations of children • Most feel comfortable when asking questions or discussing problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like to know more about their children's progress • The closeness with which the school works with parents • The range of activities outside lessons • The use of homework

Many more parents expressed positive views than negative. Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments and judge that the setting of homework should be more systematic and predictable. There is a good number of activities outside lessons and the school works hard at communications with parents, especially to keep them in touch with their children's progress. Some documentation from the school to parents is not well presented.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievement

1. The standards reached by Year 6 pupils in the national tests of 2001 placed pupils at average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science. In English and science, the levels reached were well above what are usually seen in schools with similar proportions of free school meals and in mathematics they were above. The national average scores are not yet available for 2002, but the school's results were very similar to last year in English and less good in science; in mathematics, a similar proportion reached the nationally expected level or above but, of these, a significant proportion reached high levels and almost one pupil in three reached levels usually associated with pupils two or more years older than them. As the year group contained several pupils identified as having special educational needs, these are creditable results. In recent years, the school's results have improved at a rate similar to the national rate.

2. Pupils in the current Year 6 are reaching similar standards to those reached by previous Year 6 pupils in recent national tests, in spite of there being five pupils in the year group with statements of special educational needs. They are on track to reach average standards in English; within this overall judgement, standards are above average in reading and average in writing and in speaking and listening. Reading standards are enhanced by the use of reading materials that ensure pupils' progress and the effective use of reading in other subjects for research purposes. Girls reach higher standards in English than do boys. This is particularly marked in writing, in which boys' lack of enthusiasm for some tasks limits their attainment – although the recent stress on providing topics that interest boys more is beginning to have a positive effect on both rates of work and standards. In mathematics and science, standards are above average largely because pupils respond very positively to the practical nature of much of the work.

3. In the 2001 tests, Year 2 pupils reached average standards in reading and writing and well above average standards in mathematics. The school's own assessment of attainment in science placed pupils above the national average. Reading and writing scores were above those of similar schools and those in mathematics were well above. The national scores are not yet available for the 2002 tests, but the school's scores were very similar to those of 2001.

4. The present Year 2 pupils are on track to reach standards that are similar to those in recent national tests: overall attainment is above average in mathematics and science and average in English. As in Year 6, reading standards are above average whilst standards in writing and in speaking and listening are average. Girls out-perform boys in writing although the difference is less marked than farther up the school

5. Attainment on entry to the reception class is typical of the age range. Many children have benefited from nursery and pre-school education elsewhere. They settle to school well, largely because the good teaching in the reception class is characterised by very good relationships and well-established routines. This ensures that by the time that they start in Year 1, children's personal, social and emotional development is above average. This is a considerable improvement on the last inspection when children took too long to settle and did not progress at a satisfactory rate. Overall, pupils achieve at a good rate and they reach the nationally expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, the knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

6. During Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 2, standards are above average in design and technology (DT) and history. In information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, geography, music and physical education (PE), standards are at the nationally expected levels whilst in religious education (RE) they are at the levels expected in the

local Agreed Syllabus. The improvements in those subjects in which attainment is good have been brought about through much improved teaching, which in turn owes a good deal to the thoughtful ways in which staff, led by senior managers, analyse and improve their teaching methods.

7. Pupils' good progress continues during Key Stage 2, so that by the end of Year 6 pupils reach above average standards in DT and history and above expected standards in RE. Standards are at expected levels in ICT, art and design, geography, music and PE. As in Key Stage 1, the improvement in standards since the last inspection have been brought about through the carefully considered improvements that have been made to teaching, including the setting of reasonably demanding targets set for all pupils with a particularly effective use of these in English, mathematics and science for pupils in Year 6.

8. All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils and those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the well thought out provision, good teaching and the precise targets set out in their carefully planned individualised programmes. These describe small achievable steps that allow many to close the gap with other pupils. Examples of this are seen in the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs who none-the-less reach the nationally expected standards in national tests and the very high standards reached by the most gifted pupils. Good support is given to many of these pupils not only in normal class work but also in groups taught by support staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Pupils are keen to come to school and quickly settle to work. The teachers frequently capture the pupils' imagination so that they become interested and involved in the activities. Pupils ask pertinent questions and listen to the views of others. They settle and produce work that is almost invariably of an acceptable quality and is often good. Pupils are able to work sensibly and generally quietly, sustaining concentration whether they are working as individuals, in pairs or in a group. For example, in a numeracy lesson, pupils worked quietly and spent time measuring lines accurately in millimetres, consolidating well their understanding of and skills in measuring. In most lessons pupils clearly know what is expected of them and they often try hard to please the teacher. On the few occasions when teaching is insufficiently stimulating, pupils become restless, which results in noisier classrooms and a slower pace to their learning. During a literacy lesson, focussing on poetry styles, a significant number of pupils found it difficult to concentrate when working independently as the tasks lacked stimulation.

10. The behaviour of pupils in their classrooms and around the school is good, and is underpinned by the consistent approach and high expectations of all adults. Movement around the school is quiet and orderly, as is the atmosphere in the dinner hall. In a physical education lesson, younger pupils found it natural to find their own space for movement and to follow the teacher's instructions. Pupils are polite to visitors and, for example, often open doors without being prompted. When teaching is very good, pupils are exceptionally well behaved. Pupils respect property and handle resources well. There is no evidence of bullying, racist or sexist behaviour and there have been no exclusions in the last academic year.

11. The personal development of pupils is good and the quality of relationships they form is very good with many pupils showing respect for the feelings of others. Pupils respond to teachers' requests and settle to their work quickly and quietly. Pupils enjoy opportunities to take responsibility. For example, the members of the recently formed school council and class councils take their role seriously and the responsibilities they are given enables them to develop into mature and responsible young people

12. The school's attendance figures are good. Parents are reminded of the importance of good attendance and that absence affects pupils' achievement. The great majority of pupils arrive at school on time; registers are generally taken quickly at the start of sessions enabling a prompt start

to the school day.

13. Parents' views that the school helps children to develop well personally and socially as well as to develop good attitudes to work and to other people are fully justified. The positive judgements of the last inspection are confirmed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. Since the last inspection the teaching has improved. It is never less than satisfactory and is good in the majority of lessons. The unsatisfactory teaching noted at the time of the previous inspection has been eradicated, largely because of the increased emphasis on the monitoring of teaching and learning and through continuing staff development. The quality of teaching is good in all subjects, except that in religious education in Years 1 and 2, and in art and music throughout the school, too little teaching was observed to make judgements.

15. The teaching in the Reception Year is good overall, whereas at the last inspection there was a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and very little that was good. A particular strength is the way in which the careful organisation of the classroom and the high expectations of the teacher enable the children to settle into school routines swiftly. They rapidly gain confidence and independence as they explore the stimulating range of activities on offer and join in class activities. Very good teaching in the personal, social and emotional areas ensures that children achieve well and reach good standards. Teaching is good in the other areas of learning, although its effectiveness is reduced in the physical area because the provision for outdoor physical play is limited and this narrows the range of activities that can be provided. Just occasionally there is a lack of precision in the teacher's planning that leads to a lack of focus during oral parts of lessons. This slows the pace of the lesson and results in restlessness when children have been seated for too long.

16. In Years 1 to 6, the quality of teaching is good because there are several common strengths. Staff are reflective and enthusiastic about what they are doing and this comes across in their teaching. Lessons are invariably well planned and efficiently organised so no time is lost. The teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and where there is particular subject expertise the lessons tend to be of a higher quality. In a lesson in ICT for instance, the teacher had a very good understanding of spreadsheets and was able to develop the main teaching point with individual pupils very effectively as they worked in the computer suite. Individual tuition enabled the teacher to assess the pupils' progress and guide them on to the next stage of learning. This helped pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Lessons in literacy and numeracy are consistently good because teachers have secure knowledge of how to teach the basic skills and can put them across to the pupils in an interesting variety of ways. The impact of the school's use of literacy and numeracy strategies has been good in all classes and is reflected well in the improving standards. Boys and girls are almost invariably treated similarly in lessons and the increasing use made of a wider range of topics for writing is beginning to capture the interest of boys who are beginning to achieve better.

17. Teachers' planning is thorough and, at best, indicates how pupils with special educational needs and higher achievers are to be challenged. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from carefully planned individualised programmes that take account of what has been learned and what each pupil needs to do next. The plans are constructed in such a way that improvement takes place in small achievable steps, often closing the gap with other pupils. Patient and sensitive handling of pupils with behavioural difficulties is often successful in encouraging them to settle to their work and in such circumstances they progress well. The expectations of the teachers are generally high, resulting in good behaviour from the pupils and sustained levels of concentration in lessons. Most lessons are brisk and purposeful and there are clear parameters for behaviour to which pupils respond well. There is a purposeful working atmosphere in most lessons and pupils are expected to work hard, which they invariably do. In a very small number of lessons class

management is not effective because when pupils become fussy and inattentive the teacher fails to check them. On occasions this compromises the working atmosphere in the room.

