

INSPECTION REPORT

**CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Reading

LEA area: Reading

Unique reference number: 110005

Headteacher: Mr Matthew Flannigan

Reporting inspector: Ms Vreta Bagilhole
17417

Dates of inspection: 2-5 December 2002

Inspection number: 246958

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lulworth Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Andrew Clarke

Date of previous inspection: 08/12/97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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17517	Vreta Bagilhole	Registered inspector	English Mathematics	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9708	Sylvia Daintrey	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Christ the King is a Catholic Voluntary Aided School with a strong Christian ethos. There are 165 full time pupils on roll in Years 1-6 and 54 part time children in the nursery. Most classes this year have more than one year group. The school is about the same size as other primary schools nationally. Most of the pupils are from a white UK heritage and there is also a significant proportion of minority ethnic pupils including those of Asian and Black Caribbean or African origin. The pupils live in a large area of local authority housing with some private housing. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (53 per cent) is well above the national average. There are two pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. Eighteen pupils speak English as an additional language (above average), five of who are at an early stage of English language acquisition whose main languages are Portuguese and Filipino. Children are admitted to the nursery in the term after their third birthday. In January, children who are five will move into a reception class. The attainment of children on entry to the reception class is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school, which provides a sound education. The school is managed well and is very well led by the headteacher. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average and improving at a good rate. There are weaknesses in most other subjects but there is a clear plan for improvement and all staff know what needs to be done. The pupils' attitudes to the school are good. The school meets the needs of all groups of pupils, however, it does not prepare them enough for life in a culturally diverse society. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher is very successfully taking the school forward through a carefully planned series of improvements.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have been very successful in reducing unauthorised absence.
- Parents and teaching assistants support learning well.

What could be improved

- In many lessons teachers' expectations could be higher.
- Standards and learning resources in art and design, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, history, geography and physical education.
- The provision for pupils' cultural development.
- Pupils' vocabulary and language development.
- Older nursery and reception children are not being challenged sufficiently in all areas of learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1997 and it has made satisfactory improvement since then. There has been good improvement in the last year in school development planning and identifying staff training requirements and the school is now efficiently run. Standards are better than they were in information and communication technology (ICT) although there is still a need to improve resources across the curriculum. There are schemes of work in all subjects. In areas such as design and technology and the procedures for assessment in the foundation subjects the improvement has been unsatisfactory. This is because the school fell into decline after the last inspection due to ineffective leadership and standards and the quality of education suffered significantly. The school under the new headteacher has prioritised raising standards again to national levels in English, mathematics and science. It has achieved this very well but standards in most other subjects are not good enough. Currently the school is in a good position to make further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	B	A
mathematics	D	D	C	B
science	C	E	C	B

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

The school's performance in national tests in the last four years has shown standards dropping significantly and then picking up again in the last year. The school has been through a period where standards in English, mathematics and science have been too low but this situation has changed significantly in the last year under the new headteacher and standards in English, mathematics and science are improving at a good rate and are currently average. The Year 6 group did well last year but the ability of current year group in English is not quite as good this year. Pupils throughout the school are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress, including those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those who are higher attaining. Pupils in Year 2 also did well in the national tests in 2002 for the first time in a number of years and standards were above average in reading, well above average in writing and very high in mathematics and teachers' assessments in science. This does not reflect the current standards for this age group who are a lower ability year group and did not make the progress they should have last year because of instability in staffing. Inspection evidence finds that standards currently are below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The pupils have had to revisit a lot of the work they should have covered last year. However, they are now making at least satisfactory progress at present and good progress in science.

Standards in music are typical for those expected of seven and eleven-year-olds and the pupils are doing reasonably well. In other subjects standards are in line with those expected for seven-year-olds but below those expected of eleven-year-olds. Standards in design and technology by the end of Year 6 are poor. This is due to unsatisfactory learning resources and the curriculum provision which has not made sure that pupils gain the necessary skills as they move up the school. Computers are not used sufficiently to support their work in these subjects. Good plans are ready to be implemented to turn this situation around. The school sets itself challenging targets and top of its list is to ensure that standards are as good as they can be. The school is well aware that there is a lot to do.

Children in the nursery and reception achieve the expected standards in all areas of learning except in communication, language and literacy and physical development where their progress is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for speaking and language development are not well developed. The outdoor activities offer a narrow range of opportunities and limited equipment for children to develop their physical skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are interested and curious about the new experiences presented to them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well mannered.

Personal development and relationships	Good. There is a purposeful and happy atmosphere throughout the school which enables the pupils to learn and work well together.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The attendance rate is well below the national average but has improved significantly in the last year. The headteacher has taken very effective action to reduce the rate of unauthorised absence to nil.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers manage the classrooms well, and identify clear learning objectives for the pupils. Teaching and learning in mathematics and science are good and satisfactory in English with some good teaching. There is some very good teaching in science. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in many lessons but this is not consistently done well enough in all lessons. Good teaching was observed in information and communication technology (ICT), music and history and there was a very good lesson in design and technology. Pupils show interest in the work they do and concentrate well. Teaching is well planned for pupils with special educational needs. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics and geography. This is because the teaching is not challenging enough or the pace of the lesson is too slow. In other subjects, the lack of guidance in planning the curriculum until very recently and the lack of resources have affected teaching, particularly in Years 3-6. In many lessons insufficient attention is given to extending the pupils' speaking, language and vocabulary skills. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive a good level of help in the classroom. Teaching for children in the nursery is satisfactory in all areas of learning except communication, language and literacy and physical development where teaching is unsatisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory for children in the nursery and pupils in Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory in most subjects in Years 3-6 but it is unsatisfactory in design and technology and physical education, which do not meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs receive a good level of help in the classroom and in their booster groups.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The provision effectively meets the needs of these pupils within a welcoming environment. They are well supported by staff and by a subject specialist.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory and the provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and behaviour. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in the nursery but have yet to be implemented in other subjects.

The partnership with parents is good and parents have a good impact on the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: The school is managed well and is very well led by the headteacher. The subject leaders have identified how to improve standards and are ready to implement action plans. Improvements are taking place in the senior management team who now work and meet together but still need to take a more active part in whole school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but some of their statutory responsibilities are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has been very effective at monitoring and evaluating its performance in the last year and setting targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school is planning for the future well. It is using funds wisely to improve the quality of education by ensuring best value when purchasing supplies and services. Staffing and accommodation are satisfactory but learning resources in subjects such as music, geography, history and physical education are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • Their children like school. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • Information about how their children are getting on. • The school does not work closely with parents. • Homework.

