systems used are very time consuming and do not give a clear picture of pupils' progress over several years. Teachers use the results of national and voluntary tests in English, mathematics and science to see how well pupils are doing compared to national expectations. In other subjects, teachers check standards after each unit of work and compare these with National Curriculum Levels. Other assessments include standardised reading and spelling tests. All this is providing a huge amount of information to check how well individuals and classes are doing, to set targets and to see where extra help may be needed. However, some of this data does not add much to what the teachers already know. The school is reviewing its procedures under the new leadership and is now putting more efficient systems in place to track pupils' progress over a longer period.

54. Assessment procedures for children in the reception class are very good. Children's work is assessed on an ongoing basis and records are maintained so that staff can check that children are making good progress in all areas of learning. Information is used very well in grouping children and planning work appropriate to their needs, particularly in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

55. The school's use of assessment information is generally good in lessons, but less effective at a whole-school level. In lessons, particularly in English, mathematics and science, teachers make sure that higher-attaining and lower-attaining pupils have work set at the right level to help them to move on. They know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses very well. Support is well deployed and usually available when needed. Teaching assistants make a good contribution by working with individuals or small groups. Weaknesses remain in the use of assessment data at a whole-school level. Most subject leaders do not yet use the information well enough to check how effective teaching and learning is, or to see where improvements may be needed in the curriculum. The analysis of pupils' answers in the national and voluntary tests helps to raise standards by identifying areas in need of development. However, the impact of this analysis is largely confined to Years 2 and 6.

56. The school has effective systems to share information on pupils with special educational needs and the help they need. There are good records of pupils' progress. During lessons, adults support pupils with special educational needs well, encouraging them to take a full part in the activities and praising each small step towards their personal targets. There is a good team of teaching assistants, some with specialist training, and they make an important contribution to the good progress that these pupils make.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. The school works well in partnership with parents and the community and has forged effective links that make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. This judgement is similar to that made at the time of the last inspection. Around two-thirds of the parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and information gathered from this and the pre-inspection meeting shows that, overall, parents have a positive view of the school, although one in five parents raised some concerns.

58. Parents say their children enjoy school and are happy to attend. Most parents feel that the pupils behave well and the school helps them to become mature and responsible. Parents say their children are expected to work hard, that the teaching is good and their children make good progress. Inspectors' judgements support these positive views. However, a number of parents do not think that the school works closely with them or keeps them well informed about their children's progress. Parents would like more consistency in the setting of homework and an improved range of activities outside lessons. With the exception of homework, inspectors found all these areas to be good. Although pupils are given many

worthwhile tasks to complete at home, the school does not have a policy for homework and this is an area for improvement.

59. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents is good. Occasional letters and very frequent newsletters keep parents informed about events, issues and forthcoming school trips, whilst also celebrating the school's successes. Homework diaries are provided for parents of pupils in reception, although few parents make good use of them. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are combined into a joint publication that provides a good range of information for parents, although it currently omits some minor statutory information, in particular, a reminder of the right of parents to withdraw their children from religious education lessons and collective worship. Good opportunities are provided for parents to discuss their children's progress with the teachers, including the opportunity to arrange an extra meeting in the summer term after parents have received pupils' written annual reports. Annual reports for parents on their children's progress are detailed and cover a range of information on pupils' achievements, but they do not include details of how pupils' attainment compares with either the school's or national expectations for each year group. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept closely informed of their children's progress and parents of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need are involved appropriately in annual reviews.

60. Parents are made very welcome in the school by the new headteacher who is readily available for parents wishing to discuss matters. The headteacher is keen to develop strong links with parents and work closely with them. For example, she is always available in the playground before and after school, making it easy for parents to talk to her informally. There are very good arrangements for introducing parents and children into the school, and beneficial relationships are formed between staff and parents.

61. There are many opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the school and to support their children's learning. The school encourages the help of any parents who are able to give time to work alongside teachers helping pupils; for example, with reading and practical activities. Many more parents are involved in supporting school activities such as sports, school productions, school outings and making costumes for events. The school also welcomes other adults in the community such as grandparents and parishioners to help in school. Whilst the majority of parents support their children's work at home, a minority do not listen to their children, especially those in reception, reading. Overall, the contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good and makes a positive contribution to pupils' standards of education.

62. The school works closely with parents, friends and the parish through the Friends of St Urban's Association to organise social events and raise extra funds. Good quality financial support is provided for the work of the school through funds raised through activities such as the family disco and lottery evening for new parents. Money raised is used to assist the school in providing extra provision, such as the hire of football pitches, the visit of a pantomime company to the school and book-bags for pupils. Funds are also used to ensure that no pupils are excluded from any visits or activities on grounds of expense.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. The overall quality of the leadership and management provided by the headteacher, the school's senior teachers and the subject co-ordinators is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, there have been several changes in the school's leadership and, for over a year, staff have been covering some leadership responsibilities in a temporary capacity because of

the long-term absence of the deputy headteacher. At the time of the inspection, the new headteacher had been in post for just over a term. The school has coped very well through this period of change, losing nothing of its positive ethos. This has been largely due to the professionalism and commitment of the staff, who have continued to implement the school's established procedures and to provide good quality teaching. Whilst there are definite strengths within the various levels of leadership, there is room for improvement in the way some management tasks are carried out.

64. The headteacher has, appropriately, taken her first term to become acquainted with the school. During this time, she has established good working relationships with the staff and governors, and parents appreciate her visible presence at the beginning and end of the school day. Her analysis of the school shows a good understanding of its strengths and aspects that need to be improved. She has a clear vision for the future development of the school, and the time is now right for her to implement this and provide staff with clear direction for the future. She has a dedicated team of staff who are keen to pull together and are ready to make changes where these are felt to be beneficial for pupils' learning. All the staff and governors work hard to fulfil the school's principal aims, and the very good ethos that pervades the school shows that they are very successful in this regard.

65. The headteacher has taken over the role of co-ordinator for special educational needs and provides good leadership in this area. The new National Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs has been introduced effectively. The management of the school's provision is good, and the co-ordinator and governor with responsibility for special educational needs have a clear overview of the way the school provides for each pupil and the progress that they make. Special educational needs support staff are trained well and good use is made of their time in school.

66. Following the last inspection, subject co-ordinators took on greater responsibility for their subjects, but have still not felt empowered to carry out some of their more major responsibilities. It is important for the school's expectations of subject co-ordinators to be redefined, so that all staff have a clear understanding of what they are expected to do. The co-ordinators for science and art and design provide very clear leadership, but leadership is lacking in English and history, caused by the post holder's year-long absence. Until recently, there was no co-ordinator for music. In most subjects, there are weaknesses in the way the curriculum is managed. This is largely due to the school's topic-based planning, where individual teachers have greater influence over what is taught in each subject than the subject co-ordinators. In some subjects, such as geography and history, there has not been a careful enough check to ensure that the teachers' plans cover all aspects of the curriculum adequately and that skills are developed systematically as pupils move through the school. In music and information and communication technology, this has resulted in some aspects of the curriculum not being taught. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage[2] is managed very well by the reception class teacher, although she is not officially the co-ordinator for this stage of pupils' learning.

67. Other aspects of the school are managed efficiently. Staff are familiar with day-to-day procedures, and management issues are dealt with at regular, weekly staff meetings. Efficient office staff provide valuable assistance for the headteacher and the staff.