18. Effective teaching methods are employed throughout the school. A notable feature of the best lessons is the choice of imaginative practical activities that make learning enjoyable and fun and balance out some of the more formal elements of the curriculum. In a memorable religious education lesson in Year 3 for example, pupils learned much about Baptism as they discussed some of the ways in which it is celebrated and then watched the vicar 'baptise' a doll. In a science lesson in Year 5 pupils worked sensibly in pairs with balloons and torches as they explored how the rotation of the earth causes sunrise and sunset. Teachers throughout the school are good at introducing key vocabulary specific to the subject and then encouraging pupils to use the correct terminology in their writing and discussions.

19. The teaching assistants are a valued part of the team. In most lessons they are deployed efficiently with clear roles, working with groups of pupils or with individuals in order to encourage, prompt and take learning forward. Not only do the pupils with whom they are working progress well but other pupils benefit from the smaller groups that the teacher is able to work with.

20. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching are relatively few, but there are factors that make a small number of lessons satisfactory rather than good or very good. The use of homework varies from class to class and this inconsistency means that homework is not used to best effect to make an impact on standards; there is a clear school policy but it is not followed systematically by all staff. Parents do not know when to expect homework and so are less able to contribute; pupils are unsure of the teachers' expectations so that tasks make too few demands on pupils. In the best lessons, teachers take time at the end to summarise and consolidate what has been learned and to remind pupils of the objectives of the lesson so they can gauge how well they have progressed. Not all teachers do this however, and so valuable opportunities are lost to consolidate and reinforce learning, to assess how much pupils have understood and to give them a proper sense of what their achievement. Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and this too varies from class to class.

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

21. The school provides a very wide range of rich and stimulating learning opportunities which meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. It meets all the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. This is because it has successfully addressed criticisms from the previous inspection. It now provides detailed schemes of work in all subjects that clearly identify how pupils can build on their knowledge, understanding and skills. The school also makes very good use of national guidance in order to enhance its planning.

22. The curriculum for children in the reception class is well planned and carefully based on the early learning goals for children up to the time they begin work on the National Curriculum. Staff work hard and with a reasonable degree of success to compensate for the limited facilities for outdoor play and good use is made of the hall. The school is successful in ensuring that all pupils, whatever their gender or special educational need, including gifted and talented pupils and those for whom English is a second language, have equal access to the curriculum and opportunity to succeed. Overall, provision for these pupils is good so that they make good progress. This is enhanced by the school's Christian ethos where each individual is valued and respected. Literacy and numeracy are well provided for and this is helping to raise standards.

23. The school makes good use of literacy and numeracy in a range of subjects, so that pupils' skills in literacy are increased and their knowledge and understanding of other subjects are improved. For example, in religious education in Year 6, pupils wrote clear accounts of the story of

Pentecost. However, some subjects are rarely used in this way and these include subjects from which boys' writing would benefit – for example PE and games. In geography in Year 4, pupils listened attentively and contributed well to discussions about the origins of place names, enhancing work in spelling. In Year 4, pupils used force meters and recorded their results in tables in their work on friction. The school makes sound use of information and communication technology in other subjects. In Year 2, pupils produced and interpreted a range of computer generated graphs. Older pupils used word processing skills effectively to produce newspaper reports.

24. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, gifted and talented and pupils for whom English is an additional language, experience the full curriculum and participate in all activities. The school's support systems for pupils who require additional help are well-structured and organised. When pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra help, care is taken that they still cover the appropriate work.

25. The school makes very good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education. This has positive impacts on pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour as well as on their personal development. In subjects such as science and physical education pupils are made aware of the importance of healthy life styles. On many occasions, but especially at the times when each class meets together for the purpose, teachers work hard to develop co-operation, relationships, self esteem and to help pupils to understand their feelings and emotions. The school has a clear and comprehensive personal, social, health and citizenship programme. Pupils are provided with opportunities to contribute to the life of the school through membership of the school council and class councils. For example, improvements to the toilets were made as a result of their recommendations and discussions. Pupils help with the smooth running of the school, for example as lunch-time monitors and play leaders. Older pupils support younger ones at play times and many pupils are given responsible jobs in class. The school provides clear messages about the uses and misuses of drugs through its drug awareness programme, and its work in science. Similarly sex education is taught, within a clear moral framework, through science and the health education programme. The school receives support from the school nurse in its work with older pupils.

26. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities in order to enrich the curriculum. Pupils go on a wide range of visits outside school that give good support, mainly but not exclusively to physical education, arts and science subjects. The curriculum is further enriched by many visitors into school, including authors, drama groups, composers, and representatives of charities. The curriculum is also enhanced by the summer school, when staff and pupils use part of the holiday period in order to undertake a wide range of activities, including drama, art and information communication technology.

27. The school has very good links with the local community. Local businesses support projects in the curriculum such as art. The vicar and clergy from other churches lead worship and talk to pupils. The school has close links with Christ Church, Mount Pellon. Senior citizens come into school in order to discuss life in the past. Police officers, the school nurse, fire service officers and the local crossing patrol warden talk to pupils about their jobs and related issues. Other visitors from the community include, water, home and road safety officers, drug awareness officers, and members of local football, rugby and cricket teams. Pupils make effective use of the locality in order to enhance their work in history and geography.

28. The school has good links with partner institutions. It works closely with the local nursery so that new pupils are well known and settle in quickly. It works closely with other local primary schools sharing many staff development, sporting and cultural initiatives; subject managers work closely together in order to enhance their knowledge and skills. Arrangements with the many local secondary schools served by this school ensure that the transfer to the next stage of education is usually a smooth one.

29. The overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. It has improved since the last inspection. Provision for spiritual development is good. The school

successfully provides pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs. This is supported by its religious education programmes, assemblies and worship. It is further enhanced through the school's strong Christian ethos which underlies the life and work of the school, where all are respected and where values and beliefs are appreciated. The school has close links with the parish church and pupils visit church on such occasions as Harvest Festival and Christmas. Pupils have well-timed opportunities to take part in moments of reflection. They write their own prayers and have opportunities to pray during the school day. In worship, pupils join in sensitively with prayers and hymns. Teachers take advantage of opportunities to provide for pupils to share moments of excitement. For example, pupils in Year 1 were fascinated when they began to realise that older pupils were not necessarily taller than younger pupils. Pupils in Year 5 shared their excitement when they used vinegar and bicarbonate to create simulated volcanoes.

30. Provision for moral education is good. This is because the school has a clearly expressed behaviour policy which is used consistently throughout the school in order to reinforce good behaviour. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong. There is throughout the school a high expectation of good behaviour and of respect for others and for truth and justice. Most pupils usually respond positively. Staff take time to consider any issues which may arise and the adults in school provide good role models. The school successfully rewards and celebrates achievement and behaviour through such initiatives as the "Golden Book" and certificates, letters to parents and stickers.

31. The school's provision for social education is very good. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities, such as the school and class councils, to work towards the good of the whole school community. The school provides a wide range of extra curricular opportunities and a very rich and a stimulating range of visits and visitors. Time is set aside for pupils to gather together in small groups in order to develop their self-esteem and confidence. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are usually very good. Pupils are encouraged to be polite and courteous. Older pupils work productively with younger pupils. For example, in the "Cook for your tea club", pupils in Year 2 and 6 prepare and eat a meal together and invite an adult to join them. In lessons and at play times they are taught the importance of sharing and taking turns. Pupils co-operate well together and work collaboratively. For example, Year 2 pupils co-operated very well when making puppets in design and technology. The school choir sings for the community in Halifax, and for senior citizens. In order to help to care for those less fortunate than themselves, pupils take part in fund raising for local and national charities and older pupils take the initiative for organising their own fund raising activities.

32. The provision for cultural education is good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to appreciate their own culture. For example they take part in festivals such as Christmas, Harvest Festival and Mothers' Day. In music and physical education they perform traditional songs and dances. The choir sang at the Manchester Arena as part of the millennium celebrations. Pupils have opportunities to attend the ballet and theatre and to visit local art galleries and sculpture trails. In subjects such as geography and history they learn about cultures in different places and times, such as Egypt and ancient Greece. In art and music pupils learn about the songs and work of people in Africa, China and North America. The library has a selection of stories from other cultures and learning resources for art, religious education and music are used well to provide a good level of understanding of the beliefs and creativity of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. All pupils are well known to staff, and pupils feel confident to approach any adult if they have worries or concerns. The school follows the local education authority's guidelines for health and safety, and has relevant procedures in place. There are clear routines that are carefully followed to report and record accidents. The school provides a safe and secure environment in which pupils and staff can work productively. Preparations for the involvement in national initiatives such as Active Mark and the Healthy School Award are having a positive impact on pupils' health and well

being.