The school has good links with parents which enables them to be involved in their children's education and to contribute to the life of the school. The inspection team found little evidence to support the concerns express by some parents. The quality of the pupils' annual reports is very good and provide clear and consistent information on pupils' attainment. Homework is being set although not consistently in all classes. The range of activities outside of lessons is satisfactory and the school is planning to provide a broader range of activities to enrich the pupils' experiences.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year olds, standards were above the national average in English and well above those of schools with a similar intake of pupils. In mathematics and science standards were average compared to schools nationally and above average compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils. In the previous inspection standards were found to be average in all three subjects but since then standards have been well below the national average, other than a rise in 1999, which then quickly dipped again to well below average again the next year. This is because of ineffective leadership and significant weaknesses in teaching in the school during these years. The situation has changed significantly in the last year under the new headteacher. Standards in English, mathematics and science, are improving at a good rate and are currently average. The Year 6 group did well in English last year but the ability of the current year group is not quite as good and pupils are achieving satisfactory results. The school is setting realistically challenging targets and is on course to meet them.
2. In the tests for seven-year olds, standards were above average in reading, well above average in writing and very high in mathematics and teachers' assessments in science. There were smaller numbers than usual in this year group, which makes the data unreliable. The results for 2002 show a significant improvement for the school compared to the previous four years when standards were well below average in reading and predominantly below average in writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence finds that current standards in Year 2 are below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics and science. The difference is because of the ability overall of the year group and also because pupils now in Year 2 experienced instability in teaching when they were in Year 1 last year which had a negative impact on learning. This has meant that teachers this year have had to teach many skills again to be sure that pupils understand them.
3. Currently boys and girls, including those from ethnic minority groups and those speak English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they are well supported in lessons and staff know what they need to do to improve. These pupils make good progress when they withdrawn for their booster groups. Pupils who are higher attaining receive appropriately challenging work in most lessons but could be challenged more if teachers' expectations were higher. In some lessons pupils' progress is good because teaching challenges them more and expectations are higher. The job for the school now is to establish a consistent trend in the standards pupils are attaining which meet or exceed the national picture. Teaching, although satisfactory, does not always challenge the pupils sufficiently well and further improvements are needed. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
4. Attainment on admission to the reception class is below average. The children make satisfactory progress and, by the end of the reception year, they achieve the early learning goals in all of the areas of learning except in communication, language and literacy and physical development. Children's personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory. There are appropriate opportunities for all children to select areas of activity but lack of challenge; expectation and structured play often mean that the older children are not encouraged to develop their independence. The children perform adequately in mathematical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Singing is well developed. In too many lessons, however, activities lack imagination and worksheets are used too much for nursery children to join dots and colour in pictures.

Opportunities for speaking and language development are not well developed. Vocabulary is limited and the adults do not focus on extending vocabulary enough. The outdoor activities offer a narrow range of opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. Children make less progress in communication, language and literacy and physical development because teaching is unsatisfactory and there is not a sufficient range of appropriate resources to support the children's physical development. The school at present follows local authority policy not to admit children into reception until January but intends to alter this next year so that the children spending benefit from a full year in a reception class.

5. In English, the literacy hour has been implemented satisfactorily. In all classes, pupils are attentive listeners and interact well with other pupils in the class. Speaking skills are below average, which is more noticeable in the nursery and Years 1 and 2. Pupils do make satisfactory progress considering their prior attainment but teachers do not challenge the pupils well enough to use language in imaginative ways and often talk at the pupils too much, rather than use that time to extend the pupils' language and vocabulary. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show an interest in a variety of books but they are not confident, are hesitant and do not use expression. By the age of eleven, pupils read a range of texts showing understanding and can select and discuss essential points, although their referencing skills are not good enough. Standards in writing are below average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. The presentation of work is generally not good enough and shows a lack of care. Pupils use their literacy skills in subjects of the curriculum such as science and history there is some use of information and communication technology (ICT) but it is not as strong as it could be.

6. In mathematics, by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are average and pupils make good progress considering their prior attainment. Teachers apply the National Numeracy Strategy appropriately and pupils use their mathematics skills adequately in other subjects such as ICT and science. A weakness at present is that pupils are not making the progress they could in mental calculation skills, as these are not taught consistently in all numeracy lessons. In all other attainment targets the pupils are achieving appropriately well. Pupils have a satisfactory grasp of mathematical language and can discuss what they have done but are not so good at explaining their results.

7. Pupils do well in science and achieve average standards. There have been a number of improvements in provision for the subject since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 produce a good level of work on the importance of diet and its effect on their health. Scientific procedures are clearly evident and build progressively through the school. Year 6 pupils apply their own knowledge and use scientific enquiry to understanding living things, materials and physical phenomena.

8. Standards in ICT at the end of Year 2 are typical for those expected nationally. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below what is expected. Standards have improved since the previous inspection although the resources are still not of the quality and range that they should be. There is a new computer suite, which all classes use and which has had a good impact on raising standards but classroom computers need upgrading and are not well used. Software resources are also limited and therefore pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Pupils are making good progress considering their prior attainment and the previous lack of adequate provision, which they experienced during their earlier years in the school.

9. In music, the standard of attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is typical for pupils of these ages. Pupils make good progress in their performance, listening and appreciation of music. The quality of singing is good and pupils enjoy music. However, inadequate resources are restricting the level of progress that pupils make.

10. Standards in all other subjects are typical of the levels expected for seven-year-olds and progress is satisfactory. Standards are below those expected for eleven-year-olds. Standards for

design and technology by the end of Year 6 are poor. Pupils in Years 3-6 are currently making some good progress in their learning during some history lessons but generally progress is not good enough. The provision and learning resources have been unsatisfactory for the last few years and pupils have not been able to build up the necessary skills as they move through the school. Good action plans for all these subjects are ready to implement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good and strengths of the school. At the last inspection, these standards were good for pupils in Years 1 to 6 but often unsatisfactory in the nursery. The good standards have been maintained in Years 1 to 6 and have improved in the nursery where they are now always at least satisfactory and often good. This is as a result of a programme of support and intervention from the local education authority adviser for the foundation stage, which has led, for example, to better management of the children's behaviour.

12. Pupils' attitudes are good. Parents confirm that their children like coming to school. Pupils of all groups throughout the school are interested and curious about the new experiences presented to them. For example, Year 1 pupils are excited and motivated by the prospect of making a moving picture based on their own design. They respond very well to the challenge and high level of adult support when discussing and recording their plans and instructions. Pupils in Year 2 are fascinated by the visual representations of the differences in hospital life between the time of the Crimean War and now. One girl was so inspired that she did some research at home into the life of Florence Nightingale, with the help of her parent. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 show a good commitment to learning at the start of the day when they settle quickly and quietly to a range of tasks such as reading or completing homework before registration, and check with the teacher what lessons they have today. The oldest pupils comply very well with the tasks set for them, even when these are dull and lack challenge. Children in the nursery are eager to talk about their preparations for Christmas and enjoy the range of play activities available to them. The older children in the nursery sometimes become bored when the activity is directed at the younger children and does not involve and stretch them.

13. Behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They move around the school in a very orderly way, holding the doors open for each other and for adults. They are very well behaved in assemblies and listen attentively to the stories told to them. Pupils behave well in lessons because they respect their teachers and want to please them, and they are motivated well by the reward systems. A small group of boys in Year 4 sometimes find it difficult to concentrate and take turns, but they are receiving effective support to help them manage their behaviour. Last year there were two fixed period exclusions, as there were at the last inspection. These were very short and there have been no further incidents warranting exclusion. The occasional incidents of bullying and racism are dealt with very effectively and parents are pleased with the outcomes.

14. Personal development and relationships are good. There is a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school which enables the pupils to learn. Pupils have a high level of respect for the headteacher and the example he sets. They greatly value his honesty and fairness and appreciate the improvements he is bringing about to make it a better school for them. The older pupils are increasingly involved in contributing to the life of the school, for example through the role of house captain, helping at the nursery's sports day and by making presentations at parents' evenings. In lessons, the pupils respond well to the opportunities to work together and to take initiative and responsibility. However, as at the last inspection, these are not always as extensive as they could be and limit the progress that the pupils, including the children in the nursery, can make in developing skills of independent learning.

15. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Rates of attendance, which were slightly below the national average at the last inspection, declined and fell below the 90 per cent benchmark two years ago. They have improved since then but are still well below the national average, and below the average for Reading primary schools. The headteacher has taken very effective action to reduce the rate of unauthorised absence, which has been consistently high since the last inspection, to nil. This is a notable achievement. However, the rate of explained absence is high because of the number of times parents keep their children at home due to illness or take them away for the cheaper holidays available in September. This is a feature of all groups of pupils and limits the progress that they are able to make. The school's attendance figures are also affected by the few pupils who have undergone operations or who have particular difficulties in attending regularly. Punctuality has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Most pupils arrive at school by the time the registers close and are ready for the first lesson of the day. The attendance and punctuality of children in the nursery are similar to those in the main school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is improving. In May 2001, the local authority found major weaknesses in teaching and highlighted a lack of consistency in planning, work not being planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and poorly presented work. Since the arrival of the new headteacher, the school has initiated a number of measures designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning including a programme of training for literacy and numeracy. Improved planning, lesson observations, work sampling and moderating of work have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Improved teaching in the foundation subjects has been highlighted in the school development plan as well as an extension to the school day so that all subjects have sufficient time. The quality of presentation has improved but is still not good enough. A return visit by the local authority in May 2002 found very good progress.

17. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection but account has to be taken of the drop in standards of teaching since then and the improvement that has taken place this year. There are some very good lessons in science in Years 2 and 6 and in design and technology in Year 1. There is some good teaching in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), music and history. During this inspection two unsatisfactory lessons were observed in Years 3-6. One was in mathematics where the level of challenge was not high enough and one was in geography where the pace was too slow and pupils did not progress enough in their learning.

18. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching in the nursery was unsatisfactory in all lessons. The teachers in the nursery have benefited from support from the local authority and teaching is now satisfactory overall but there is still unsatisfactory teaching in physical development and communication, language and literacy. Teaching is satisfactory in all other areas of learning. It was not possible to observe teaching in reception because there is no class until January because of local authority policy. Several children of reception age were being taught in the nursery.

19. Having received recent training in literacy and numeracy, the teachers are now confident in using the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory with some good lessons. Lessons are planned appropriately and teachers identify learning objectives clearly, which they share with the pupils. Teachers manage the classrooms well, work is well marked and the teachers plan and organise suitable activities for the pupils. However, on some occasions the work is not challenging enough and teachers talk at the pupils too much and do not extend their speaking and vocabulary skills in order for them to have the tools to reach higher standards. This does not happen in the good lessons. Pupils put a satisfactory level of intellectual and

creative effort into their work but are capable of higher levels if they were consistently challenged in all lessons. Sessions at the end of lessons are variable, some contain a good level of further challenge and some do not.

20. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good, although in one unsatisfactory lesson, the level of work given to the pupils was not challenging enough. In most lessons, work is planned well and lesson objectives are clearly explained to the pupils. The pupils enjoy mathematics lessons and are keen to do as well as they can. Some lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and teachers sharpen and develop pupils' mental skills rigorously at the beginning of lessons but this is not consistent in all lessons. There are good examples of the use of mathematics in ICT and other examples of the use of literacy and numeracy to enhance learning in other subjects. However, this is an area where the school could do better. Teaching assistants provide good support in English and mathematics lessons and contribute well to the progress the pupils make. Homework is used regularly to support the learning.

21. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good with some very good lessons in Year 2 and 6. Teachers ensure that their pupils are given a wide range of experiences across the National Curriculum attainment targets. They use methods that make lessons interesting for the pupils and investigative and experimental work feature predominantly. Pupils contribute their ideas and co-operate well with each other. In ICT the teachers have adapted well to the new suite and are teaching basic skills well. The pupils are making good progress in their learning. However, the use of the classroom computers is inconsistent and most classes do not use these enough to apply skills during lessons in other subjects. In music the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are well prepared and follow planning carefully and give appropriate attention to all aspects of learning in music. The pace of lessons is good and pupils concentrate well. However, teachers' expectations for more able pupils are not high enough.

22. In other subjects teaching has been affected by the lack of guidance on planning the curriculum until recently and the lack of suitable resources. There are now action plans for all subjects that identify improvements and the curriculum is now planned appropriately. During the inspection a very good lesson was observed in design and technology in Year 1 where challenging work was planned and skilful questioning used. In the good history lessons, questioning is well used and pupils are encouraged to extend their thinking about aspects of the Roman invasion of Britain. Teachers are being innovative about resources and planning some good opportunities such as arranging for a former nurse to promote a discussion about the differences in hospital conditions during the time of Florence Nightingale and now. Insufficient resources make it difficult for teachers to organise effective lessons in physical education. No teaching was observed in art and design.

23. Teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs and work in their booster groups is planned well. The individual or group education plans for pupils with special educational needs are carefully formulated to provide realistic targets for them to work towards. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive a good level of help in the classroom. They learn at a satisfactory rate in line with that of their peers.

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

24. The quality and range of opportunities for learning are broadly satisfactory as they were at the last inspection. Some aspects of the curriculum have improved and some have deteriorated.

25. When the new headteacher arrived in September 2001, there was very little guidance available for teachers on planning the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6. This was a deterioration since the last inspection. The situation has improved over the past year. There is now an appropriate emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, and ICT. The National Curriculum programmes of study in ICT are now broadly met. In the drive to raise standards in literacy and numeracy, there are extra slots on the timetable for developing basic skills. However, the skills gained in literacy, numeracy and ICT lessons are not well embedded in other subjects. For example, literacy skills are not well developed in history, numeracy skills in physical education and ICT skills in many lessons that take place outside the computer suite.

26. Provision in most other subjects is satisfactory. The school has adopted national schemes of work which is helping it to plan for the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. This has happened very recently and the situation prior to this was unsatisfactory. The curriculum remains unsatisfactory in design and technology and physical education in Years 3-6 where some statutory requirements are not met. Design and technology still does not provide all the programmes of study, for example in planning and communicating ideas and in evaluating processes and products. This results in standards that are well below average by the time the pupils leave school. Physical education no longer meets requirements as very few dance or gymnastic activities are provided in Years 3-6. Teaching time at in Years 3-6 falls nearly an hour short of the nationally recommended minimum for the length of the taught week. The school is appropriately planning to extend the school day from next September.

27. The curriculum offered in the nursery has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. It is better structured and planned to cover the six areas of learning. However, there are still weaknesses in the development of the children's language and literacy skills and in the provision of different, more challenging activities suitable for the older children who have already spent several terms in the nursery.

28. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory, as it was at the last inspection. A scheme of work has been introduced for the first time this term. This is starting to have a beneficial effect on enabling teachers to raise standards in pupils' personal development in a structured manner. In the best lessons, the pupils are learning to develop confidence in sharing their views and to understand the similarities and differences between each other. In a session that was not so effective, the teacher talked too much and did not give sufficient time for the pupils to work together and develop their own ideas. There are satisfactory arrangements for sex and drugs education, which are taught mainly to older pupils through the science curriculum.

29. The curriculum provides adequate equality of access and opportunity to all pupils. A strength is the provision of booster classes for pupils identified as being one or more terms below the level expected for their age group in reading, spelling or numeracy. When these pupils are withdrawn, they miss parts of other lessons, but the effects are minimised by the organisation of a rolling timetable in the afternoon. The school is appropriately planning to introduce an extension programme for more able pupils next January.

30. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs and the programme of booster group withdrawal that has been developed by the headteacher and special needs co-ordinator ensures that any disruption to their normal class work is kept to a minimum. Outside agencies, such as the educational psychology service and behavioural support service, are well used by the school. This includes, for example, the in-service training provided by the educational psychologist for teachers on how to formulate individual education plans with reference to the setting of targets. The targets set in these plans are checked regularly to ensure that pupils are making the desired progress. Pupils who

Speak English as an additional language are also well provided for and fully participate in the work done in their classrooms. Teachers are knowledgeable about these pupils' abilities and use this knowledge effectively in curriculum planning, classroom teaching and pupil grouping. The pupils who are at an early stage of English acquisition receive appropriate support weekly from a language support teacher who monitors their progress. The language support teacher is employed by the local authority and provides detailed reports based on tests for the school to enable it to decide on the level of provision needed for each pupil.

31. Provision for extra-curricular activities has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. After-school clubs are now available in sport, for example lacrosse. A choir performs occasionally at music festivals. There are no other clubs or activities and nothing is offered for younger pupils. The school is planning to consult with parents and pupils on providing more creative clubs such as art, music and drama and introducing activities for children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

32. Links with the community are not as strong as at the last inspection and are now unsatisfactory. There are appropriate links with the parish church which have a positive effect on the provision for religious education and music and on pupils' personal development. There are sound links with other schools which enhance provision in music and sport and ease the transition to secondary school. Students from a local secondary school and from Reading University volunteer to help with activities such as basketball and design and technology. However, there are few visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum and no links with local businesses. Email is not used to enable pupils to make links with other people in different localities, either in Britain or around the world.