68. Overall, the governing body manages its duties well. Governors have been particularly involved over the last year in ensuring adequate coverage for the previous headteacher's

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2 Children start school in the Foundation Stage, which caters for children aged three to five and generally refers to children who are in the nursery, reception or early years' classes.

secondment, the deputy headteacher's long-term absence and the appointment of a new headteacher. The governing body fulfil most of their statutory duties well, although they have not taken sufficient steps to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are taught, and they have not included some pieces of information that are required by statute in their annual report to parents and the school's prospectus. There is a good range of expertise amongst the governors, who have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and are fully involved in formulating the school's development plan in consultation with the staff and parents. The headteacher has felt very well supported by the governing body, and the Chair in particular, during her first term of office.

69. The school's procedures to monitor and evaluate its own performance are satisfactory overall, although there is room for improvement in the way the school monitors, evaluates and develops its teaching. The school has good procedures for identifying appropriate targets and improving the performance of individual members of staff. Targets set for teachers are linked to the school's main priorities for development. Opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching have been held in abeyance over the last year, and all subject co-ordinators now need to become much more involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the implementation of the curriculum in their own subject areas. Co-ordinators are expected to draw up action plans for their subjects, but without the opportunity to observe what is happening throughout the school at first hand, their action plans cannot always reflect a true picture of the school's needs.

70. The school's procedures for financial planning are good. Governors and headteacher have good understanding of how to set the budget and monitor expenditure. Financial planning places a high priority on targeting additional support to raise standards. Grants are used well for their intended purposes, and governors make sure that spending is on track and used effectively. The governors have a very good understanding of the principles of best value, ensuring that all purchases of goods and services not only provide value for money, but also, where necessary, are effective in the support they offer. There are plans to extend their search for good value by exploring other services that will enable the school to have good access to support services and, therefore, enable the headteacher to focus on school improvement. There are good procedures for consulting staff, parents and pupils.

71. The school has a satisfactory number of teachers and a good number of support staff to meet the needs of the pupils. Although there are still problems in the staffing because of the long-term absence of the deputy headteacher, the headteacher and governors have worked hard to minimise the problems and maintain stability with the appointment of temporary teachers, and other teachers have made every effort to ensure that the absence and changes have had minimum impact on pupils' learning. Staff who support teachers in classrooms or work with specific groups of pupils are well trained and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Training for all staff has very high priority, and this ensures that provision is improving all the time. There are very good procedures for the induction and development of all support staff. Administrative staff enable the headteacher and teachers to concentrate their efforts on the pupils and their learning. They use computers as an efficient and effective means of producing, storing and retrieving information, although the storage and analysis of assessment data could benefit from more effective use of new technology.

72. The school has a satisfactory range of resources and adequate accommodation. The accommodation is relatively new. The caretaker and his staff ensure that it is kept very clean, and the rooms are always presented as an attractive and stimulating learning environment. Classrooms are of a good size, but there is little flexibility for teaching smaller groups of pupils outside the classroom other than in the small central areas. The playgrounds are adequate, and there is restricted access to the playing fields of the adjacent high school. There is no secure area or large play resources for outdoor activities for children in the reception. The

school has recognised this as a priority and has recently secured funding to create both open and covered areas for these children. The school development plan indicates the extent to which governors plan to improve the school environment in the future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

    i. improve the school's provision for, and standards achieved in, information and communication technology* by:
    - ensuring that the school's scheme of work covers all aspects of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology;
    - providing training for staff in areas of the curriculum with which they are unfamiliar;
    - making greater use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning in other subjects;
    - improving the reliability of the school's network and ensuring that appropriate technical support is available.

    (paragraphs 9, 24, 28, 34, 66, 71, 92, 96, 104, 107, 108, 110, 115, 126, 133-140, 144)

    ii. improve the organisation, management and monitoring of the curriculum by:
    - reviewing the school's procedures for planning the curriculum and ensuring that staff are clear about the respective responsibilities of class teachers and subject co-ordinators;
    - ensuring that the school's curricular plans cover all aspects of the Programmes of Study for all subjects of the National Curriculum and that current shortcomings in the planning for information and communication technology, geography and music are rectified;
    - ensuring that curricular guidance makes clear how essential skills in subjects, such as history and geography, are to be developed systematically as pupils move through the school;
    - providing opportunities for subject co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and the implementation of curricular plans;
    - ensuring that assessment information is used more effectively to help teachers with their planning.

    (paragraphs 9, 24, 28, 34, 35, 36, 55, 66, 68, 69, 97, 112, 116, 122, 123, 126, 132, 136, 139, 141, 145, 152)

    * These issues have already been identified as priorities in the school's development plan.

74. Other issues that should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

    - pay greater attention to the development of a fluent writing style; (paragraphs 6, 22, 89, 90)

    - ensure that the information provided in the governors' annual report for parents and the school prospectus meets statutory requirements. (paragraphs 59, 68)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

(In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils)

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	6	18	11	13	1	0	0
Percentage	12	37	22	27	2	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	210
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%

School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.4

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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	13	17	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	12
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	24	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (100)	90 (100)	93 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	10
	Girls	16	16	14
	Total	25	27	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (100)	90 (100)	80 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	15	19
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	30	27	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (90)	84 (84)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	16	19
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	30	28	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (90)	88 (94)	100 (94)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	116	0	0
White – Irish	9	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	40	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
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.25
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	257

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003

	£
Total income	415,130
Total expenditure	436,994
Expenditure per pupil	2,081
Balance brought forward from previous year	65,190
Balance carried forward to next year	43,330

Recruitment of teachers

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	210
Number of questionnaires returned	140
Percentage of questionnaires returned	67

Percentage of responses in each category[3]

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school	61	36	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good	64	34	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	39	42	16	1	3
The teaching is good	59	39	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	34	46	18	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	64	31	4	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	70	30	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents	35	51	13	1	1
The school is well led and managed	60	35	1	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	64	34	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	37	35	22	3	3

3 Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to one hundred.

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

75. Children enter the reception class at the start of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, 27 children were taught in a single-age class. Most children attend one of a wide range of nursery schools before entering school. On entry, attainment is very wide-ranging, but usually around average overall, although above average in personal, social and emotional development.

76. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and much improved since the previous inspection. At that time, teaching was satisfactory and children made satisfactory progress. Since then, strong leadership has provided for very good improvement in the quality of teaching, with excellent teamwork between the teacher and nursery nurse. The introduction of the new Foundation Stage curriculum and linked assessment procedures provides for a very interesting and stimulating curriculum, well matched to the needs and interests of the children. Children make very good progress and, by the end of their year in reception, they attain standards that are above average in all areas of learning and well above average in personal, social and emotional development, speaking and listening and singing.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. Staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development very effectively, setting an excellent model of co-operation for children to follow. This is enhanced by their work on relationships in religious education lessons. Relationships within the class, amongst children and between children and staff, are excellent and children make very good progress in learning to work and play together constructively. Staff are caring and supportive, constantly boosting children's confidence by praising their efforts and achievements. They listen with genuine interest and respect to what children have to say, and children develop confidence and trust in them. Children know that some actions are right and some are wrong and their behaviour is exemplary. They concentrate well and enjoy taking responsibility; for example, when giving out milk. Children develop independence, such as when they register themselves on arrival by placing their name label onto their milk bottle, and by tidying up at the end of sessions. They take care of their own physical needs competently, such as when dressing and undressing themselves independently for physical education lessons. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are well above average, with almost all children exceeding the levels expected for their age.