34. The school has satisfactory procedures to monitor attendance and most parents are clear about what to do if their child is absent from school. More families are taking their holidays in term time and the school regularly reminds them that this can have an adverse effect on their children's progress. Certificates are given to pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance, both termly and annually, to help promote good attendance.

35. Pupils' personal development needs are met through staff knowing each individual child and they quickly recognise any change in behaviour or attitude. There is no formal recording of pupils' development, although these areas are reported to parents through the annual written progress reports.

36. The behaviour of pupils is monitored through a consistently followed range of reward systems. Sanctions are well understood but only rarely do they have to be used. The pupils and parents value the Gold Book and the weekly assemblies that celebrate good attitudes and behaviour of individual pupils. Pupils are involved in the setting of the class rules, which are displayed on the classroom walls and act as a reminder of the school expectations; pupils' involvement results in them believing the rules to be important and ensures that they respect and follow them.

37. There are good processes in place to monitor the academic performance of pupils. These are clearly linked to the good assessment processes that are used throughout the school. They are well developed in almost all subjects and the teachers use the information to inform and adjust their lesson plans in order to build on the knowledge and understanding of all pupils. External tests are used alongside internal ones to establish the achievements of all pupils. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is tracked especially carefully. Their individual education plans are appropriate to pupils' needs and include clear targets and teaching strategies, with appropriately challenging dates for reviews to take place. Pupils themselves contribute to their programmes. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs and relate well to them, providing encouragement and praise as well as making demands that ensure their good progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The great majority of parents view positively the school's provision and are supportive of its approaches. They say that their children like school and that they make good progress, that the teaching is good and they feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. A smaller proportion of parents feel that the school does not keep parents well informed about their children's progress, does not work closely enough with parents and that the school does not provide enough activities outside lessons; some feel that the arrangements for homework should be better. Inspectors confirm the parents' good opinions; they agree that the school could improve the quality of the information that it produces for its parents and that homework should be used more systematically. However, inspectors feel that the school provides a good range of activities for pupils outside lessons, which includes a wide range of curricular visits outside the school.

39. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about the children's progress is satisfactory. Parents receive regular information through letters home, which tell them of day-to-day routines and expectations. The prospectus sent to parents of children new to the school, contains all the statutory information required, daily routines and general information. However, the literature is bland in its presentation and often fails to celebrate the good work of the school. Each class gives parents an outline every half-term of the work to be covered in lessons. Parents appreciate this but the school rarely draws on this in order to set homework – for example small research tasks. This results in parents being unable help their children with their work by, for example, sharing first hand knowledge or providing artefacts.

40. The written reports given at the end of the academic year are of good quality; they inform parents of the areas their children have studied over the year and an outline of their achievements and personal development. They give areas for future attention that are clearly focused to enable parents to support their children in their learning. Two parent consultation evenings are organised each year. These are well attended and parents value the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher. Parents of children with special educational needs are regularly informed about their children's progress and involved in their child's learning. Review meetings are held regularly to inform parents of progress and to discuss the next steps. A very small number of parents find this process difficult to access, although the school tries hard and its systems are improving and are now good.

41. A small number of parents regularly help in classrooms. The school rightly values their help. Parents are invited to school activities, which they appreciate and enjoy. These opportunities are limited by the size of the school hall; sometimes the local church is used to host school services, bringing a sense of occasion and a heightened sense of spirituality. The parent teacher association organises social and fundraising occasions that provide additional resources for the school such as the recent purchase of combined television and videos for use in the classrooms. Their time and dedication are very much appreciated by the school and both the resources provided and the help given in classrooms make a good contribution to pupils' progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. Leadership is good at all levels. The headteacher provides clear sighted and capable leadership and is supported enthusiastically by the strong team of staff – especially the members of the senior management team – and by governors. The school's aims centre on ensuring that all pupils do their best and reach good standards in a wide-ranging curriculum. They guide the work of the school and appear, in slightly different forms, both in documentation and around school, making a good contribution to the positive learning atmosphere. There are efficient management systems in place that are used confidently and effectively. These also ensure that the school's aims almost always govern the practice of all staff.

43. All members of the teaching staff take responsibility for managing one or more subjects or aspect of the school's work. This works well. Experienced staff understand the role very well and have made major contributions to all subjects but particularly to literacy and numeracy. Newer teachers have been helped by the school quickly to understand all of the school's approaches; they have fitted well into the staff team and are already having positive impacts in all of the areas for which they have responsibility. Curriculum managers' roles are full ones. Each of them monitors teaching and learning in their subjects and gives expert advice to other staff, based on their careful and often astute observations and evaluations. This very effective programme of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning has made a very powerful contribution to the improvements made since the last inspection. Strengths in teaching are identified, celebrated and consolidated whilst relative weaknesses are recognised and successfully worked on. Pupils' work, especially their test results, is rigorously analysed in order that strengths and weaknesses are identified and consolidated and remedied respectively. For example, underachievement in writing, especially by older boys, has been recognised and a number of strategies put in place in order to make improvements. These are beginning to have their effect although more remains to be done. The national systems for the management of the performance of the headteacher and teaching staff are fully in place and on track to contribute to the quality of the school's work. The provision for special educational needs is a priority for the school. The headteacher is co-ordinator and her good overview has enabled the new Code of Practice to be implemented – although there are areas that still need further development before they are fully embedded in the school's practice. Good use is made of outside agencies to provide additional support and advice.

44. The governors meet their responsibilities well and are rightly regarded by all staff as full members of the working team. Many governors know well the school's strengths and weaknesses

because they have productive working links with staff and participate in the day-to-day work of the school. Good links with subject managers help to inform governing body decisions. The governing body has expanded since the last inspection and has gathered a good range of expertise; new governors are quickly accepted by others, are helped to understand their new role and quickly make high quality contributions.

45. A school improvement plan draws on a good range of analyses of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All governors and staff play a proper part in this process and pupils, through the school council, make a systematic contribution. Parents contribute through the parent representatives on the governing body but this is not sufficiently systematic for their views to be fully taken into account. However, the resultant plan covers a good, ambitious range of topics and is a very useful tool for focusing the school's energies. Minor weaknesses consist of an absence of a sense of priority between the large number of activities described, and success criteria that too rarely include the intended benefits for pupils and their attainment or welfare.

46. Finances are managed confidently, with good use made of computerised management systems. Careful spending allows governors to save money in order to help to fund projects such as the computer suite; plans are being made to improve the outdoor play facilities of the reception year. The governors' decision to improve secretarial staffing is making a good and growing contribution to the efficiency of the school's financial and administrative systems. Day-to-day administration runs smoothly thus allowing the headteacher and other staff to focus on the management of teaching and learning. Funds made available for specific purposes - for example, special educational need and through the local Education Action Zone, are spent appropriately and effectively. The governors' decision to spend well above average sums on classroom support assistants is amply justified. These members of staff make good contributions at all levels and work especially well with pupils with special educational needs, ensuring their good progress. Overall, the premises are adequate. However, the outside play area for reception children is small and without a full range of equipment; the school field is too small to include a grassed area for team sports. The governors' understanding of the principles of obtaining the best available value are exemplary and they operate their policy well, thus ensuring that spending is not only prudent but also gains the best available outcomes for pupils.

47. Since the last inspection, leadership has continued to be good. Management, especially the contribution made by subject managers, has improved markedly. The governing body, now up to strength, remains as supportive as it was but now has good systems for both evaluating efficiency and progress and contributing fully to them.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. Improve standards of writing, especially that of older boys.* In particular:

- continue to provide more opportunities for factual writing, especially on topics that interest boys;
- improve pupils' handwriting skills and ensure that better handwriting makes its full contribution to improving standards of writing;
- teach punctuation, spelling and the organisation of writing more systematically;
- ensure that the marking of written work is consistently good;

(See paragraphs 2, 4, 16, 23, 43, 63, 64, 67, 68)

- Ensure that improved provision of outdoor play facilities make a stronger contribution to learning in the reception class.* Ground levels and materials should be considered; marking out of hard play areas should stimulate imaginative play; equipment should be provided that develops a full range of physical skills and encourages co-operative play.

(See paragraphs 15, 46, 49, 60)

- Increase the contribution that homework makes to learning by making its use more systematic. Alongside revision and learning by heart, include academically demanding tasks such as research and longer pieces of writing (especially on topics that interest boys).