33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Although it was also satisfactory at the last inspection, it has not kept pace with national strategies designed to improve this aspect of the curriculum. Provision is planned for in religious education and personal, social and health education but not in other subjects. It has been weakened by the lack of emphasis on practical and creative subjects, by the curtailment in visits and visitors and by the shortage of resources in many areas. There is a lack of understanding amongst staff of the need to exploit opportunities in all subjects for cultivating pupils' personal development.

34. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and similar to that described in the last inspection report. Although religious education and collective worship were not a part of this inspection, it was evident from classroom displays, prayers and assemblies that pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on the Catholic faith which animates the school. Some PSHE lessons provided good opportunities to reflect on thoughts and feelings, such as what makes certain places special to us. There were some examples in history lessons of pupils being encouraged to empathise with people from the past, such as how the Iceni felt when Britain was invaded by the Romans. Pupils sing with joy and confidence in music lessons, but these qualities are not developed in assemblies where there are few opportunities for pupils to participate, for example by singing hymns or making a presentation. The assemblies seen during the inspection were appropriately directed at teaching pupils that Christmas is about more than getting presents. However, very little use was made of stimulating resources to evoke the wonder and joy of Advent.

35. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is satisfactory. There is a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is promoted consistently across the school. The headteacher acts as a good role model, especially for boys. Classroom staff are successful in establishing an ethos of mutual respect in which good relationships can be developed. Pupils are given appropriate classroom duties and they engage in the democratic process by electing their house captains. Pupils in a Year 5/6 PSHE lesson are given a sound opportunity to discuss solutions to relationship problems such as how to

help a child at an early stage of learning English who is being teased about her accent. However, the lack of emphasis in the school on extending pupils' language skills means that opportunities are missed in other subjects for pupils to explore and discuss moral and social issues. For example in a Year 4/5 geography lesson on the consumption of water, there was no debate about what could be done to reduce the use of water and what effects the issue of wasting water has on the environment. The experiences provided for the pupils at lunch-time in the playgrounds are limited and do not greatly extend their social and physical skills.

36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. This is a decline since the last inspection. Performers such as local musicians do visit the school and enrich pupils' experience of music and parents with young children visited a science lesson during the inspection to show Year 2 pupils how human beings change as they get older. However, pupils are not being adequately prepared for life in a culturally diverse society. The school is not providing provide a rich programme of visits to places such as museums, theatres and galleries or seeking partnerships with a range of visitors who can extend pupils' cultural awareness. There are limited opportunities to explore British and other cultural traditions from around the world. The best example seen was in the nursery where an effective display promoted the similarities between the festivals of Diwali and Christmas and the children were involved in making Hindu artefacts. There is very little contribution by subjects such as art, dance, design and technology and geography to pupils' cultural development. Displays outside the classrooms do not promote the richness of diverse cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school provides effective care for its pupils. Appropriate measures are in place for ensuring their welfare, health and safety. A notable improvement is the building of a security fence around the school. The governors play an active and effective role in discharging their responsibilities for health and safety. Parents are correctly informed if their child has suffered a 'bumped head' injury. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. The designated teacher and headteacher are experienced in dealing with cases of concern and all staff are given written guidelines on the procedures to be followed. Pupils are taught adequately about issues of safety and healthy living, mainly in science lessons.

38. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have been very effective over the past year in reducing the high rate of unauthorised absence, from four times the national average to nil. The headteacher has worked very well with parents to ensure that all absences are now explained. He continues to use the local education authority's 'Attendance Challenge' initiative very successfully to motivate and reward the pupils for good attendance. The headteacher has also improved punctuality through allowing parents to bring their children into classrooms up to ten minutes before the start of the day and establishing a culture where any lateness, even by a few minutes, is not tolerated. The school has set a challenging target of 94 per cent attendance with no unauthorised absence. Despite these measures and high expectations, there is still a large amount of absence for sickness and holidays. The school is aware that it needs to continue working with parents to bring home to them the importance to their children's education of regular attendance and punctuality.

39. Procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are also very effective. They result in the calm harmonious atmosphere throughout the school, including the nursery, which was seen during the inspection and which is much appreciated by the parents. Pupils know and respect the rules and are highly motivated by the reward systems. Sanctions beyond being sent to the headteacher rarely have to be used. The few incidents of racism are recorded and dealt with very successfully. The school works well with the local education authority's behaviour support team to help those few pupils who have particular difficulties in managing their behaviour.

40. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance were described as being sound at the last inspection, but when the current headteacher arrived at the school in September 2001 there were no systems in place. This was confirmed in a local education authority review. The school has made good progress in establishing new assessment procedures in English and mathematics. The attainment of individual pupils and cohorts is now recorded and tracked in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. Data is now analysed and used to identify pupils who are underachieving and to set targets for them. Assessment in all other subjects is undeveloped. However, the school knows what needs to be done and has appropriate plans to implement what was a key issue in the last report. Assessment in the nursery is satisfactory.

41. The school provides effective support and guidance to its pupils to help them raise their academic and personal achievements. All classroom staff show a good level of care for the pupils in their charge. They create a warm, relaxed yet purposeful start to the school day which ensures that all the children in the school and nursery feel safe, happy and ready to learn. The new programme for personal, social and health education is enabling teachers to know their pupils even better and to support them in a more planned way in developing personal qualities such as self-esteem, understanding others and resolving conflicts. In a Year 1 session, the learning support assistant played a valuable role in the monitoring of personal development by noting the pupils who found it difficult to speak in front of the class so that the teacher could devise strategies for building up their confidence. Rewards for good work are effective in motivating pupils to strive to meet expectations. The headteacher visits each classroom every day and encourages the pupils to take pride in their work and develop a desire to succeed. Pupils identified as under-achieving in English, mathematics or behaviour are making good progress in their small group sessions. Individual targets in literacy and numeracy are beginning to be used to help pupils and parents understand what needs to be done to improve standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents continue to be supportive of the school. They feel comfortable approaching the school and are pleased with the quality of teaching and the progress their children are making. A minority of parents have concerns about the school's partnership with them, including the information they get on their child's progress and the amount of homework their child is given. The inspection team found little evidence to support these views. The range of activities outside of lessons is satisfactory and the school is planning to provide a broader range of activities to enrich the pupils' experiences.

43. The school has good links with parents which enable them to be involved in their children's education and to contribute to the life of the school. Parents and carers have easy access to the teachers at the start and end of the school day. They receive good information in the newsletters about life and expectations in the school, for example about punctuality and homework. There are an appropriate number of opportunities throughout the year to come into school for more formal discussions, presentations and consultations with staff and governors, and a crèche is provided so that parents can bring younger siblings. The quality of the pupils' annual reports has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good. The reports throughout the school provide clear and consistent information on pupils' attainment and effort in each subject; a frank commentary on the child's behaviour, attitudes and personal development; and targets for English and mathematics. The pupils contribute their own assessment of their progress and parents are able to add their own comments. The school seeks to keep parents informed about its special needs provision by providing them with copies of booster group plans and individual education plans. Parents are invited to discuss their child's specific problems with their teachers. Parents of statemented pupils see their relationship with the school as being good and are very pleased with the service that they get from it.

44. More information is provided to parents about the curriculum and sex education than was the case at the last inspection. A list of topics for the term is displayed for parents of children attending the nursery. However, parents in the main school do not receive regular updates on what their children will be studying in class. The prospectus and governors' annual report do not include all the information that is legally required, especially details about the school's results over previous years compared with its targets and national data.