Communication, language and literacy

78. The teaching of basic skills is very good and provides children with a firm basis for their early reading and writing. Staff combine different elements of literacy in an imaginative way that engages children's interest. For example, when sharing news voluntarily, children are awarded a letter after their contribution. Their choice leads to one of several other activities linked to spelling simple words, including the use of puppets and a talking computer program. The teacher and nursery nurse focus well on developing children's ability to listen to what is said. Children make very good progress and show respect for others by listening carefully, sometimes asking questions to find out more. Staff enrich children's vocabulary effectively, both in whole-class sessions, group activities and free choice sessions, engaging in conversation with children at every opportunity, such as when children play in the 'shoe shop'. Most children speak clearly and confidently, in well-structured sentences, using a good range of vocabulary to describe objects or events. They learn their letters and the sounds they represent in an interesting way, and they begin to apply them in reading and spelling simple

words. Most learn how to read and spell simple common words and write a simple sentence, and higher attainers begin to use capital letters and full stops. Children enjoy reading, and when they enter Year 1, most have made a good start on the school's reading scheme. The classroom provides many opportunities for reading labels and notices, as well as books. Children have sound opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills when working independently, such as in the role-play areas. By the end of the reception year, standards are above average overall, and, in speaking and listening, they are well above average.

Mathematical development

79. The teaching is very good, and children make rapid progress in their understanding of number, attaining above average standards overall. There are many good opportunities to count and use practical equipment. For example, children use resources such as marbles, counting carefully to see how many weigh the same as a large pine cone. By the end of the reception year, higher attaining children count beyond 20 accurately and begin to add and subtract numbers up to ten. Average attainers count and add up to ten and lower attainers work on counting ten and begin simple addition up to five. Children know and understand simple properties of shapes and use them to create pictures. They learn to recognise patterns, such as symmetry, and identify these in real life situations, such as by observing butterflies. Children develop a good mathematical vocabulary and apply it well in their work, such as when comparing weight or length. Staff use their assessment information very well to match work to children's needs, providing very good challenge and support for all pupils. By the end of the reception year, most children work at the level expected for their age, and a good number work at a higher level.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Lessons to deepen children's understanding of their world are taught very well in an imaginative way that engages their natural curiosity. They develop a sense of place and time through studies of their own lives and their environment, learning to love and care for their world. For example, in a topic on growth, they observe creatures such as frogs and butterflies changing and know that life cycles constantly repeat themselves. They grow seeds and bulbs, observe the changes carefully, and know about the different parts of the plants and how each part grows. For example, they know that roots grow down into the soil to find food and water and that the stems grow upwards so that the plant can have light. They learn about their own bodies and how they change as they grow. Children explore the use of water and dry and wet sand independently, and make food, such as cakes, noting how ingredients change when they are mixed and heated. They use computers confidently, both to practise their literacy and numeracy skills and to create pictures, such as of symmetrical butterflies. Children learn about the weather; they keep a weekly weather diary, record daily temperatures and note patterns of weather. They learn about properties of materials and their uses, such as when considering materials of clothes worn in hot or cold weather. Children use a good range of construction toys and materials to build a variety of products. Their knowledge and understanding of the wider world is deepened by a good range of visits and expert visitors, such as a vet who talked to the children about his work.

Physical development

81. Provision has improved since the previous inspection and is good overall. Teaching is very good; staff plan physical education lessons and a very good range of daily outdoor activities, such as circuit training, games skills and athletics to ensure that children develop good control of their bodies and a good awareness of space. This compensates well for the lack of regular access to a secure outdoor area. There are many opportunities in the classroom for children to manipulate simple tools and toys, and children make good progress in developing

their finer control. Good attention is paid to holding tools, such as pencils and paintbrushes, correctly. Staff are vigilant about health and safety in all physical activities and encourage children to develop awareness. By the end of the reception year, standards are above average.

Creative development

82. The teaching to develop children's creative skills is very good overall, particularly in direct teaching sessions, where children are taught skills, linked to their work in other subjects. In art, they learn to mix their own colours and draw and paint, observing very carefully. For example, they draw still life pictures of flowers, such as kerria japonica and garlic flowers, reproducing the detail in the flowers very effectively with pastels. Children use malleable materials such as clay to form simple pots, which they decorate attractively. In a link with science, they learn how different forces, such as 'pulling' and 'pressing', change the shape of their clay. In music, children learn a good range of songs and join in very well, singing very clearly and tunefully, with a good sense of rhythm. Standards in singing are well above average, and children demonstrate a real joy in learning, joining in actions, applying loud or soft voices to create dramatic effect and following the beat with percussion instruments. In role-play areas, children enter into their roles confidently, taking turns very well. Role-play areas are imaginatively developed to link with the class topic. For example, there have been pet and shoe shops and, during the inspection, the water tray was set up as a pond environment with plastic pondweed and frogspawn and model frogs and tadpoles. Overall, standards are above average by the end of the reception year; most pupils attain the level expected for their age and a good proportion exceeds these levels, particularly in observational drawing and singing.

ENGLISH

83. Standards in English are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above by the end of Year 6. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Results in the national tests have been consistently high at both key stages since then, apart from a dip for Year 2 last year. This was due to the unusually high number of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and the very small number of bilingual pupils, are making good progress. Inspection findings are that there are no significant differences between the achievement of girls and boys. This means that the boys are making particularly good progress, because national figures show that girls are usually well ahead at this age, particularly in writing.

84. This positive picture in English is due to a number of things that the school does well. Teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good. Pupils listen well, they work hard and want to learn. Provision for language and literacy is very good in the Foundation Stage, so pupils make a good start. The school ensures that pupils practise basic literacy skills, such as spelling, a wide vocabulary and speaking clearly, but then have lots of opportunities to use these skills in interesting lessons in all subjects. Teachers keep careful records and keep a close eye on each pupil's progress. There is good support for those who need it. Pupils in Year 6 are very well prepared for the national tests and the move to secondary school.

85. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good throughout the school. Teachers place a high priority on developing these skills and ensure that opportunities are clearly planned. This helps pupils to develop fluency and build on existing skills. There are plenty of chances for them to contribute in lessons and, because relationships are usually very good, most pupils have the confidence to talk to teachers and converse with others. This was seen in a very good history lesson in Year 1, where pupils listened well to a visitor and then asked sensible

and interesting questions. The school organises regular productions, which pupils enjoy and remember. These make a very good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils in Year 3, for example, showed outstanding ability to speak clearly, and with understanding, when they performed scenes from 'Macbeth' to a large audience of parents on the last day of the inspection. Another reason for these high standards is that teachers manage the lessons well, and so behaviour is usually excellent. Pupils listen to each other with respect. This encourages even the less confident pupils to share their ideas. For example, in a sustained discussion in Year 6 on motives and character in 'The Pied Piper', everyone concentrated well and pupils of all capabilities made good contributions. In a very small number of lessons, the teacher spends too long explaining the task, and so there is not enough time for pupils to share their own ideas.

86. Pupils in all classes enjoy reading, whether searching for information or reading for pleasure. Nearly all pupils reach the expected level and a significant number go beyond this. The teaching of reading is well organised, and teachers share their enjoyment of books. Reading is taught systematically and effectively in the early stages, with an appropriate emphasis on learning the sounds of letters and groups of letters. Pupils of all ages take books home regularly, and good parental support is also helping them to improve. The quality and range of books have been increased recently, and pupils are now allowed to move on to harder books as soon as they are ready. Pupils like this and learn to choose books sensibly. Many pupils use the city libraries regularly; this is partly because librarians visit the school and show what is available.