(See paragraphs 20, 38, 39, 69, 74)

*** The school has already identified these as areas for improvement.**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	29	13	0	0	0
Percentage	0	16	58	26	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	204
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	26

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	17	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	12
	Girls	14	15	14
	Total	24	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (93)	83 (93)	87 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	13	12
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	25	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (93)	90 (93)	93 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

* Where there are 10 or less in a group, the numbers are not published.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	18	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	12
	Girls	14	13	18
	Total	21	22	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (63)	70 (79)	100 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	16	14	17
	Total	25	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (54)	73 (63)	87 (71)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

* Where there are 10 or less in a group, the numbers are not published.

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
168	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
5	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)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.9
Average class size	29.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	278

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a
Total number of education support staff	N/a

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002.
	£
Total income	490,750
Total expenditure	479,325
Expenditure per pupil	2,350
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,499
Balance carried forward to next year	45,924

Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a
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Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
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

204

Number of questionnaires returned

66

Percentage response rate

32

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	24	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	36	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	38	5	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	48	9	3	8
The teaching is good.	62	36	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	29	17	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	26	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	38	9	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	58	32	6	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	32	14	3	11

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

Introduction

49. Children in the reception class get off to a flying start in full time education. Since the last inspection the unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated and the quality of teaching is good. Planning for the foundation stage is thorough and very well matched to national guidance, although systems to monitor children's progress to ensure that learning builds on what has gone before still need further refinement. The children make good progress because of the overall good teaching and the rich curriculum, which provide a wealth of experiences in all areas of learning, with the exception of outdoor play. In this area there are shortcomings in the provision and aspects of the teaching that should be better; this lessens the progress that children make, especially, but not exclusively, in the physical area of learning. By the end of their time in the reception class most children are on track to achieve the early learning goals for the age group in all the areas of learning but in personal social and emotional development the goals are likely to be exceeded. At the time of the inspection the children had been in school for only four weeks, two of these weeks on a part time basis.

Personal, social and emotional development

50. The provision and teaching in this area are strong features that have resulted in the children settling into school routines very quickly. This is a big improvement since the previous inspection when this was not the case. Despite having been in school only a very short time the children behave well and are rapidly learning social skills such as saying 'Excuse me' or taking the correct number of crisps from the plate at snack time. Of particular note is the way in which the teaching encourages independence very successfully indeed. Children are expected to select for themselves the activities they wish to pursue from a wide range on offer and to replace items of equipment when they have finished with them. The classroom is very well set out to facilitate independence in such a way that makes minimal demands on the adults, so they can work intensively with small groups. In the role-play area for example, children regulate how many of them may participate by wearing a coloured band. When all bands are taken they know that they must find an alternative activity.

51. Children are making good progress when working alongside others and they are happy to share equipment and help each other. Most of those who still prefer to play by themselves can sustain interest for suitably lengthy periods of time, without flitting from one activity to another. All the children respond to the high expectations of behaviour and show maturity for their age. They are rapidly learning to listen attentively when the teacher is talking and to refrain from calling out. With adult help, most children dress and undress themselves in readiness for physical education sessions.

Communication, language and literacy

52. Many of the children are confident speakers for their age and are happy to engage in conversation with other children – for example, in play activities. Several willingly initiate conversations with adults, one pupil for example, explaining clearly how he constructed his paper flag. In whole class lessons most children are eager to answer the teacher's questions, although a minority still remain passive, contributing little but listening appropriately. The teacher's organisation effectively ensures that there are many good opportunities for speaking and listening. The majority of children are developing their vocabulary well through class discussions and play activities such as in the 'Builder's Yard' where they practise speaking and use the new words they have learned in their play, for example to order materials by telephone. Higher attainers have wide vocabularies and

use relatively complex sentences; lower attainers are often diffident but none-the-less listen carefully and speak with reasonable clarity.

53. Children are already in the very early stages of reading and writing through the good teaching. They are becoming familiar with text in their daily sessions in which they read a book together, recognising, for example, that there is always a gap between written words. They are beginning to recognise some letter sounds and to copy the teacher's writing in captions to describe their pictures. There is a good emphasis on developing good habits at an early stage, such as holding pencils correctly. In the 'Builder's Yard' play area the children practice 'writing' in their play and even at this early age recognisable letters are emerging in the mark making of higher attainers; lower attainers develop good attitudes and enjoy mastering holding their pencils properly and controlling the marks they make. The teaching is good, striking a sensible balance between play and a more structured approach to pave the way for the more formal literacy hour. There are however, too few occasions when adults join in the role-play in order to take the game forward, to encourage reluctant speakers to participate and to reinforce key vocabulary.

Mathematical development

54. Good foundations for future learning in numeracy are laid in the reception class through the range of activities provided and children learn well. Most can count confidently to ten and beyond and they reinforce their knowledge in simple counting songs. Through well planned play activities in sand and water they develop a growing understanding of mathematical concepts such as weight, capacity and volume. They make best progress when an adult works with them to promote mathematical vocabulary and to generate ideas for experimentation.

55. The teaching is good with detailed planning that identifies clearly what is to be learned and how the activities will promote learning. Occasionally sessions where children sit on the carpet for direct teaching are over long and lack pace. When this happens some children become restless and their concentration wanes. On the other hand there is a strength in the way the teacher works with small groups of children on activities with a clear focus such as matching the correct number of coloured blocks to corresponding numbers on a card, or simple addition puzzles. In these situations the higher attaining children develop a good grasp of counting to ten and recognising the repeat in patterns.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

56. Children develop a growing understanding of the world around them through the interesting range of activities provided. As part of their topic about builders they learn about some of the materials involved in building through experimentation. They explore with great pleasure and keen concentration the properties of sand and gravel, for example, by using a sieve to separate the particles of different sizes and successfully separating stones, sand and gravel. Higher attainers can explain the process and the outcome using the correct terms. When building a wall with wooden blocks two girls were able to position the bricks correctly in a vertical pattern similar to a brick wall and to 'cement' them together using a mixture of wet sand, explaining the process as they went along. All children are becoming familiar with the computer and beginning to handle the mouse, although some are more tentative than others. Higher attainers can manage with minimal adult help.

57. Tasks are well planned and organised with plenty of opportunities for children to find things out for themselves. For example, very good learning occurred when children were introduced to magnets. At the start of the lesson they guessed that the magnets would pick up stone, glass and metal but after the teacher's careful explanation and their own experiments by the end of the lesson they concluded that the magnets would pick up only metal objects.

Physical development

58. Pupils make good progress in this area because the teaching is good. There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop their fine manipulative skills by handling small apparatus such as scissors, dough, glue and brushes.

59. Teaching is very good in the more formal movement lessons in the hall when children learn very well how to use space and explore a range of movements. In one lesson in the hall, children practised 'giant' steps and 'fairy' steps with great enjoyment, varying the quality of the movements accordingly. They showed a good ability to negotiate a path around each other without colliding and they responded rhythmically to percussion instruments. Because of the high expectations of the teacher, the quality of the movement was good and children behaved impeccably. Good use was made of individuals to demonstrate the desired movements and there was a clear emphasis on refining and improving movements as the lesson progressed. As a result of all these factors most children achieved very well in the lesson.

60. The very good progress often seen in lessons translates into overall good, rather than very good, progress as there are some important weaknesses in the provision for outdoor play that limit children's learning in this area of learning. The area designated for outdoor play is dull and unattractive. The paved area is merely a path, which is too narrow to enable children to take full advantage of the good selection of wheeled vehicles as there is too little space for manoeuvre and they can easily tip over the edge. There is no apparatus to develop their muscles, balance and co-ordination in climbing and balancing and the range of activities provided offers less challenge and scope than those in the classroom. Since children are not directly supervised by adults for much of the time there is insufficient guidance to help them to use the apparatus to best advantage.

Creative development

61. A good range of activities is provided that enables children to enjoy the work, concentrate well and acquire skills in painting, picture making and modelling as well as making music. Observational skills are developed well through well-chosen activities. For example, pictures of baby owls made with feathers accurately depict the softness of down, while the pictures in subtle autumn colours reflect a growing awareness of tone and colour in nature.

62. Teaching is good and a particular strength is in the way in which skills in painting are guided carefully by adults, enabling the children to mix and apply paint accurately and with good attention to detail. The finished self-portraits on display are a good example. They are very well observed, with accurate skin tones and physical features such as eyes positioned precisely. The resulting pictures are of very good quality.

ENGLISH

63. In Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment in speaking and listening and writing is at the levels expected for pupils of their ages. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. In Years 2 and 6 attainment in reading is above average, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The good teaching in the subject has its greatest impact on reading, which is often at the heart of many lessons. The current inspection findings, in both Years 2 and 6, are in line with the results of the 2001 National Curriculum test scores in writing and an improvement on those in reading. The 2002 test scores were similar to those of 2001. As they move through the school, girls generally, and increasingly, perform better than boys, more so than the national trend, and particularly in writing. As a result of its thorough analysis of assessments the school has recognised these differences and has taken steps to address the issue, for example by making more opportunities for factual writing and providing more non-fiction books and magazines suitable for boys. This is beginning to have an impact on the standards reached by all pupils, but especially by boys.