45. Parents have a good impact on the work of the school. They have responded very well to the headteacher's drive to reduce the rate of unauthorised absence and now provide explanations when they keep their children away from school. There are a good number of parent helpers in the nursery and Years 1 and 2 who make a significant contribution to learning in these classes. Parents of the younger pupils also have an effective influence on their children's progress in reading by hearing them read at home. The friends association plays a valuable role in running social events, including discos for the children, and raising money for resources such as for lunchtime activities. Parents are consulted about developments in the school; for example, at a recent open evening they heard presentations from some of the older children about the improvements that they would like to see.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The headteacher is leading the school very well after a long period of instability and falling standards since the last inspection. His leadership style and influence has been welcomed by all those involved with the school and all staff now feel they are well led. Pupils in particular show great respect and pleasure when talking about him. He has a very clear educational vision and knows how to motivate staff, governors, parents and pupils to feel that all can contribute to improving standards and the quality of education. He has already empowered subject leaders and the senior management team to share his vision and to understand their roles more fully and all know what is needed to bring about improvement. The school is managed well and efficiently run. Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection.

47. The governing body has worked well with the headteacher to identify the current short and long term priorities of the school. They have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and a determination to confront difficulties and weaknesses and to lead the school forward. The school is now setting itself challenging targets. However, the governors are not fulfilling all their statutory responsibilities such as the curriculum for design and technology and physical education. The governors' annual report omits some information like the admission arrangements for pupils with disabilities.

48. The school has been very effective in monitoring and evaluating its performance and taking effective action since the arrival of the new headteacher. He has clearly identified the main weaknesses since coming to the school and used outside agencies well to identify what needs doing to improve standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Improvements are taking place in the senior management team who now work as a team and meet regularly but still need to take a more active part in school improvement.

49. The school development plan contains clear targets for raising the standards in the school and is tackling activities after school so that there is a wider range. Improvements to accommodation and the length of the school day are clearly stated. Successes so far include the raising of standards in English, mathematics and science, the booster groups for pupils who are underachieving, action plans for all subjects of the curriculum and increased attendance levels. To achieve this there has been a

rigorous programme of monitoring teaching and learning in the classroom which has succeeded in making sure that teaching in the school is at least satisfactory, and improving at a good rate.

50. Analysis of data available to the school has been rigorous this year and used to highlight aspects for improvement such as spelling. The school makes good use of ICT to support administration and is using data effectively to set and review targets. Most of the large underspend has already been spent on the recruitment of staff, booster class support and increasing the amount spent on resourcing English, mathematics and science. There are also plans to improve the nursery accommodation and to set aside finance from future budgets to return the school to a full complement of seven classes and a nursery.

51. The provision for special educational needs is managed well and is supported by a knowledgeable governor. There are regular reviews of pupils' progress and good involvement of parents in statutory reviews. As part of the school's performance management procedures the headteacher regularly attends booster sessions and checks what is being covered against the group education plans. The identification of higher attaining pupils and ensuring suitable provision for them is set out in the school's development plan for action by January 2003. The head is very clear about his responsibility to provide work at a suitable level for this group and in particular those identified as gifted and talented. The provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is managed well and the school is well supported by the local authority. Leadership and management are satisfactory in the nursery and reception and have been successful in improving the unsatisfactory provision found at the last inspection but there is still a lot more to do.

52. The school has experienced problems in the recruitment and retention of teaching staff and a large proportion of the staff, including the headteacher, have joined the school in the last two years. Now there are sufficient suitably qualified staff to teach in the school. The staffing did not reach acceptable levels until this year and did cause difficulties for the school last year in Year 1. The good numbers of learning support assistants are well deployed and make a significant contribution to provision in the school; for example, they run the booster sessions for pupils identified as under-achieving in aspects of literacy and numeracy. The use of support staff is an improvement since the last inspection and a strength of the school. Arrangements for staff training have also improved and a system of performance management is now in place. Teachers have received training in ICT which is starting to have an impact on pupils' learning. Staff in the nursery have received support from the local education authority to help them meet the needs of the age range of the children, as recommended in the last inspection report, but their skills in extending the older children are still not fully developed.

53. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Many classrooms are of good size with interesting displays, and some of the spare rooms are used well for booster sessions and to house the ICT suite. The nursery classroom is rather cramped and the outside play area is unsatisfactory, for example the grassy area is waterlogged in winter and the hard play area is inaccessible to physically disabled children. The buildings are not as well cared for as at the last inspection, for example there are cracked and dirty windows and some bare shabby walls. The learning environment outside classrooms and in the playgrounds is not stimulating and does not contribute sufficiently to pupils' development. The school has appropriate plans to improve the accommodation, including that for children in the nursery and reception.

54. Learning resources are unsatisfactory. This represents a decline since the last inspection. Resources in science are good. The school has appropriately invested in new resources for literacy and numeracy. Although provision of computers has improved, it is still below the national average and well short of the government's target of one computer for every eight pupils by 2004. Computers in classrooms are out of date and not used to support learning, and there is insufficient software.

Resources are satisfactory in art, poor in physical education and unsatisfactory in all other subjects. These shortages have a negative effect on standards and the richness of pupils' experiences. The library has been out of action since the beginning of term because of rewiring work. Fiction and non-fiction books are currently kept in classrooms and are barely adequate, as they were at the last inspection. There are few books from other countries and cultures. The school no longer makes use of the local education authority library service and no member of staff is delegated to oversee the library. These weaknesses mean that the pupils lack experience and skills in researching information independently.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. In order to improve standards and the quality of provision the school should:
- (1) Do everything it can to ensure that teachers have the highest possible expectations of what the pupils are capable of and that they challenge the pupils to achieve their best. (paragraphs 21, 68, 71, 76, 81, 99, 117)
 - (2) Improve standards and learning resources in art and design, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, history, geography and physical education by implementing the action plans it has ready ensuring that
 - all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered and statutory requirements are met;
 - all subjects are adequately resourced;
 - assessment procedures are rigorously developed;
 - computers are used to enhance learning in the subject;
 - training is provided where teachers' confidence is less secure, particularly in physical education.(paragraphs 88-112, 119-124)
 - (3) Improve the provision for pupils' cultural development including the programme for educational visits by enabling the pupils to
 - recognise, explore and understand their own cultural values;
 - come into contact with the traditions and values of a broad range of cultures;
 - participate in literature, drama, music, art, crafts from a broad range of cultures;
 - enjoy a rich programme of visits to places such as museums, theatres and galleries and to seek partnerships with visitors who can extend pupils' cultural awareness.and to
 - purchase resources such as musical instruments and books from other cultures. (paragraphs 32, 36, 89, 105)
 - (4) Extend and enrich pupils' language and vocabulary, both spoken and written in all subjects by planning appropriate opportunities into lessons and other school activities. (paragraphs 62, 72, 78, 81, 94, 122)
 - (5) Ensure that older children in the nursery and reception aged children are challenged appropriately by:
 - increasing the level of challenge in activities and raising teachers' expectations;

- improving communication language and literacy by planning imaginative activities that develop speaking and listening, reading and writing;
- improving teaching in physical development and outdoor play by providing a sufficient range of appropriate resources and activities to challenge children to move imaginatively and with growing confidence.

(paragraphs 61,62, 67, 68)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

The school should also improve:

- The quality of presentation of pupils' work, ensuring consistency across the school.
- Pupils' referencing skills and provide a well-stocked library, which contains books to challenge and interest all ages and groups within the school.
- Pupils' mental calculation skills.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	12	17	4	0	0
Percentage	0	8	34	47	11	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27	165
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	97

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	9	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys*			
	Girls*			
	Total	19	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (77)	95 (69)	100 (81)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys*			
	Girls*			
	Total	19	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (81)	100 (96)	100 (88)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	10	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys*			
	Girls*			
	Total	15	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (65)	75 (69)	85 (85)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys*			
	Girls*			
	Total	15	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (n/a)	75 (n/a)	80 (n/a)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

- Test and examination data have been excluded from this report because there are ten or fewer boys and girls in the year group.