87. By the end of Year 2, pupils read reasonably fluently, accurately and with understanding. Most read expressively, changing the tone of voice when moving between characters. Lower attaining pupils have the same positive attitudes as the others and are determined to succeed. Teachers give them the tools to do this, for example, when they come across an unfamiliar word they know how to split it into parts or look for clues on the rest of the page. Pupils of all capabilities can talk about the plot and characters. For example, they read two versions of the 'Cinderella' story and can describe the differences. Many can predict what might come next in the story, or why things happened as they did. For example, pupils in Year 2 read and talk about the story of Daedalus and can rewrite it in their own way. Teachers encourage pupils to use research skills from the beginning. As a result, all pupils know how to use an index or a dictionary and find information in the library. In a lesson on fossils in Year 2, the pupils used large and small dictionaries confidently to help them to understand the text in non-fiction books.

88. Older pupils continue to make good progress and read with increasing confidence. By the end of Year 6, teachers have introduced them to a very wide range of reading material, including play scripts, poetry, biography and novels. As a result, the pupils make mature choices; one girl, for example, was reading the full version of 'Anne Frank's Diary'. Teachers introduce more advanced reading skills, such as identifying half-truths in advertising or spotting subtleties of plot and character, that are not obvious in the text. This helps pupils to get even more out of their reading. There are some useful links between reading and writing, which help pupils to recognise different styles and purposes. For example, pupils in Year 5 study examples from theatre critics before writing a review of a school production. Pupils use research skills well to find information from non-fiction books, although there is little use of CD-ROMs to extend these skills. Most pupils can collect information from the Internet; some do extra work at home. However, pupils do not always select and organise all this information as well as they do from books.

89. In writing, many pupils are working above the expected level by Year 2. Nearly all can write pieces of prose, some quite long, with complete sentences and punctuation. Teachers mark work in some detail to help pupils to make their sentences correct and interesting. Higher

attaining pupils are beginning to choose words well to create the desired effect; for example, in their descriptive writing or in their well-organised 'Guide for Building a House'. Their spelling is usually reasonably accurate, but there is a wide variation in the standard of handwriting. Very few pupils can join letters and, as a result, they become frustrated when they want to write quickly.

90. By the end of Year 6, pupils have enjoyed a good variety of writing tasks. They respond well to these and make good progress, so standards overall, are well above average. Teachers often look for real contexts to write about, and this motivates pupils to present their work well and think about its purpose. For example, pupils write convincing letters of complaint on local issues, or a deeply felt piece for doubtful parents on the benefits of the residential visit, complete with reassurance on safety matters. Teachers train pupils to see writing as a process, for example, studying examples and then collecting ideas and phrases before writing and improving the real thing. This works well, for example, in pieces of persuasive writing in Year 6 or very good poetry in Year 3. Most pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are very good by Year 6. Those with weaknesses are trying hard to improve. Handwriting is generally good by Years 5 and 6, but, even by the end of Year 4, many pupils do not join letters, and this slows progress.

91. Teaching is good overall, some is satisfactory and some very good. The best lessons have lively and stimulating introductions, which leave pupils keen to get started and show what they can do. These teachers have high expectations both for work and behaviour, so pupils concentrate well and no time is wasted. There is time to share successes at the end of the lesson. A weakness in a small number of lessons was that the explanations and instructions went on for too long. As a result, the pupils were less motivated and did not have time to complete their work or share it with others at the end.

92. Most lessons are well planned and prepared and have clear learning objectives. Teachers share these at the beginning of the lesson and talk about how well they have been achieved at the end. This helps pupils to see how well they are doing and what comes next. In contrast, in a very small number of lessons, teachers planned too many objectives and so none of them were fully reached. This happens partly because the curriculum is planned to make the best use of links between subjects. This can work very well, such as in a lesson in Year 1, where the pupils made good gains both in history and English. However, in two other lessons, the teachers tried to do justice to literacy skills, history and information and communication technology. As a result, there was no strong focus on any of these and learning was slow.

93. A strength in all the classes is the teachers' marking. This is thorough, encouraging, and gives pupils a clear idea about what they have done well and what they have to do to improve. Comments are constructive and bring pupils back to the aim of the lesson. For example, a boy in Year 6 wrote a good letter of complaint, but the teacher helped him to put a stronger case with comments such as, 'So … what's your point here?'.

94. The school works hard to develop literacy skills in all subjects. Writing is used very well, both to help pupils to understand and remember what they have learned and to give them opportunities to write for a wider range of purposes and audiences. Amongst many good examples are the detailed accounts of a visit to the coast from Year 5, thank-you letters to a supermarket in Year 1 and some thoughtful and sensitive poetry on the destruction of Pompeii from pupils in Year 3. Teachers give pupils the tools and techniques to arrange their writing, for example, showing how to work from notes and lists in science or history or suggesting ways to express responses to pieces of music. Pupils use non-fiction books well in their research, because the teachers insist on this being done in an organised and logical way.

95. In all subjects, teachers are successful in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Discussions are managed well, and teachers give time for pupils to answer with full

sentences and correct vocabulary. Good questions encourage this. In a science lesson in Year 4, for example, the teacher made pupils think by asking questions such as, 'What would happen if … ?'. There are opportunities for pupils to give more formal presentations to an audience. Two pupils in Year 6, for example, gave the class a talk on their research on Ancient Greece using a computer and projector. These pupils were confident and articulate, and had no difficulty in keeping the class interested.

96. There is some use of information and communication technology to develop literacy skills, mainly through word-processing. However, this is not as effective as it might be because many pupils need help in using computers. In some lessons, the adults spent so much time reminding pupils of basic skills that the writing focus was lost.

97. Leadership in English has been interrupted for over a year because of the absence of the co-ordinator. No one has been keeping an eye on teaching or the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Despite this, the school has managed to exceed its own targets each year. This is a tribute to the commitment and hard work of the teachers and the very good attitudes of the pupils. The temporary co-ordinator and the new headteacher are now looking at priorities for further improvement. One issue will be the way the school uses the National Literacy Strategy. St Urban's is one of the few schools not to adopt the literacy hour fully, although many elements are used well in lessons. The new team is considering the use of some of the very successful literacy support programmes now available. Teaching assistants already make a good contribution to learning in most lessons and might well find these materials valuable. The school wishes to adopt a more structured and systematic approach to the planning and monitoring of pupils' work in literacy.

MATHEMATICS

98. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics as they progress through the school. The standard of their work is above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Attitudes to the subject are very good, pupils listen well and enjoy the teaching and learning developed in lessons. Standards are high in the use of number and algebra because the pupils can focus on the use of numbers both mentally and in the written methods of calculation. The pupils are being taught particularly well how to apply their knowledge and understanding to solving problems both mentally and orally. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and has an impact on the standards being achieved.

99. Pupils in Year 2 calculate confidently with numbers up to 20. Most pupils can work with much bigger numbers and confidently add or take away 1, 2, or 5 or more, to numbers up to 100. Most pupils add numbers mentally, such as 10 + 5 and 16 + 3, quickly and accurately. Most pupils count in tens up to 100 and follow number sequencing when adding tens, starting from 9 or 62. When doubling and halving, pupils show good understanding of place value. They confidently double numbers up to 100 and use this knowledge to see the relationship to find one half of those numbers. Understanding the value of each digit, such as the 2 in 21, is developing well. There is very good understanding of multiplication and division. When learning about simple fractions, most pupils know how many 2s or 3s make 12. The pupils work across all areas of mathematics and learn the names of two and three-dimensional shapes, as well as how to tell the time and take simple measurements.

100. Pupils in Year 6 have very good understanding across all areas of mathematics, including multiplication tables, square numbers, square roots, multiples and factors, negative numbers, percentages and fractions. They multiply and divide numbers by 10 and 100, involving two decimal places, quickly and accurately. When asked to add or subtract two numbers, most pupils complete the problem mentally, such as 49 + 54, 79 + 225 and 3.7 + 11.8. They calculate very confidently when halving and doubling. Almost all pupils can add or subtract

four digit-numbers, such as 7138 + 3479. They are equally confident with decimal numbers such as 112.96 – 56.48. Higher attaining pupils work with multiplication and division to solve complex problems, such as 709 x 216 and 16.32 x 7.9. Most pupils have a very good knowledge of fractions and percentages. They calculate percentages and fractions, such as 34% of 75 or 7/20th of 60.