64. Standards are improving overall and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils and those for whom English is an additional language, make sound progress overall and good progress with reading. Significant factors in these improvements are the good and sometimes very good quality of teaching and the effective use the school makes of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers also use assessments well in order to identify areas of weakness and set clear targets for improvement both for groups and individuals. For example, the school accurately identified the need for further work on punctuation in pupils' writing, and for pupils to develop their skills in reading between the lines.

65. The school provides many well-considered opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. When pupils gather together in small groups as part of their personal development, or take part in class and school councils to discuss issues within school, they are encouraged to listen carefully and to speak clearly and confidently. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and as a result they usually behave well and sustain their concentration levels. This helps to enhance their listening skills. In Year 2, for example, because the pupils listened carefully to the teacher's explanations, they understood what they were expected to do and settled quickly to work on poetry writing. They expressed their ideas clearly when they responded to the teacher's questions. Because relationships are very good pupils are generally confident to speak to teachers and to other pupils. This enhances their self-esteem and increases their confidence because they know that their efforts will be received well. Pupils in Year 6, for example, listened with concentration and thoughtfully developed their ideas when they responded to the suggestions of partners and the teacher about journalistic styles of writing. Although the speech of lower achieving pupils is generally less well organised and they use less complex sentences, as they move through the school they are generally increasingly confident to take part in discussions. Lower achieving pupils in Year 4, for example, briefly described stories they had read, whilst higher achieving pupils used extended sentences and offered thoughtful opinions on the styles of different authors.

66. The school provides a wide range of carefully graded reading materials, assesses pupils' progress thoroughly and makes good use of the literacy framework in order to extend pupils' reading skills. Pupils make good use of their reading skills in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, they extend their research and comprehension skills in the wide range of reading materials available in subjects such as religious education, history and geography. By Year 2 teachers ensure that most pupils make effective use of contents and indexes in non fiction books and most pupils know how to use glossaries. By Year 6, pupils confidently locate books in the well-organised library and make effective use of skimming and scanning skills in order to extract information. Most pupils enjoy reading. For example, Year 2 pupils described how they enjoyed reading poetry and pupils in Year 4 eagerly explained their delight in reading humorous stories. Teachers ensure that all pupils, including lower achieving pupils, have a good grasp of strategies such as sounding out letters in order to build words, reading on in order to clarify meaning and using picture cues when they meet new or unfamiliar words. They provide good role models so that pupils learn to use expression and meaning when reading aloud. As a result of the good overall teaching and provision, most Year 2 pupils begin to read accurately and fluently, although lower achieving pupils' reading is more laboured and less accurate. Higher achieving pupils discuss preferences between authors and show detailed understanding of text. By Year 6 most pupils have a good understanding of the ideas and motivation of characters in stories and read fluently and confidently. The reading of lower achieving pupils is less fluent. Higher achieving pupils confidently use a good range of skills in reading between the lines.

67. Although pupils at Years 2 and 6 achieve standards in writing which meet the expectations for their ages, the school is aware of the need to develop this area further. Following a careful and accurate analysis of its assessment systems the school has placed further emphasis on such aspects of pupils' writing as punctuation, spelling and the organisation and purpose of writing; in these areas, boys in particular had too few skills. This work has had a positive impact and most pupils are now making good progress in these areas. For example, by Year 2 most pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately and higher achieving pupils use question marks and speech marks confidently. Teachers ensure that this is sustained as pupils move through the school so

that, for example, by Year 6 most pupils use commas, apostrophes and paragraphs consistently, although lower achieving pupils, including a high proportion of boys, do not show the same understanding of their use. Pupils receive regular practice with spellings and are taught to identify and learn spelling patterns so that most Year 2 pupils usually spell common words accurately. Many pupils in Year 6 accurately spell more complex words. Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities experience a wide range of writing for different audiences and purposes and learn to organise their work to suit these. Pupils in Year 1, for example, write simple poems and book reviews and in Year 4 they write imaginative stories and use powerful verbs to make them interesting. In Year 5 pupils write thoughtful play scripts and well argued persuasive letters and in Year 6 use bullet points effectively and write convincingly in the style of journalists. Throughout the school there are examples of writing in other subjects of a kind that supports learning in both that subject and in English. Few examples were seen in subjects such as PE and about ICT that might appeal particularly to boys.

68. During lessons teachers assess pupils' work effectively, helping individuals and groups to clarify their understanding and skills so that they make good progress. They mark pupils' work regularly and comments are often supportive and detailed, helping pupils to understand which steps to take next. However, this is not done consistently throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, overall standards in handwriting should be better than they are. Where teachers do not provide good role models in their own handwriting in the marking of pupils' work, opportunities are missed, particularly with younger pupils, to help them with such areas as letter shape, position and formation in their independent writing. By the end of Year 6 most pupils' independent handwriting is fluent, joined and legible. Teachers provide good role models and remind them to maintain standards of presentation.

69. Teachers usually plan work that is suited to the different attainment levels of pupils. In the very good teaching in Year 6, for example, higher achieving pupils were asked to produce headlines for newspaper stories. Pupils of average ability discussed Shakespearean language with the teacher, whilst lower achieving pupils and pupils with special educational needs, well assisted by support assistants, explored the layout of newspapers or worked on basic word recognition skills. In this way all pupils were challenged to increase their skills at their own levels of ability. Teachers generally have a good subject knowledge which they explain clearly; they make effective use of the literacy framework so that almost all pupils make sound progress. Lessons are usually well planned and conducted at a good pace so that pupils work hard. For example, in the very good teaching in Year 4, the teacher shared the lesson objectives with pupils so that they knew clearly what was expected, and sustained their concentration when they moved smoothly from whole class sessions to work in groups. This helped to enhance their work on writing instructions. Use is made of homework in order, for example, to help children's spelling, but its use is not sufficiently well-organised to make a full contribution to learning, nor are more complex tasks – for example note-taking or extended pieces of writing – often given.

70. The subject is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and works hard to help and advise other teachers. Teaching and learning are monitored thoroughly and the analyses of teaching, learning and attainment are used well in order to determine priorities. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has a clear idea of what needs to be done in order to raise standards.

MATHEMATICS

71. In recent years, the school's results in national tests have improved to the point that in 2001 the results of Year 2 pupils were well above the national average and those of Year 6 pupils were average, having been well below average three years previously. The results of tests taken in 2002 are similar to 2001 but no national comparisons can be made as national averages are not yet available. The improvement in test scores is mirrored in the improvement in inspection judgements; in 1997 standards were judged to be at average levels and now they are above

average throughout the school. The improvements have come about as a result of the good teaching of the daily lesson in mathematics, with older pupils split into smaller groups, thus allowing much individual attention to be given. Higher attaining pupils blossom and a good proportion of them reach very creditable standards; lower attainers, including those with special educational needs respond with interest to well-planned work in which they are often helped very effectively by learning support staff. All pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, work hard in order to maintain above average standards.

72. The good progress in Years 1 and 2 is exemplified by work in number. Early in Year 1, pupils use a simple computer program to accurately put in order numbers such as 11 to 15; by the end of the year the higher attainers understand that 34 consists of three tens and four units and accurately add, for example, 19 and 13. By the end of Year 2, they halve and double numbers such as 50 and 70. By the end of Year 2, most pupils also have a good grasp of the names and characteristics of shapes such as hexagons and octagons. They know the three, four and five times tables and use them to do simple multiplication sums. Work with measures of various kinds, fractions and the use of simple data gathering in order to produce graphs and charts are all at an above average level. These above average standards owe a good deal to skilled teaching. In particular, planning is detailed, making clear what pupils are to learn and describing different activities for pupils of different levels of skill. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good and are used very astutely keep pupils interested and working hard.

73. In each of the Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to progress well. By the end of Year 6 the higher attaining pupils are achieving standards more closely associated with pupils two or three years older than they. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to work that is planned to extend their learning at the optimum rate, as well as to the friendly but demanding approach of adults, including support staff. Many of them progress so well that they close the gap on other pupils and reach the standards usually expected of pupils of their age. Many 11-year-olds work confidently and accurately with decimal fractions, adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing them by whole numbers. They use fractions and percentages with equal facility. Most pupils use calculators accurately; before using the calculator they often estimate the answer, so that they have a quick check that they have used it properly. Many Year 6 pupils have a good vocabulary of the subject and use terms such as 'recurring', 'round down', 'complement' and 'multiples' both naturally and accurately. On a few occasions the lower and middle attainers confuse words such as 'factor' and 'multiple' to which they have been introduced in the same lesson, but teachers ensure that regular exposure and practice consolidate the correct meanings.