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	124	1	
White – Irish			
White – any other White background	4		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background	9		
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	3		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean	6		
Black or Black British – African	4		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	1	
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group	9		
No ethnic group recorded			

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

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	171

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Total number of education support staff	2

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	444,759
Total expenditure	437,461
Expenditure per pupil	2,093
Balance brought forward from previous year	51,000
Balance carried forward to next year	58,298

Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

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	192
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	32	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	42	7	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	43	9	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	41	17	3	16
The teaching is good.	42	51	1	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	36	20	4	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	32	7	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	35	6	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	26	42	22	0	10
The school is well led and managed.	39	39	13	3	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	55	9	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	35	30	6	16

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

56. At the time of the inspection there were 54 children attending part-time in the nursery. Children are admitted to the nursery in the term after their third birthday. In January, children who are five will move into a reception class. At the time of the inspection there was no reception class and older children had been in the nursery for six terms. The nursery class has a full time teacher and a nursery nurse. A supply teacher is currently replacing the permanent teacher who has been absent for most of the term. Children make a smooth transition from home to the nursery. Parents and children are well prepared by visits and communication before they commence school. A few children have attended local playgroups before they come to school and all the children remain at the school after their time in the nursery. Attainment on entry to the reception class is below average. No children have been identified with special educational needs; there is one child who speaks English as an additional language and who is making sound progress. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and teachers update records regularly. Assessment information on admission contributes to the ongoing assessment procedures carried out during the year. Teachers use assessment to inform planning, however, it is not used well enough to challenge older and higher attaining children.

57. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in improving the quality of the curriculum, resources, teaching and learning although there are still areas of weakness. The school has met the requirements of the key issue to provide a balanced curriculum for children in the nursery. The nursery provides a satisfactory learning environment for young children. However, the older children who have spent six terms in the nursery are not always challenged sufficiently especially in communication, language, literacy and physical development. The rate of progress has improved from poor to satisfactory overall. The teachers have benefited from support from the local authority and teaching is now satisfactory overall but there is some unsatisfactory teaching in physical development and communication, language and literacy. The outdoor area needs developing to make it an exciting and stimulating environment. There is access to a tarmac and grass area but there is no regular access to climbing equipment. Resources for indoor play are satisfactory but the quality of resources for outdoor play is unsatisfactory.

58. Standards are below average in communication, language and literacy and physical development and children are unlikely to meet the expected goals. In all other areas of learning, children attain the expected standard for their age. The school has improved planning since the last inspection and it follows the nationally recommended curriculum. Day to day planning is satisfactory for the younger children but there are still areas of weakness in the planning for the older children.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. By the end of the reception year, the children will achieve the expected learning goals. They enjoy coming to school and soon learn the procedures and routines because they are carefully planned and implemented. Children experience a caring and secure environment, where expected behaviour is clearly identified. There are appropriate opportunities for all children to select areas of activity. Older children play alongside and with younger children and most co-operate well with each other sharing toys and resources. Children have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Opportunities to show initiative are less well developed because adults over-direct the activities and do not always encourage children to share and extend their own ideas. The children are developing their levels of concentration. They behave sensibly and are developing levels of co-operation for example they play in the home area and help each other caring for the baby dolls or organising the trucks and lorries in the fire station.

They have learnt to take turns and consider others. The Diwali celebration helps children develop a growing understanding that people have different cultures and beliefs.

60. Teaching is satisfactory and contributes to standards achieved because consistent messages are clearly given and reinforced in a firm way. The quality of teaching could be better if children were challenged more to develop their own thinking skills and encouraged to show more initiative and independence.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Few children attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. Children listen well, focus on their teacher and other adults and follow instructions. They enjoy listening to stories and children have a positive attitude to books and they know books communicate meaning and older children know that print goes from left to right. They all handle books carefully and take books home regularly. Observation of work scrutiny indicates that a few higher attaining children write simple sentences and begin to write unaided, they sequence the story of the elves and the shoemaker. Writing skills are less well developed for the majority, adults often write the child's name on worksheets and children are not always challenged to write their own names. Opportunities to encourage children to develop their speaking skills are not always taken and there are insufficient opportunities for children to explain and talk about events and activities. Children's vocabulary is limited for example when explaining to visiting adults the characters and events of a story. Adults do not focus on extending vocabulary enough. There is insufficient encouragement to independently select and look at books. Although children make sound progress recognising letters older children's ability to sound out letters is not well developed and consequently they are not making as much progress reading as they should. Older five year olds can identify letters in a book but cannot put them together to make words for example they can say 'g' 'e' 't' but not 'g-e-t'. Older children in the nursery take words home but they receive insufficient challenge in lessons to use them. Activities lack imagination, for example worksheets are regularly used for nursery children to join dots and colour in pictures.

62. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall in this area of learning. Adults are caring and have a good relationship with the children but they do not always build on the good relationship they have developed to extend the children's thinking and literacy skills. Teaching lacks an imaginative and lively approach needed to raise standards from below average to what is expected. Questions are not always used skilfully to extend speaking skills.

Mathematical development

63. By the end of the reception year, the children will achieve the expected learning goals. Older higher attaining children in the nursery recognise basic shapes and can identify a square because it has four sides and four corners. They guess and name the shape in the 'feelie' bag correctly. Scrutiny of work indicates that higher attaining children recognise numbers 0-10 and can arrange them in the correct order. They count the number of objects and do simple addition and take away sums using numbers under ten. Average children complete the same activities using numbers under five. Lower attaining children add one to numbers under five. Children make satisfactory progress in counting skills, higher attaining children count to 12. The children are encouraged to create a repeating pattern with the beads. Higher attaining children manage this, average and lower attaining children need adult support. Singing rhymes are used to develop counting on and subtraction. In the nursery children can draw and recognise the basic shapes correctly. Activities tend to lack imagination for example children sit at a table and join dots on worksheets to make squares and colour squares. Scrutiny of work indicates too much use of worksheets for young children.

64. Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and adults reinforce learning well. Time is used effectively and in the better sessions activities extend learning in a practical way. When teaching is less effective activities tend to lack imagination for example children sit at a table and join dots on worksheets to make squares and colour squares.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. Children make satisfactory progress in learning about the wider world around and achieve the expected learning goals by the end of the reception year. There are appropriate opportunities to build and construct a range of objects. Opportunities for children to be independent in planning the style of their vehicle are unsatisfactory. Children are encouraged to use the computer and are making sound progress developing confidence and competence using the mouse to move the cursor in different directions. They develop an awareness of light and enjoy using torches to explore the effect of light on different shapes in the dark house. The teacher explains how the torches work with batteries and reinforces learning well. Children develop their knowledge of how plants grow and all children experience planting their own tubs. Most children know the primary colours. They are beginning to know the days of the week and the date, and they have a sound awareness of different weather conditions because they help their teacher complete the weather chart every day. All nursery children attend assemblies alongside older children and learn about their religion and culture within a Catholic school.

66. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan an interesting range of activities that children enjoy and extend their learning experiences. When teaching is less effective children experience a lot of adult directed activities and they do not always have the opportunity to investigate and find out about objects and features of living things, for example they plant bulbs but are not challenged to consider how the bulb will grow.

Physical development

67. By the end of the reception year, the children do not achieve the early learning goals and make unsatisfactory progress in improving their skills of co-ordination, control, movement and manipulation. They are able to handle tools, objects and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. They complete jigsaw puzzles, match and position shapes and use pencils, crayons, scissors and paint brushes effectively and with confidence. However, the outdoor activities offer a narrow range of opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. Movement opportunities are limited, for example there are no resources for children to develop balancing and jumping skills and opportunities for climbing are limited. When the weather is inclement, physical activities are often missed. Children use the small bikes but many are too small for the older children. The nursery is timetabled for a session in the hall each week but this is sometimes missed as it was during the inspection. The grass area is muddy but the outside area is not utilised fully. The nursery has a selection of small equipment but the range is limited.