101. Teachers plan carefully to provide appropriate work for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching assistants support them very well in lessons and use well-planned strategies to help them to understand their work. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, in line with all other pupils.

102. As pupils learn and develop skills in mathematics, there are good opportunities to use them in other subjects, for instance, in measuring in design and technology, or producing and reading graphs in geography and science. Knowledge and skills developed in literacy lessons are used well in numeracy lessons, as pupils read problems, which are often complex, and explain the strategies they use to solve them.

103. The overall quality of the teaching in mathematics is very good and has a significant impact on the standards being achieved. There are examples of very good and excellent teaching that inspire the pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy has not been fully adopted throughout school, although it is used as the main method of teaching numeracy. Those teachers who are most aware of the strengths of the National Strategy are using it most effectively, and their teaching is often very good and excellent. All lessons are planned with a clear focus on learning, and the objectives are consistently shared with the pupils. Teachers are knowledgeable and positive about mathematics and generally teach it with enthusiasm, and pupils are prepared to work hard and present their work carefully. All classrooms are organised very well, with an area to support teaching and learning in mathematics. The displays include key vocabulary and resources that promote learning and help to raise standards. Teachers consistently put an emphasis on teaching the basic skills of numeracy. Most lessons develop at a good pace, and pupils are challenged by the teachers' skilled use of questions. The teachers use number fans and white boards effectively to involve pupils and develop their ability to calculate mentally and respond quickly. Teachers are very clear what they want pupils to learn in individual lessons, although not all teachers review whether they have achieved their purpose at the end of the lesson or when marking the pupils' work. When introducing lessons, their explanations are very carefully structured. They question pupils carefully, often using questions to check on pupils' understanding before introducing the next stage of learning. Consequently, pupils listen very well to teachers, try to answer questions and apply themselves to their work. When questioning pupils and checking their answers, teachers encourage pupils to explain their thinking and the strategies used to solve the problem.

104. Pupils' attitudes and response to mathematics are very good. They concentrate, work hard and are enthusiastic to learn. Workbooks are generally neat and well presented, and the teachers mark them regularly. In the best practice, the marking is supportive and encouraging, but also links pupils' progress to the intended learning and to what they need to do next. This good practice needs to be extended. A few teachers use information and communication technology very effectively, as they use the interactive white boards to interest and stimulate pupils as well as to make their explanations much clearer. However, there needs to be greater use of the computers to involve pupils in data analysis and the use of spreadsheets.

105. The co-ordination of mathematics is good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and confident, and leads the subject effectively. A programme for observing other teachers in lessons has helped to identify clear strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is a clear action plan to involve all teachers in training and

development that will extend the very good practice already in place. The progress of pupils is being monitored, and the information is used to set challenging targets for groups of pupils. Resources are good and will be further improved with the planned replacement of the published scheme of work.

SCIENCE

106. Standards in science are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. This reflects a good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. This has come about because of improvements in teachers' expertise, in the curriculum and in the way that pupils' progress is monitored. An intensive programme of revision and test practise in Year 6 also has a significant impact on standards. There is a very good atmosphere for learning, and pupils of all capabilities make good progress throughout the school.

107. In the teachers' assessments in Year 2 in 2002, standards fell to well below average. This was because of a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. The weakest area was that of investigation, observation and experimentation. This is now much improved. Most pupils now have a good bank of scientific knowledge and vocabulary and are developing a clear understanding of how to carry out fair tests and record their observations in a scientific manner, making good use of their literacy skills. They use their numeracy skills appropriately in measurements, but do not make sufficient use of computers to record their work and present their findings. Most pupils make sensible predictions before carrying out experiments, such as when they predict which materials will let light or sound through and which will block them. Almost all pupils work at the level expected for their age and a good proportion are now working at a higher level, applying their knowledge well when carrying out observations and investigations.

108. In the national tests in 2002 at the end of Year 6, standards were well above average, and these standards are reflected in current practice. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in building up knowledge and the skills of research and investigation. By Year 6, they have a good depth of scientific knowledge and understanding, and the school's focus on a practical, investigative approach to lessons means that they have good understanding of how to plan and carry out a fair test. They enjoy devising their own investigations to solve problems and know that conditions must be kept constant if a test is to be fair. Pupils know that tests must be repeated to ensure that they are accurate. They record their findings carefully, drawing sensible conclusions from their evidence. Their good oral skills and wide scientific vocabulary make a good contribution to their progress, enabling them to explain their methods and conclusions clearly. Good literacy and numeracy skills also contribute effectively to pupils' progress, as they record their work well in a good range of written scientific forms. Pupils use computers to carry out research on scientific topics, but they make insufficient use of computers to support them in testing, recording their data and presenting reports. In Year 6, there is an extensive programme of revision and testing, which reinforces work across all aspects of science.

109. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good, because of the effective extra support that they are given and the revision and testing programme. The support enables them to take a full part in lessons, working alongside average and higher attaining pupils in investigation in groups. Some achieve very well and attain the levels expected for their age.

110. Good teaching and the very positive attitudes of pupils of all abilities enable the pupils to achieve well. Teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly and share the learning targets with pupils so that they are clear about what they are to learn and to do. Teachers have good

subject knowledge and ask relevant questions to find out what pupils know and to develop their scientific understanding. They focus on providing pupils with good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, which stimulates them to think hard about their work and to discuss it purposefully with other pupils. In the best lessons, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what they can do, and they set challenging and interesting work. For example, in Year 6, pupils were set a problem to solve through experimentation. They had to devise a parachute that could descend so slowly that it would not break a fragile birthday present on landing. Pupils eagerly discussed all the relevant possibilities of size, shape and materials of their canopies and the lengths of the cords and how they might test their theories. After much intense discussion, they made sensible choices and conducted fair tests independently of the teacher. Time was used very well and pupils enjoyed their learning. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to handle equipment, such as microscopes and thermometers, and to carry out research to improve their skills. They do not plan enough opportunities for using information and communication technology in collecting data, such as through using electronic measuring devices or their electronic microscope.

111. The curriculum is good. It is broad and relevant and enables pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills through carefully structured investigative activities. Good leadership has provided a good programme of training and improvement of the curriculum and resources. A good policy and programme of work, matched to national guidelines, provide teachers with clear information about the knowledge and skills to be taught. Assessment procedures are good and help teachers to gain a clear view of pupils' achievements and progress.

ART AND DESIGN

112. Pupils' achievement in art and design is very good, and the standard of their work by the end of Years 2 and 6 is well above the national expectations. Pupils make very good progress throughout school. Work using pencil, paint, pastels and oil pastels is completed carefully, using a range of techniques that show sustained, creative effort and result in examples of the highest quality. There are very good examples of three-dimensional work and sculpture. The standards being achieved and the quality of the provision show a very good improvement since the last inspection. A scheme of work ensures that pupils have the opportunity to study all aspects of the curriculum, but it needs to be reviewed to provide better progression in the study of artists as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

113. By the end of Year 2, pupils have worked with a good range of art materials to produce sketches, pictures and collages. They mix paint and apply it carefully using a good range of techniques with their brushes when making pictures in the style of Monet and the Impressionists. They select and position tissue paper carefully and thoughtfully in making collage. They work confidently as artists to explore ideas and produce work of a very high quality. Pupils in Year 1 had made two-dimensional pictures related to a town. By using card, they made very good pictures and used them to produce rubbings that were very effective. Pupils are given the opportunity to work with a variety of materials to make images and artefacts and explain confidently the purpose of their work; for instance, using pastels to draw pieces of fruit. When illustrating work in other subjects, the pupils work with the same skills to produce equally good sketches and records in science, geography and design and technology.

114. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' drawings, sculptures and paintings of work related to Ancient Greece show good progression in experiences and skills. The same high standards can be seen in their illustrations in other work, such as the cartoon-type pictures of the Amazon

rainforests. Pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as other pupils. Pupils use their literacy skills to research the work of artists as well as discuss their notes and understanding. Pupils across the junior age range build on the good teaching and learning of the infant classes. Some of the pupils' work is exceptional. In Year 3, for example, pupils carefully experimented with ideas and designs and then worked with great skill and imagination to follow the ideas of Matisse and Kandinsky. The resulting sculptures and thread work were outstanding. Pupils in Year 4 have very good knowledge and understanding of the works of Hockney, Warhol and Lichtenstein. Pupils use their imaginations, as well as thinking about the particular features of the artist's style. Oil pastels following the style of Picasso in the picture 'Lady in the Underground' are very good. Pencil sketches of Meanwood Towers, produced by pupils in Year 4, show good observation, and perspective, line and tone of a very high quality.

115. The quality of the teaching throughout the school is very good. Many teachers have very good subject knowledge and are clear of what they want pupils to learn in lessons. They manage practical sessions very well. They question pupils carefully to encourage them to think about the world of art and design. This was seen in a lesson in Year 4 when the teacher wanted pupils to learn about the use of line and colour. She showed pupils examples of artists' work and stimulated their imaginations, creativity and excitement, so they worked intensively for a sustained period. Teachers are developing the use of information and communication technology as a resource for learning. There are good examples of repeating patterns and drawing from imagination, as well as research using the Internet. However, there is scope to make greater use of computers to extend the teaching and learning in art and design. The use of sketchbooks is well developed. There are opportunities for pupils to learn and practise skills and techniques, which they can then refer back to in their sketchbooks, such as the use of pencil to create shape, texture and pattern with lines of different density.

116. The leadership and management of art and design are very good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, confident and enthusiastic about the subject. She knows and understands the national guidelines and ensures that pupils enjoy the full curriculum. The school now needs to review the very good practice in both teaching and learning and formalise the scheme of work by defining the areas of study and the progression in skills and knowledge.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. During the inspection, only one lesson of design and technology was seen. By looking at the pupils' work, the records of teachers' planning and displays around the school, it is clear that an appropriate range of opportunities is offered to develop the pupils' designing and making skills in the subject. Overall, the standards of work seen are very good and well above expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. The pupils make very good progress. These standards show significant improvement since the last inspection.

118. By the end of Year 2, pupils show good skills in their design work; for example, in their Easter cards and carnival masks. The models show good cutting and gluing skills as they work with a range of materials, such as card and paper, in both two and three-dimensional work. Their writing shows how well they remembered the processes of investigating, designing and making and how skilled they are at evaluating their designs. In the lesson seen in Year 2, the pupils were designing a 'seagull-proof container' to carry the lighthouse keeper's lunch across the wire to the lighthouse. Their imagination was outstanding, and their sketches were of an equal quality, showing a very good understanding of investigation and design. The neat sketches were clear, labelled to identify materials and show how it would be made.

119. The work of pupils in Years 3 to 6 shows more complex planning and making skills in their design projects and standards that are well above expectations by the end of Year 6. The

models linked to transport show a good use of materials and a high quality finish. Pupils in Year 6 have followed a project to design and make fairground rides. They have used a range of wood, card and paper to make working models that incorporate electric motors and batteries. The records of design, making and evaluating were completed using the computers. They fully understand how to evaluate their work and make suggestions of how future designs can be amended and improved.

120. In the lesson seen, the quality of teaching was very good. The teacher set the context imaginatively and in a very skilful manner so the pupils were excited and really enjoyed learning. Pupils are given time to discuss and plan. Lessons are planned very thoroughly and a good range of resources is provided. Teachers show very good subject knowledge and have a good understanding of the process of learning. Clear explanations develop pupils' enthusiasm and involvement. Teachers give attention to developing pupils' knowledge of the appropriate vocabulary.

121. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has a clear sense of purpose that underpins the provision and gives direction to the future development of the subject. The good leadership gives the subject status and all teachers include it on their timetables and follow the school's policy. However, there is no clearly defined scheme of work that builds on the links to the national guidelines and the current good practice. The school now needs to review the current planning and establish a scheme that will clearly define the areas of study and the progression in skills and understanding.

GEOGRAPHY

122. Standards in geography are in line with those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6, and similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. The school has done enough to maintain standards, because the teaching is satisfactory and the pupils want to learn. This has not been enough to raise standards, because there are weaknesses in the curriculum and insufficient time is allocated to geography in some classes. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make just about satisfactory progress overall. However, progress would be better than this if the work covered in each year was more consistent.

123. One weakness in the curriculum is that some work is repeated in different classes without extending what the pupils already know. For example, pupils study rivers in Years 3, 5 and 6, but there is little difference in the level of difficulty. Another example is in making and interpreting maps. Pupils make a good start in Year 1, when they plot a walk around the school area or follow the travels of characters in books. However, teachers do not develop mapping skills enough in later years. Pupils practise the same simple keys almost every year. There is not enough use of maps with a range of scales, particularly large-scale local maps. As a result, pupils' ability to interpret maps is weak.

124. A stronger part of the teaching is the work throughout the school on places and people. Teachers make good use of the local area. For example, pupils in Year 1 interview local people and make lists of the features near the school. This is extended in Year 4, where pupils collect evidence of village and city life and make sensible conclusions. They use cameras, notes and sketches well to gather and analyse their information. In Year 5, pupils enjoy a field trip to Whitby, they write very good accounts of this, showing that they have gathered a great deal of information. However, the visit would be even more valuable if geographical skills were developed as well as literacy skills. For example, there is a chance missed to collect and analyse data, or to sketch details for later mapwork.

125. Pupils enjoy their visits and get very involved in environmental issues linked to these, such as recycling, water use, traffic and intensive farming. Teachers make good links with English

lessons. For example, pupils in Year 4 analyse letters in local newspapers on racism and write their own replies. Such work ensures that pupils make steady progress in their understanding of how decisions about places and environments affect the quality of people's lives. This progress is evident in Year 6, when pupils research life in the Amazonian rainforests. They present this in their own way, most showing a reasonable grasp of the impact of humans and change on an environment.

126. The subject is led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has tried hard to raise standards by working alongside teachers, joining field trips and collecting a useful portfolio of pupils' work, but the curriculum has not been managed well and geography has not been a priority within the school's development plan in recent years. There is some use of information and communication technology; for example, when pupils in Year 6 use the Internet in their research. However, there is a need to improve the provision of software, such as CD-ROMs, to make much better use of technology in the subject.

HISTORY

127. Standards overall in history match those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory, and sometimes it is very good. Pupils enjoy the lessons and work hard. At the previous inspection, however, standards were judged to be above average. The main reason for the decline since then, is that the time spent on history varies considerably from class to class. In about half the classes, the teacher is clearly enthusiastic about history and these pupils make very good progress. In other classes, pupils' skills and knowledge are not developed as much as they should be. Because of this, progress overall is only satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. They take a full part in the lessons and make satisfactory progress.