74. Almost all features of teaching are good throughout the school. Pupils respond by enjoying the work and behaving well. In group, practical work not only do they co-operate very well but also make some of their best progress. Occasionally teachers miss opportunities at the end of lessons to remind pupils what they have learned, consolidate the learning and give pupils a sense of the real progress that they make. Good use of computers supports learning, although a shortage of suitable programs means that some work is unrelated to the topic being studied by other pupils in the class. Homework is used to consolidate work done in class but its use is not sufficiently systematic to make a full contribution to pupils' progress.

75. The co-ordination of the subject is expert, vigorous and effective. Teachers have benefited from training in mathematics teaching and in the use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teaching is supported well by expert monitoring of planning, work in classrooms and the regular scrutiny of pupils work followed by high quality feedback that recognises good work whilst indicating where further improvements can be made. Careful analyses are made of test scores. These are used successfully in two main ways; firstly to identify pupils who with additional help could progress to a higher level; secondly to identify areas of strength and relative weakness in the topics taught in order to improve further the quality of teaching.

76. The improvements made since the last inspection to the teaching of the subject and to standards, are well embedded into the school's approach. The thoughtful and vigorous ways in

which it analyses its performance and plans for the future ensure that it is well placed to make further improvements.

SCIENCE

77. In Years 2 and 6 attainment is above what would be expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. For Year 2 it is in line with the school based assessments of science in both 2001 and 2002. For Year 6 it is below the 2001 test results and in line with those of 2002. This disparity is caused by differences between year groups, including the numbers of pupils with special educational needs.

78. Significant features in the high standards and pupils' good progress are the good quality of teaching and the correspondingly good quality of learning. Also important is the use the school makes of its analysis of assessment data in order to focus planning. For example, the school placed further emphasis on the teaching of forces and energy after identifying weaknesses in these areas and as a result pupils' understanding is greater. As pupils move through the school, teachers ensure that they develop a sound understanding of methods of scientific enquiry. For example, pupils in Year 1 were reminded of the importance of ensuring that their work on human growth included the use of fair tests. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 were challenged to evaluate the effectiveness of their investigations into air resistance by ensuring that they were fair. However, teachers often miss opportunities to reinforce pupils' understanding of fair testing by not sufficiently ensuring that it is included as part of the recording of investigations in their books.

79. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of the subject so they are confident in the work they prepare and in the clarity of their explanations. This was evident in Year 5, for example, when the teacher demonstrated the rotation of the earth, using inflated balloons and torches and, in discussions with pupils, clarified their understanding. Because teachers have high expectations, pupils in Year 2, for example, produced clear diagrams of electrical circuits and showed good understanding of how they function. Similarly pupils in Year 6 showed a good knowledge of gravity and recorded clear analyses of the results of their investigations into friction.

80. Teachers usually present their work in lively and interesting ways so that the great majority of pupils are inquisitive and eager to learn. This was evident in Year 1 when pupils were fascinated when they looked closely at pupils in their class and began to realise that that size and age did not necessarily correlate. In Year 4, pupils measured their pulses before and after exercise and recorded the results on a clearly produced table. This helped their understanding of heart beat and the effects of exercise and gave them valuable practice in using numbers. Teachers make effective use of skills in other subjects to support their work in science. For example, pupils in Year 6 extended their vocabularies when they confidently used words such as photosynthesis, pollination and germination in their work on plants. Most pupils responded positively when the teacher expected them to maintain high standards in the use of artistic skills in the production of clear and well finished detailed pictures of flower heads, although the work of lower achieving pupils was less well presented.

81. As they grow older, most pupils develop a wide knowledge and deep understanding of materials and their properties. This is enhanced because most teachers have a good understanding of how to teach basic skills. Most pupils in Year 2, for example, used observational skills and made accurate use of flow charts in order to illustrate reversible change. Higher achieving pupils showed clear understanding of the idea that when some materials are heated they cannot go back to their original state. Although the understanding of lower achieving pupils was less clear they used the example of popcorn well in order to illustrate irreversible change. Pupils in Year 4 used well-considered predictions and accurate measurements in their work on temperature and insulation. By Year 6 most pupils know the process for recording scientific investigations including the systematic presentation of data and reaching conclusions, for example, in work comparing the effectiveness of different forms of washing powders. However, opportunities for

older pupils to organise their own scientific investigations are more limited.

82. Teachers generally control pupils well and relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils are very good; as a result, pupils generally use equipment sensibly, behave well and show good collaborative skills. For example, Year 6 pupils confidently discussed the principles involved in the making of spinners in their work on air resistance and collaborated well in investigating the speed at which these descended. This helped to enhance their knowledge and understanding. Teachers generally plan work carefully and ensure that tasks are suited to pupils' different abilities. This gave pupils in Year 2, for example, a clear understanding of what was expected in their work on human growth. Pupils all made good progress because they were given similar tasks but with different levels of challenge. An important factor in the good progress made by most pupils is that when teachers mark work their comments are supportive and usually relate to how pupils might make progress in the understanding of the scientific ideas with which they are involved. For example, in work on diets and healthy life styles the teacher in Year 2 commented, "You designed a good pack up lunch box and included cereal." In Year 6 work on gravity the teacher asked, "What happens when you let go?"

83. The subject is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator knows the subject well and works hard to advise other teachers. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively in order to evaluate the work of teachers and pupils; thus there is a clear understanding of the way forward in order to raise standards.

ART AND DESIGN

84. During the inspection it was not possible to see any lessons. However, evidence from examinations of pupils' work, teachers' planning, photographs and discussions with pupils and teachers indicates that attainment at Year 2 and 6 is in line with what would be expected for pupils aged seven and 11 and pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. Pupils enjoy the subject, speaking enthusiastically about their own art and their study of the work of other artists. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection in Year 2 and an improvement on these in Year 6. The school ensures that the statutory requirements for teaching art and design are met. It provides suitable opportunities for pupils to experience a range of materials, media and techniques, although during the inspection there was less evidence of three-dimensional work.

85. The curriculum is enhanced by the opportunities the school provides for pupils to work with visiting artists. Well-finished mosaics and collage mural work designed and completed alongside artists are well displayed in school. This enhances the appearance of the school and helps to raise pupils' self-esteem. Pupils worked on large, attractively finished sculptures of insects which were on display in the community. Pupils are also provided with interesting opportunities to work at and visit a local art gallery and their knowledge feeds through well into subsequent work.

86. Pupils in Year 2 produce pleasing close observational drawings, showing sound skills in the use of pencil and pastels. Higher achieving pupils showed some understanding of perspective in their work. They produced some thoughtful work in their sketch-books, although the school is aware that these are not used consistently well throughout the school. As they move through the school, pupils use a sound range of materials in collage work, for example, in Year 5 they made attractive pictures of flowers. By Year 6 pupils produced some carefully finished still life drawings and thoughtful paintings after the style of artists such as Morris, Klee, Van Gogh and Seurat. They make appropriate use of their understanding of perspective in work on posters. Collage masks were carefully finished although the presentation of work by lower achieving pupils was weak. Higher achieving pupils confidently compared the styles of artists such as Picasso, Van Gogh and Monet in discussions with visitors.

87. Attractive displays of pupils' work such as the printing produced by older pupils at the summer school and displays of autumn colours in the entrance to the school, help to lift the aesthetic tone of the school and help to make it an attractive place in which to work. The subject is

well co-ordinated. The very knowledgeable and experienced co-ordinator helps the other teachers and has a clear understanding of how to raise standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Attainment in both key stages is above nationally expected levels. Although relatively few lessons were seen during the inspection, evidence from photographs and pupils' past work shows that the curriculum is wider than the basic National Curriculum requirements and the quality of pupils' finished work is often good. The great majority of pupils achieve well in the subject and make good progress in widening their range of skills in interesting topics. There is a strength in the way in which pupils plan and design their work, demonstrating original ideas and attention to detail before evaluating the finished product to determine where modifications could be made.

89. The teaching is good overall throughout the school; it was very good in one lesson where pupils in Year 2 made glove puppets from a template. This lesson was especially successful because the teacher had a thorough understanding of the designing and making process, and thus was able to explain the process clearly and challenge pupils to think hard, for example about the criteria for making a good puppet. The practical part of the lesson was productive and rigorous because it was very well organised to enable pupils to sustain their work with considerable independence and to achieve highly. When pupils in Year 6 designed a slipper according to certain specifications their designs were detailed and imaginative, based on cartoons or musical themes for instance, with good detail. Several included additional features such as pockets and almost all designs were well-annotated in ways that would aid the making process. The teaching was good because clear and detailed planning, good subject knowledge and an enthusiastic approach guided it; because work is planned to suit all pupils, whatever their levels of attainment, all pupils make sound progress.