128. One of the main reasons for the uneven teaching of history is the way that the subject has been organised in cross-curricular topics. Some of these topics are history-led. For example, pupils in Year 3 study the Romans in Britain and in Year 5 the Ancient Egyptians. Teachers and pupils get very involved in these topics, learning is good and the pupils remember what they did. Some other topics either have no obvious history content or the work proposed is uninspiring. For example, the scheme in Year 3 suggests the creation of the Grand Canyon, or the development of the Hawaiian Islands. These are too obscure for young pupils and do not develop their skills in collecting and using evidence to find out about the past.

129. Where the work is interesting, and pupils have enough sources of information, they learn well. Pupils in Year 1, for example, make a good start when they look at life in the more recent past. The teacher provides lots of objects, photographs and books, and these help pupils to make comparisons and learn to use some historical language. Pupils use these new skills well when a visitor talks to them about his childhood. They listen sensibly and ask good questions. Pupils in Year 3 move on to considering why things happened as they did; for example, when they write about why the Romans decided to come to Britain. They do this with good understanding because the teacher has brought the period to life for them. In Year 5, the teacher provides a good range of good quality books, videos and artefacts about Ancient Egypt. Pupils work hard on interpreting these, and so gain a good understanding of daily life and beliefs, together with the parts played by some important characters.

130. A strength in almost all the teaching is the good link with literacy. Pupils discuss and write very well, particularly as some history lessons inspire them. Pupils in Year 4, for example, use the evidence they collect from a visit to Meanwood House to write imaginative stories about some of the past residents. In Year 2, the pupils write about Grace Darling's exploits with

good understanding. Pupils in Year 3 write moving poems on the hardships and loneliness of a Roman soldier. Teachers provide some good opportunities for research, which help pupils to learn how to select and record information sensibly. By the time they reach Year 6, some pupils gather information from several sources, including the Internet, and present it to an audience using a computer presentation program. However, more resources, such as CD-ROMs or more frequent access to the Internet, will be needed to make more of this work possible.

131. A general weakness in the teaching of history is that pupils rarely have the chance to look at the way events are reported or interpreted in different ways by different people. Pupils have the reading and discussion skills to do this well. There is insufficient use of timelines in most classes, so pupils' sense of chronology is not as good as it might be.

132. History has not been a priority for the school in recent years. The headteacher is now acting as co-ordinator until one is appointed. There are appropriate plans for a review of the curriculum and the way it is planned. National guidelines will provide a useful reference point in this. Once this is done, good teaching and hard-working pupils put the school in a good position to improve standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

133. Although the school has made some improvements in its provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection, notably through the improvement of its resources, the school has not kept pace with developments in new technology. Standards, which were above average at the time of the last inspection, are now, overall, below the expected level at the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils are not achieving as well as they should be or as well as they are doing in other subjects.

134. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are working at the expected level in terms of their ability to exchange and share information using word-processing and graphics programs. For example, pupils in Year 2 produce short pieces of writing during the literacy hour. However, many pupils still need a considerable amount of help to get started, negotiating the complexities of logging on and locating the right program to use. Many pupils make slow progress in using a word processor because they are unfamiliar with the computer keyboard. Pupils' skills in finding things out, developing their ideas and making things happen, and reviewing and modifying their work are below the expected level. For example, most pupils have yet to develop confidence in saving their work, reloading it and making any necessary changes.

135. By the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in exchanging and sharing information continue to be the strongest aspect of their work. Pupils have also learnt how to find out information using the Internet. Most pupils meet the national expectations for these two areas of the curriculum. Some higher attaining pupils demonstrate good skills in setting out text in different ways. Most pupils have acquired the most essential skills of using a computer. For example, they know how to log on to the Internet, locate programs, save and print their work. Few pupils possess good keyboard skills, and entering text into a word processor is a time consuming process for many. Pupils have had little experience of using database or spreadsheet programs, or of creating, testing and refining sequences of instructions to make things happen or to monitor events and respond to them. It is the gaps in these areas of the curriculum that bring pupils' overall standards to below the expected level.

136. Throughout the school, but most noticeably in Year 6, there are various examples of where teachers have used information and communication technology effectively to promote learning in another subject. In Year 6, for example, higher attaining pupils have produced presentations on the Amazon rainforest and ancient Greece and, in Years 3 and 4, pupils have researched the work of famous artists on the Internet and used a graphics program to produce pictures in the style of Kandinsky and Warhol. Overall, however, there is still very little use of information and communication technology as a tool to enhance teaching and learning in other subjects. Subject co-ordinators have not yet taken on the responsibility for planning how the school should incorporate the use of new technology within their subject in each year group. The school is conscious of the need to use new technology to help pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. A number of sessions were timetabled during the inspection

in which teachers combined the teaching of English and information and communication technology. In some of the classes, however, the teacher needed to spend most of the time helping pupils to get to grips with the laptop computers, so their use did not contribute significantly to pupils improving their literacy skills.

137. The weaknesses in information and communication technology stem from unsatisfactory curricular planning and previous lack of access to computers rather than unsatisfactory teaching. In lessons or sessions devoted to information and communication technology, the overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory and pupils make sound progress in their learning. The teachers set appropriate tasks, provide clear explanations and give sound help and advice. They give careful thought to the way in which pupils are grouped. In one lesson, for example, the teacher grouped pupils into mixed-ability pairs so that all lower-attaining pupils received some additional support. In some classes, the use of the classroom computer is organised very well. In Year 3, for example, a timetable clearly indicates when each pupil is to have their half-hour turn on the computer and notes are provided to guide pupils through their tasks. Such organisation allows for efficient use of the available resources, although it does not give sufficient flexibility for wider and more frequent use of computers. In some lessons, the teacher allows pupils to spend too much time on non-essential aspects of their work. In one lesson, for example, pupils spent too much time at the start altering fonts and the colour and size of their text, with the result that they did not complete their writing.

138. The teachers' confidence in teaching the subject has improved since the last inspection. Most teachers are nearing the completion of training, which has been funded by the New Opportunities Fund, although, from the gaps in curricular coverage, it is clear that further training in the use of specific software still needs to be provided. Most teachers are beginning to make greater use of new technology to prepare lessons and within the classroom. Several teachers, for example, make effective use of the digital camera to record work in progress or to produce pictures for discussion. The teacher in Year 6 makes very good use of an interactive white board as an aid to teaching and to stimulate pupils' interest. The pupils' positive attitudes and very good behaviour are also important factors, that contribute significantly to their learning.

139. At present, the curriculum for information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements and is unsatisfactory. The school has a scheme of work, which is based on national guidelines, but teachers do not complete all aspects of the scheme or stick rigidly to the guidance. As a result, some aspects of the curriculum are not covered at all, or are only dealt with cursorily. For example, block charts produced by pupils in Year 4 and attempts by pupils in Year 5 to give instructions to a programmable floor turtle were no more advanced than those frequently found in Year 2. However, the school recognises its weaknesses, and attempts are being made to rectify them. Resources for use in teaching aspects of control technology have recently been purchased and will shortly be introduced into the curriculum. Teachers complete assessments of pupils' attainment in information and communication technology twice a year, but the assessments are so general that they give little guidance to staff on what they need to do next in order to raise standards.

140. The new headteacher has recently taken over the co-ordination of the subject and has a clear vision of how the subject should develop over the next two years. An appropriate development plan has been drawn up, and the plan recognises that teachers need much clearer guidance on what they are expected to teach and how they are to use new technology more widely in teaching of other subjects. The school has invested a considerable amount of money in new resources, but these are not yet functioning as well as they should be. As the school has no room for a computer suite, 11 new laptop computers have been purchased. This is, potentially, a very sensible way to enable pupils to have greater access to computers. However, the wireless network does not reach these computers in some classrooms. Other problems with the network, access to the Internet, the functioning of printers and the lack of

technical support have also had a detrimental effect on the use of new technology throughout the school. The school has appropriate procedures to ensure responsible use of the Internet and to prevent pupils from accessing unsuitable web-sites.