90. There is an emphasis throughout the school on practical activities that make this a popular subject with pupils; indeed, pupils in Year 6 cited design and technology as a favourite subject. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of the subject that enables those at all levels of ability to achieve success because the outcomes do not depend too heavily on skills in literacy. There is obvious enjoyment and a pride in the finished product. Teachers are suitably safety conscious and vigilant when pupils are using tools. In the best lessons, teacher's planning caters for the needs of all the pupils well, ensuring that those with difficulties with writing are well supported. There are good links with other subjects. Pupils in Year 5 tasted and evaluated different types of bread. They categorised them first into taste, smell and texture and then used and consolidated the recording skills they had learned in their science lessons. They worked co-operatively in groups, which contributed well to their speaking and listening skills. When teaching is less successful the range of activities tends to be narrower with less emphasis on practical work nor a high quality finish.

91. The curriculum includes a stimulating range of additional experiences that promote design and technology and provide opportunities for pupils to work on large-scale projects, gain confidence and enhance their skills. For example, under the guidance of an artist in residence pupils produced the very attractive and colourful mosaic pictures displayed in the school entrance depicting the 25th anniversary of Christ Church School.

92. The subject manager has good subject knowledge and uses this well when advising other teachers. Informal monitoring provides a sound understanding of what needs to be done to further enhance the subject and there are ambitious plans for the future. The school is aware that not all staff are fully at ease with the subject and with this in mind the subject will be a focus in the development plan next year. At present there is no formal system to assess what has been learned by pupils and this is an area for further development.

GEOGRAPHY

93. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards are similar to those typically seen in primary schools at the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils acquire an increasingly good body of knowledge as they grow older. The subject is well represented in the curriculum and the range of work covered by the pupils reflects the national guidance the school has adopted as a framework for its curriculum; consequently pupils cover a suitable amount of work in the course of a year. Standards in geography are not as high as they are in history because the work pupils are given to do often relies excessively on printed work sheets - which many pupils find uninteresting - and there is less attention to worthwhile practical activities, fieldwork and the development of geographical enquiry. Whilst pupils in Year 6 have a good body of knowledge about physical features such as erosion and the formation of stacks, arches and caves they could recollect far fewer examples of fieldwork or practical activities, so that their understanding and skills lag behind their factual knowledge.

94. The quality of teaching is generally good throughout the school, although this does not translate into high achievement because the practical elements of the curriculum are too restricted to consolidate and enhance learning in lessons. The teachers have secure knowledge of the subject and in the best lessons choose imaginative approaches to capture the interest of the pupils. In a very effective lesson in Year 3 pupils developed their skills of enquiry well when they considered the potential impact on their locality of a proposed new swimming pool. The lesson worked very well because the teacher orchestrated the introduction skilfully with plenty of open-ended questions to make pupils think hard. As a result they discussed maturely the advantages and disadvantages of such a development and made some thoughtful observations. The chosen recording method was a simple but effective brainstorming activity that enabled pupils of all abilities to make a valid contribution because it did not rely too heavily on writing skills. As a result pupils learned very well because they were all involved and motivated.

95. The school has recently purchased a published scheme to help teachers provide more breadth to the curriculum. The best teaching makes judicious use of these printed work sheets, using them to support practical activities rather than as an activity in themselves. This was seen in an effective lesson in Year 4 when pupils used a variety of maps and sources to identify where place names originated and used the sheets to record their findings. Similarly, examples of pupils' past work in Year 1 show how they collected data about the volume of traffic passing the school at different times of the day and considered the impact on the environment of parked cars, recording their findings in a simple pictorial format. On other occasions all pupils pursue the same tasks, often using relatively undemanding worksheets, with no variations in challenge for higher and lower attainers and this limits the extent to which many pupils make progress.

96. Throughout the school there are effective links with literacy. In Year 6, for example, pupils have undertaken their own research into topics such as mountain environments. Throughout the school, written work shows accurate use of geographical terms. There is insufficient use and development of numeracy and ICT in the subject. The subject manager is relatively new to the role but has been well inducted by the previous post-holder and is well placed to take the subject forward.

HISTORY

97. As a result of the good teaching throughout the school pupils attain standards that exceed those expected nationally; higher attainers reach good standards and lower attainers, who are well catered for, reach standards close to average. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with national expectation.

98. The subject is treated as an important part of the curriculum and it makes a worthwhile contribution to the social, moral and cultural development of the pupils. As well as making good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of past events and in developing their historical skills, pupils are developing an understanding of concepts such as cause and effect. There are good opportunities for pupils to draw conclusions from evidence from the past and to make links

with some other subjects, particularly literacy, but also geography and design technology. This gives cohesion to the curriculum as the learning in one subject is supported by that in the others. For example, following their research into the structure and design of Tudor homes, pupils in Year 4 made well crafted model houses and combined them into a street scene that gave an added relevance to their learning. There is however, much less evidence of the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in history, although in some classes the more confident and knowledgeable teachers use ICT well – for example work in Year 6 in which pupils used the internet to research Athens and Sparta..

99. Although only one lesson was observed, from evidence of pupils' past work, displays and photographs, teaching is judged to be good overall. The imaginative range of activities in pupils' books strike a balance between practical and written work and there is not an over reliance on printed worksheets to supplement teaching. Much of the written work requires pupils to use historical skills, for example by recording their own interpretation of events or to write accounts of happenings through the eyes of the protagonists. In the one lesson seen in Year 3, teaching was lively and enthusiastic with skilled questioning that drew effectively upon pupils' knowledge from past lessons.

100. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning. Older pupils recalled with great enthusiasm some of their experiences in the subject and discussed with candour what they had learned. For example, they were knowledgeable about social aspects of the Victorian era, discussing the impact of the introduction of railways and class divisions at that time. Some of the work in pupils' books is beautifully presented, with detailed illustrations and good evidence of understanding. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote imaginary first hand accounts about the life of a slave in Ancient Greece, recounting graphically some of the hardships they encountered.

101. There is a real strength in the way in which the school provides a range of first hand experiences to bring the past alive. Pupils studying the Victorians enjoyed recreating a typical school day that gave them experience in copy writing, drill and darning. Others recalled with great animation how they relived a day in the life of a Roman soldier, dressing up in replica uniforms and re-enacting typical soldiers duties. As part of the celebrations for the Silver Jubilee the whole school took part in a street party depicting the 1970's, complete with typical fashions and music of the day. There are several interesting displays of historical artefacts and contemporary photographs throughout the school, helping to reinforce pupils' historical understanding. By handling objects that are no longer in everyday use pupils learn to make comparisons between life then and now and to speculate sensibly about the uses to which the objects were put. Very good use is made of local places of interest to enliven the subject. Such experiences do much to promote enjoyment of the subject and to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.

102. The subject manager who has a sound overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and knows what needs to be done to make further improvements.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. Attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with what is expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. However, since the previous inspection the school has significantly improved its resources. It now has a well-appointed, although small, computer suite, complemented by computers situated in classrooms. This has enabled the school to expand its information communication technology curriculum and to improve standards in some aspects of pupils' learning. For example, as they grow older, most pupils extend such skills as those needed for keyboard and mouse control. They have sound access, storage and retrieval skills so that they work on computers confidently and purposefully. They make good progress in such areas as word processing and communicating information in different forms and for different audiences. This has been enhanced by increased staff expertise. However, although there have been some developments in areas such as data handling, control and modelling, the

standards reached by pupils in these areas have not improved sufficiently. The school is aware of this and has clearly laid out plans for staff training in order to help to move forward. Similarly, the school has responded to criticisms from the previous inspection and now has suitable sensing equipment and plans for staff training are in place.

104. A significant factor in the overall improving provision is the good quality of teaching and the correspondingly good learning and progress made by most pupils in most lessons, including those with special educational needs. Teachers generally have a good understanding of the programmes in use and explain work clearly so that pupils increase their skills. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, a group of pupils working with the class teacher increased, at a good rate, their skills in using the shift key in order to set line breaks because the teacher used clear demonstrations and explanations and set challenging tasks. Their progress was further enhanced because the organisation of pupils into small groups enabled the teacher to interact closely with them. This enabled lower achieving pupils to make good progress. However, this work was with only about a quarter of the class and pupils in the other groups did not always sustain their concentration and so they made only steady progress; access to other computers in classrooms is generally not well organised and the reading work that the rest of the class was engaged in was not sufficiently well monitored for it to be a sufficiently valuable activity. Thus the good teaching is experienced by pupils for much less time than the class timetables appear to show – hence pupils' overall progress is steady rather than good. In other situations, the school makes good use of classroom and information technology support assistants in working with small groups and individuals. For example, in Year 5, pupils' skills in sorting data were extended when they were helped by the information technology assistant.