MUSIC

141. Standards are close to the average at the end of Year 2, but below average at the end of Year 6. This represents a decline since the previous inspection. The school does not fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum because older pupils do not have opportunities to compose their own music, and only those who are taught to play instruments by visiting specialists learn about musical notation.

142. In sharp contrast, pupils achieve well in singing and standards are above average. Pupils enjoy their opportunities to sing and do so with clarity and tunefulness. They know how to vary their voices and style of singing for a good variety of songs and follow their parts well in rounds and when singing in harmony. They have good opportunities to perform to a wider audience, to the school, parents and wider community, in regular musical and dramatic productions, such as 'Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat'. The choir provides good opportunities for talented pupils, including those with special educational needs, to develop their skills, such as by singing solo.

143. Pupils are familiar with the work of various composers and learn some technical musical vocabulary when listening to their music. For example, pupils in Year 6 understand that music gets louder and louder in a crescendo. However, their range of musical vocabulary is limited, and they have few opportunities to apply musical techniques to their own playing or composition. Pupils in Year 2 listen to music of famous musicians and express their feelings on listening to contrasting pieces, such as Mars and Venus, from Holst's suite 'The Planets'. They learn about the lives of composers, such as Mozart and Saint-Saëns and write mini biographies. By Year 6, pupils have some knowledge of composers, but have not built sufficiently on their work from Year 2.

144. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 play an appropriate range of untuned percussion instruments and, by the end of Year 2, maintain a steady beat when accompanying songs. They compose simple rhythms, using these instruments and their own body parts, sometimes recording them as pictorial musical scores. This work is not built on appropriately in Years 3 to 6, and all pupils make unsatisfactory progress in this aspect of music. The majority have no knowledge of the musical notation system and no opportunities to play tuned instruments. At the time of the previous inspection, all pupils learned to play the recorder in Year 3. This practice has lapsed, but pupils in Year 4 have just begun to learn their first notes. Pupils who are taught recorder in the recorder club or the violin, flute or clarinet by visiting specialists have good opportunities to learn notation and play tuned instruments. They make good progress in their lessons because they are taught well. Pupils use computers to research the lives of composers and, occasionally, to find samples of music from other cultures, but do not use them to compose or record their own work.

145. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, in Years 1 and 2. During the inspection, a very good lesson was observed in Year 1. The teacher's musical expertise helped her in planning a lively and stimulating lesson that developed pupils' understanding and use of musical techniques well. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory, overall, because teachers lack knowledge and understanding of the subject. The use of a specialist musician in lessons and with the choir enhances the teaching of singing, and teachers are enthusiastic in these lessons, managing their pupils very well and promoting sound progress. However, they do not plan to cover other parts of the curriculum because they do not know how. There is no up-to-date policy or scheme of work to guide them, which is unsatisfactory. All staff express a willingness to improve this aspect of teaching, but need a substantial amount of training and the guidance of

a programme of work. The amount of time spent on music is below average, particularly for the pupils in Years 3 to 6. Too little time is spent to allow pupils to build up their skills progressively at an appropriate rate.

146. Until very recently, there has been no subject co-ordinator, and leadership and management have been unsatisfactory in providing guidance and training for staff. A new subject manager has developed a satisfactory action plan for improvement, and she and other staff express an enthusiasm for improvement. There is much to be accomplished, and the co-ordinator is wisely planning to involve outside experts in the development programme. Paradoxically, music adds much to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development through the many opportunities that they have to work together in class and school concerts, celebrating their success in singing, and through a good programme of trips, such as a musical concert at the nearby high school and visits by experts, such as an African drummer, who inspire pupils to learn.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. The aspects of physical education observed during this inspection were different from those observed on the previous occasion, so it is not possible to make direct comparisons. However, the judgements in this inspection are generally more favourable than before. The overall quality of the teaching is good, and standards in games at the end of Year 2 and in athletics at the end of Year 6 are above the national expectations, indicating that pupils make good progress in these aspects of physical education. As no lessons for dance or gymnastics took place during the inspection, it was not possible to evaluate pupils' attainment and progress in these areas, which the school recognises as areas for further development.

148. The pupils' response in physical education lessons is very good. They participate with enthusiasm, behave very well and collaborate well with a partner or other members of their group. The foundations for such good behaviour are laid in the reception class and developed well in Year 1. The combination of good teaching, very good discipline and pupils who listen well and try hard, results in good learning. In a very good lesson in Year 1, for example, pupils improved their ability to throw and catch balls and objects of different size because they tried hard to follow the teacher's instructions and to improve their own performance. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in their physical education lessons, and careful guidance from the teacher or teaching assistant ensures that those who are less well co-ordinated or who have difficulty concentrating are also enabled to play a full part in lessons.

149. All pupils participate well in warm-up activities, and even the youngest pupils understand the effects that exercise can have on the body. The staff have a good awareness of health and safety issues and ensure that pupils are changed into appropriate clothing for their physical education lessons, an improvement since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, virtually all pupils have a good awareness of others, finding their own space in which to work and avoiding other people when moving during their warm-up sessions. They show good skills in using a tennis racket to strike a ball and in catching a foam tennis ball. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve expected standards in various disciplines in athletics, and a good proportion exceed these expectations, for example, showing a good awareness of technique when jumping or handing over a relay baton. A good proportion of pupils also participate in extra-curricular activities and represent school teams in Years 5 and 6. The school teams achieve a good degree of success in competition with other schools.

150. The school's arrangements for swimming are good. All pupils have swimming lessons in Year 3, and pupils who have not reached a sufficiently high standard continue in Year 4. Although no swimming lessons were observed during the inspection, the school's carefully kept

records indicate that pupils achieve good standards in swimming, with many pupils exceeding national expectations well before the end of Year 6.

151. On the basis of the three lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning in physical education is good. The teachers plan their lessons well, providing a good variety of activities that keep pupils motivated and busy. The teachers help pupils to learn by demonstrating new techniques themselves or by getting them to watch other pupils. However, they do not give pupils enough opportunity to deepen their understanding by developing their ability to learn through evaluating their own or others' performance. The teachers manage their classes very well, achieving high standards of behaviour and very good co-operation from the pupils. In a good lesson in Year 6, for example, groups of pupils worked together very well, helping each other with the timing, measurement and recording of their individual performances. In similar ways, many physical education lessons contribute well to pupils' social development.

152. The leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory, although there are ways in which they could be improved. The subject benefits from an enthusiastic co-ordinator who plays a significant part in providing a good range of extra-curricular activities for the older pupils, although no additional activities are yet available for younger pupils. The normal curriculum is enhanced by the involvement of outside specialists, such as professional rugby and football coaches, and the involvement of parents who run a football club on Saturday mornings. Older pupils also have the opportunity to engage in outdoor and adventurous activities during their residential visit. The overall curriculum provides an appropriate balance between the various aspects of physical education, but staff lack guidance on how they are expected to provide for the systematic development of pupils' skills or how they can ensure that the teaching they provide, for example, in gymnastics, will ensure that pupils are increasingly challenged as they move through the school. In this regard, assessment procedures are not having an impact on teachers' planning. As yet, there has been no monitoring of teaching in physical education. Facilities for physical education are adequate, but the infants' afternoon break coincides with, and provides a distraction during, some outdoor physical education lessons.