105. Because teachers present their work in lively and interesting ways most pupils are eager to extend their skills and sustain their interest. In Year 3, for example, most pupils made good progress in using a programme to paint and draw because the teacher made the activity challenging and enjoyable. Pupils in Year 2 produced interesting illustrated poems and Mother's Day cards. Year 5 pupils produced well-finished and attractive power point presentations and used digital cameras to record the growth of plants in the school garden. Pupils in Year 3 fed information into toy robots in order to increase their understanding of control systems. Pupils' positive attitudes to their work are further enhanced by their participation in the out-of-school-time computer clubs.

106. Teachers generally have high expectations and set challenging activities so that, for example pupils in Year 1 created accurate pictograms. Year 2 pupils created block graphs and answered questions in order to interpret data. By Year 6 pupils use spread sheets in order to sort data numerically and alphabetically and to extract information. Teachers generally make sound use of computers in other subjects of the curriculum in order to extend pupils' computer skills and to increase their understanding of other subjects. Throughout the school computer programmes are used in order to reinforce and extend pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, used CD ROMs in order to research work on the Romans and ancient Egyptians. Year 6 pupils researched Athens and Sparta through the internet. Year 6 pupils produced well-finished newspaper reports giving accounts of sporting activities; these activities provoked good responses from boys and so are worth extending. Higher achieving pupils in Year 5 and 6 confidently and accurately used spread sheets in costings and in comparing currencies.

107. The subject is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and technical expertise. He has made a significant contribution to helping other staff to raise standards. He has a clear understanding of what needs to be done in order to address weaknesses and build on strengths.

MUSIC

108. No music lessons were observed during the inspection, so that no judgements can be made about teaching. Observations during assemblies show that singing is at an average standard; it is generally both tuneful and rhythmical but on occasions lacking in enthusiasm. On these occasions the music co-ordinator gives skilful support but other teachers are less expert. However, during discussions with pupils it was clear that they enjoy a suitably broad curriculum that

is enriched by musical activities beyond the school day; these include performances on such occasions as harvest festivals in the local church and joining in events in, for example, Manchester for the millennium celebrations. School performances such as a last year's 'Wind in the Willows' bring additional dimensions to provision and to pupils' enjoyment.

109. Higher attaining and more knowledgeable pupils draw on their experiences as members of the school choir and from participation in recorder lessons; the attainment of these pupils is above the national expectation. A good proportion of pupils have developed wide musical tastes and talk with an appropriate degree of knowledge and much enthusiasm about Beethoven, Mozart, pop music including rap (which they categorise reasonably as 'Partly music but partly poetry') and music from other cultures.

110. The subject manager is an expert musician and brings a good deal of expertise to the school. Her specialist teaching of both her own class and of another class of younger pupils is having a positive effect on both attitudes to the subject and on standards.

111. Since the last inspection a scheme of work has been produced that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The improved range and quality of musical instruments, books and recorded music together with teachers' planning for the subject indicate that provision for teaching and learning has improved in recent years and is now sound. The school is reasonably placed to make further improvements and the likely success of these will be closely related to the effectiveness of the monitoring, evaluation and resultant improvements that are planned for later in this school year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. At the ends of both Years 2 and 6, pupils reach standards that are in line with national expectations. Pupils make steady progress year-on-year between the ages of five and 11, largely because teaching is always at least sound and is more often good. The lack of a grassed area suitable for team games, with its effect on the development of associated skills, prevents progress being good in these areas.

113. By the end of Year 2, most pupils understand the need for warming-up the body before strenuous exercise and they enjoy stretching to the extent that some repeat the activity during play times. Many pupils throw balls powerfully, but with accuracy that is no more than typical for their age. Stopping and catching skills are at an average level. Higher attainers have good control over their movements whether they are running and dodging on the playground or linking together sequences of movements in the hall. In lessons, the great majority listen carefully to the teacher's instructions and understand the carefully used technical vocabulary of the subject. These are improvements since the last inspection. Good support is given by teaching assistants; they often work with pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that they listen carefully and understand the tasks. On many occasions, they demonstrate the type of movement that the teacher is seeking and this ensures that their pupils make good progress. After expert questioning by the teacher, many pupils are beginning to be able to reflect on and evaluate their work, suggesting ways of making further improvements.

114. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils are quick and accurate runners and dodgers. They move confidently, turning and changing direction and speed with good control. Many are good throwers and catchers. Lower attainers move awkwardly but far less so on the grassed areas than on the hard surfaces of the playground or hall. However, in lessons all pupils are attentive and work with enthusiasm, often developing their skills at a good rate. Ball skills are overall at an average level. In one lesson that was largely concerned with developing these, pupils listened carefully to the teacher's well-pitched instructions and advice and worked hard. In the early stages of the lesson, many were able to describe the effect of exercise on their body, in particular how the heart and lungs were affected. They followed the teacher's clear instructions and co-operated well in small groups in order to make steady progress. The combination of the hard surface and the lightness of the balls made control difficult but pupils persevered and behaved well.

115. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Since the last inspection the subject has benefited from improved resources, additional teaching time and an increase in teacher expertise that owes a good deal to a programme of training, some of which was organised and delivered in conjunction with a neighbouring school. In these improvements, the school has benefited from the work of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Most of the effects of these improvements are seen in pupils' attitudes to the subject, and in the use of specialist vocabulary both by teachers and pupils. The school is well-placed to improve the standards reached by pupils but in order to do so it will need to use its lesson observation strategies to identify where such improvements are needed and plan for them with the care seen in other subjects. A programme of swimming instruction helps the great majority of pupils to become swimmers but the school has not enough awareness of exactly how well they learn to swim and what skills they acquire.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. During the inspection it was not possible to see any lessons in Years 1 and 2. However, examinations of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils and teachers indicates that attainment is what would be expected for pupils aged seven. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. Attainment for pupils aged 11 is above what is expected nationally and is an improvement since the previous inspection. This is because as they move through the school teaching is good and pupils make correspondingly good progress.

117. Teachers ensure that the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education are met. In conversations with visitors, pupils in Year 1 talk confidently about God and Jesus. They know that the church is a special place. They refer clearly to God and Jesus and know about prayer and some of the purposes of prayer. In Year 2, pupils confidently retell the story of Noah, although the work of lower achieving pupils lacks detail. Higher achieving pupils retell the Christmas story in detail and in the correct sequence. Pupils learn about other religions. They produce clear sketches and descriptions of a Hindu home shrine and show great interest when examining artefacts. They sequence and describe the ritual washing of hands accurately.

118. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of the subject and this helps them to give clear explanations so that pupils understand their tasks. For example, in Year 6, pupils' understanding of the Christian Trinity was deepened when the teacher used demonstrations and diagrams to clarify their understanding. Because teachers generally have high expectations in the use of language, as they move through the school most pupils use appropriate vocabularies when discussing religious matters. Pupils in Year 3, for example, were familiar with words such as font, baptism and baptise. Relationships are very good and pupils confidently engage in discussions with teachers and their peers. Pupils in Year 2, for example, explained that they felt happy working with friends because their "special place" was in the classroom. Pupils in Year 4 co-operated well during their work on creation stories.

119. Teachers usually present work in lively and interesting ways so that pupils are eager to be involved. In Year 3 work on 'Beginnings' the vicar came into class and presented a simulated Christening ceremony; pupils sustained their interest, and their understanding of celebrations and baptism was increased. The school has close links with the church and clergy and this helps to deepen their understanding of religious life and commitment. They also learn about religions other than Christianity. Older pupils visited a mosque and the school was visited by a Buddhist nun. Pupils in Year 6 develop a thorough knowledge of Sikh, Jewish, Moslem, and Hindu symbols and have a good understanding of Moslem dress traditions and learn about Arabic script. Higher achieving pupils produced clear sketches and well-written annotations in their descriptions of a mosque.

120. Because teachers usually manage pupils well and organise resources and equipment

efficiently, pupils usually behave well and sustain their concentration. For example, in Year 6 pupils moved quickly from the whole class session when they were listening to the well told story of Pentecost and quickly settled to work on explaining the Trinity. This was further enhanced by the support given to lower achieving pupils. Although the understanding of these pupils was less advanced they worked hard and made good progress.

121. The daily life of the school enhances work in the subject; pupils learn to live together in a community, pray together and extend their understanding and knowledge of religion. For example, in worship for older pupils, pupils were interested, behaved well and increased their understanding of Jesus' miracles because the story was well told and illustrated and sensitive opportunities were provided for prayer and reflection. The management of the subject is good. Although the co-ordinator has only recently taken up the post she has very good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how the subject is to develop in order to raise standards.