68. Teaching is unsatisfactory for outdoor play and physical development. There are insufficient opportunities to develop confidence using a range of outdoor resources. Outdoor sessions are conducted at a brisk pace but the movement content is limited and opportunities to extend children's vocabulary of movement are not good enough. Teachers give appropriate attention to safety aspects but do not encourage children's natural spontaneity and joy in physical activity. The development of physical skills is too narrow. Expectations are not high enough and children are not challenged to extend the range of their physical skills and to experience the joy of moving.

Creative development

69. By the end of the reception year, the children will achieve the expected learning goals. Children confidently mix paints and use pencils, crayons and complete simple collages. They complete sponge paintings and they make clay divas for the Diwali celebration. Parent helpers make a very good contribution and encourage children to use their imagination when painting their diva holders. Children paint stripes, blobs of colour, swirls and can mix colours. They paint their own portraits well identifying main features such as the mouth, nose and hair colour. Artwork is appreciated and displayed in the classroom. The role-play home area extends imagination and gives children the opportunity to think of others for example preparing the dolls for their day and looking after them. Singing is good. The teacher encourages the children to learn and sing a range of songs such as 'No more monkeys sitting on the bed.' Opportunities to handle percussion instruments are limited because there are not enough percussion instruments in the nursery.

70. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Parent helpers make a significant contribution to the quality of learning. There are daily opportunities for children to use paint and a range of pastels and crayons. Opportunities for older children to extend their creative experiences are limited because expectations are not always high enough.

ENGLISH

71. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year olds, standards were above the national average and well above those of schools with a similar intake of pupils. In the previous inspection standards were found to be average but since then standards have been well below the national average other than a rise in 1999 which then quickly dipped again to well below average again the next year. This is because of ineffective leadership and significant weaknesses in teaching in the school during these years. The situation has changed significantly and under the new headteacher standards, teaching and pupils' learning are improving at a good rate and are currently average by the time they leave the school. The Year 6 group did well last year but the ability of the current year group is not quite as good and pupils are achieving average results. Teaching, although satisfactory, does not always challenge the pupils sufficiently well and further improvements are still taking place. In the tests for seven-year olds, standards were above average in reading and well above average in writing. However, inspection evidence finds that current standards are below average in reading and writing. This is because of the different ability overall of the year group and also because pupils in Year 2 experienced instability in teaching when they were in Year 1 which had a negative impact on learning. For the previous four years standards were well below average in reading and predominantly below average in writing. Currently, boys and girls, including those from ethnic minority groups and those who speak English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they are well supported in lessons and staff know what they need to do to improve. Pupils who are higher attaining receive appropriately challenging work in most lessons.

72. Standards in listening are average throughout the school and pupils listen to their teachers well. Speaking skills are below average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. Pupils are attentive listeners and interact well with other pupils in the class. They are keen to respond to teachers and answer questions and express their ideas. In some lessons, pupils make good progress in their learning such as in a Year 1 lesson in design and technology when skilful questioning by the teacher enables the pupils to describe how they would plan to make a moving picture. In a Year 3/4-literacy lesson, pupils readily say what they think about a newspaper article on the murder of Caesar and give reasons using the text as an example. In science lessons in Years 2 and 6, pupils are able to describe scientific principles showing a good understanding of scientific vocabulary. However,

teachers do not challenge the pupils well enough to use language in imaginative ways and often talk at the pupils too much, rather than use that time to extend the pupils' language and vocabulary. Pupils are not encouraged enough to give reasons for opinions or extend their ideas in the light of discussion. By the end of Year 6, most pupils talk and listen confidently in most lessons and communicate ideas. They show understanding of the main points of a lesson and can develop ideas, describe events and convey their opinions using standard English vocabulary and grammar. However, because teaching does not challenge pupils to make contributions often enough and to ask questions, these skills could be better. More could be made of sessions at the end of lessons to develop pupils' speaking, language and vocabulary skills. Drama is not used sufficiently to express pupils' ideas and feelings.

73. Current standards in reading are below average by the end of Year 2 and broadly average by the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils enjoy stories they read and know what they like. They are not confident with difficult words. They know they can sound them out but are hesitant and do not use expression. Lower attaining pupils have clear targets to help them improve. Higher attaining pupils are more confident and know what an author and illustrator are. Most pupils take books home and read them with their parents. There is a good range of books for them to read, which have been purchased recently. Pupils in Year 6 read with fluency and understanding, are mainly accurate and have a satisfactory understanding of significant ideas, events and characters. They can make a good attempt at explaining difficult words and are beginning to use inference and deduction. Most find pleasure in reading and enjoy newspapers and magazines. There are weaknesses throughout the school in pupils' referencing skills, which are not as developed as they could be because this has not been specifically planned for and because there is a lack of non fiction books and no library at present.

74. Standards in writing are below average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those who are higher attaining are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress in writing. In Year 1, pupils are making good progress this term although their skills are below average. They write simple sentences with a few words spelt correctly. They sometimes use capital letters and full stops but know they should. Higher attaining pupils show a suitable understanding of rhyming. Year 2 pupils recognise and use simple spelling patterns, write common letter strings and spell common words. They make satisfactory progress in handwriting but letters are not always accurately formed and consistent in size. The presentation of work is not good enough and shows a lack of care. This is because teachers do not make it clear that this is required. Pupils put their ideas into sentences and sequence events, writing stories and books such as 'Mr Grumpy's aeroplane'. However, many pupils do not write in a broad enough range of styles or in an imaginative way. Higher attaining pupils use speech marks appropriately and captions and write an explanation such as 'a good way to trap a lion'. They write simple instructional text on how to make a puppet and know the importance of numbering and order. In a Year 2/3 class, higher attaining Year 2 pupils draft a story showing awareness of the setting. They identify an alien character and describe it and are beginning to show awareness of the reader by using some interesting vocabulary.

75. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' work shows more confidence, control and imagination. They know common prefixes and suffixes and synonyms and understand the grammatical functions of words, including nouns, verbs and adjectives. Handwriting shows more care on occasions but still lacks consistency and too much work is untidy and letters incorrectly formed. Teachers extend pupils' written vocabulary more in these classes but not consistently and teachers still tend to take too much time of the lesson talking at pupils and not enabling them to regularly make contributions or have enough time to concentrate on developing their writing. The pupils write across an adequate range of writing styles such as letters, poems and plays. Year 4 pupils make good progress in finding key words and phrases that give information from a newspaper and recognise that headlines do not reflect

accurate English grammar. They know that words such as 'stabbed' and 'wild' are there to catch the reader's interest. They are broadening their vocabulary and beginning to use a richer vocabulary such as 'The raider whirled his axe around his head'. In Year 5 higher attaining pupils use asides to the reader such as 'or had it been a dream?'. Their work is lively and thoughtful. In a good lesson in Year 6, pupils are keen to contribute with words after hearing the poem 'Annabell and the witches'. Most pupils write continuing the poem and read their work well out to the class. Higher attaining pupils write in response to questions such as 'What do you think witches really look like?' thinking well about their answers and discussing them. These examples of good work are not reflected in the quality of pupils' writing over a period of time, which often lacks richness in the language and vocabulary used and interesting ideas are not developed as much as they could be. Pupils are applying their literacy skills appropriately in subjects such as science, history and ICT but examples are rare and not consistently used in these and other subjects.

76. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good lessons. Teaching in the school is improving because of the programme of monitoring and support that the headteacher has put in place. Teachers implement the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily. Lessons are planned appropriately and teachers identify learning objectives clearly, which they share with the pupils. Teachers manage the classrooms well and this enables the pupils to concentrate and work purposefully. Teachers and pupils enjoy discussing what is to be learnt during the lesson and pupils are interested and well motivated. A good feature is that teachers are marking pupils' work well and making them aware of what they need to do to improve. The teachers plan and organise suitable activities for the pupils and there is appropriate attention to ensuring that planning identifies suitably challenging work for all ages and abilities but on some occasions it is not challenging enough. Once lessons start, however, the pace is not brisk enough and on too many occasions the teachers talk at the pupils and do not ask them open ended questions or involve them in writing tasks that will enable a faster rate of learning. Pupils put a satisfactory level of intellectual and creative effort into their work but are capable of higher levels if they were challenged more. The good lessons move at a brisk pace and contain more challenge for the pupils and more opportunity for them to extend their speaking, language and vocabulary skills. The end of the literacy sessions are used to identify what pupils have learned, but often in satisfactory lessons the teachers do this for the pupils, who miss out on the opportunity to express their own ideas. Other than in the best lessons, teachers do not issue more challenge or encourage the pupils to think about what they need to learn next. Teaching assistants and parent helpers provide good support in lessons particularly for pupils with special educational needs.

77. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of where the subject is now and how to improve standards. There has been a large investment this year on published schemes, books with large text and a new reading scheme. The school has also invested on training in reading and writing after local authority monitoring highlighted the need to implement the literacy hour more effectively. There is now a good portfolio of pupils' writing where teachers have agreed national curriculum levels. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and include the use of optional tests which have been used to track pupils' progress from Year 2 upwards and have helped in the decisions needed on the new lists for the new classes this term with more than one year group. Analysis of these has also led to the setting of targets for writing, spelling and higher order reading skills, which are identified in a good literacy action plan. There is no policy for English at present and this is due to be written this year.

MATHEMATICS

78. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils are doing reasonably well. Over the last four years standards have been consistently below average by the end of Year 6 so recent test results and inspection evidence indicate good improvement for the school. The high standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 last year do not reflect the current standards as this Year 2 are

a lower ability year group and did not make the progress that they could have last year because of instability in staffing. A weakness at present is that pupils are not making the progress they could in mental calculation skills, as these are not taught consistently in numeracy lessons. In all other areas of mathematics the pupils are achieving appropriately well but to improve further the pupils need to develop more flexible approaches to problem solving and look for ways to overcome difficulties, explaining their reasons. Standards are the same as at the last inspection but considering the below average attainment since then there has been a good improvement in the last year.

79. By the end of Year 2, standards are average. Pupils add, subtract, divide and multiply simple number problems. They have a satisfactory grasp of mathematical language and can discuss what they have done but are not so good at explaining their results. Most pupils work competently with numbers up to 100 and the higher attaining pupils can work with larger numbers. They make some good progress in using money and count in twos, fives and tens. The highest attaining Year 2 pupils are in a Year 3 class, which has a good impact on their attainment. They know the basics of telling the time using an analogue and digital clock. Most pupils use hand spans to measure distance and the higher attaining pupils use metres and centimetres. They have a satisfactory understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes.

80. By the end of Year 6, standards are average. Considering their prior attainment pupils in Years 3-6 are making good progress. Pupils use the number system confidently and work well in the four number operations. Year 3 pupils do well in doubling and halving numbers and recognising half of a shape. Pupils in Year 4 make good progress in solving problems involving two digit numbers and discuss their ideas well and higher attaining pupils set themselves a challenge of using three digit numbers using money. By the end of Year 6, pupils are good at working with high numbers and use their understanding of place value to multiply and divide whole numbers. Pupils recognise and describe number patterns, and relationships including multiple and factor. They have a good knowledge of fractions, decimals and percentages. They find perimeters and areas of simple shapes. They make good progress in their understanding of probability and handling data. They find out and record using ICT the chances of throwing numbers on a dice and do other investigations such as tossing a coin and the chances of being chased by a lion. They make tally charts and construct graphs showing information such as the attendance at a sports centre. Pupils in Year 6 also make good use of ICT when using a spreadsheet to plan a budget for a party. Although pupils can solve calculations, they do not have a rapid enough recall of number facts as this is not taught consistently in lessons. Pupils are recording the learning objectives well in their books. Work is well marked but the presentation in many classes is not neat or clear enough.

81. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good, although in one unsatisfactory lesson, the level of work given to the pupils was not challenging enough. In most lessons, work is planned well to match the needs of pupils. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and implement the National Numeracy Strategy appropriately. Lesson objectives are clearly explained to the pupils. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons and contribute well to the progress the pupils make. The pupils respond by eagerly getting on with their work and show a confidence and enjoyment in mathematics. In a good lesson in Year 1, the teacher used questioning well to challenge the pupils to describe the sequence of activities during the school day. Other good features were in a Year 2/3 lesson where the teacher assessed pupils' understanding during the lesson and gave them additional support and challenge to ensure that they all understood. Some lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and teachers sharpen and develop pupils' mental skills rigorously at the beginning of lessons but this is not consistent in all lessons. In many lessons the teachers include time for pupils to discuss their mathematical work and try to explain their thinking using mathematical language. However, this aspect should be more rigorously taught so that pupils become better at using precise mathematical language, developing their own strategies for solving problems and trying out ideas of their own. An

unsatisfactory feature is that the level of work given to the pupils is not challenging enough and pupils do tasks that are too easy. Although this may be necessary at present because of gaps in their knowledge, the level of challenge is too low, and pupils do not progress well enough in their learning.

82. The co-ordination of mathematics is satisfactory. An action plan has been produced and increasing the confidence of teachers to implement the numeracy curriculum is a priority for the school this year. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory and these are being used to guide curriculum planning but more rigorous assessment is needed in using and applying mathematics. Test results are being very well analysed and used to set targets. Pupils have their targets clearly written in their books. The co-ordinator has attended training and is disseminating the information to the staff and reviewing planning. There is a programme of lesson observations and targets are set with the teachers afterwards. The school is improving its resources for mathematics and there is an adequate range of books to support the teaching.

SCIENCE

83. By the end Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve standards that are in line with national average and Currently all groups of pupils are making good progress because of good teaching and improved provision for the subject. The school has analysed its own test scores and is using the information well to inform planning and identify areas in its provision for the subject that need strengthening.

84. By the end of Year 2, pupils are aware of the importance of diet and its effect on their health and have produced a good level of work on the subject. During their work on food they have developed their ability to classify things into groups, for example, those that are healthy or not healthy. As part of their work on electricity pupils have gained an understanding of the use of circuits and drawn diagrams illustrating how they work. Pupils have done work on the life cycle of a gnat and have a basic understanding of the fact that animals are adapted to their environment, for example, by having different kinds of teeth. By the end of Year 6, pupils have an understanding of the concept of what constitutes a fair test. In their study of materials they correctly identify processes that are reversible or irreversible. For example, they know that burning produces an irreversible change in materials. They understand that not all microbes are harmful and that some have a positive effect on their lives, for example, the action of yeast. Pupils understand the process of shadow formation and how shadows change depending on the position of the light source.

85. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers encourage their pupils to contribute their ideas to lessons and to co-operate with each other. They ensure that the pupils understand the objectives of the lesson and maintain good relationships with them. Pupils who need it are well supported in lessons by their teachers or learning support assistants. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils made very good progress in their knowledge of how human beings change as they get older when their teacher arranged for a baby and toddler to come into school so that they could make comparisons between the two. The lesson was developed well by the teacher and the pupils paid full attention to what was happening and maintained their interest throughout. The methods used by the teacher also provided a good link to their literacy work for the pupils when they were asked to formulate questions to ask the parents of the two children. In a Year 5/6 lesson pupils progressed very well in their knowledge of gravity and how force is measured because of the teachers good subject knowledge and the very well planned experiments arranged for them. In a good link to literacy, pupils in a Year 4/5 lesson on the solar system made satisfactory progress in the development of their study skills. However, some of the pupils' work viewed during the inspection was untidy and showed lack of care.

86. There have been a number of improvements in provision for the subject since the last inspection. The school has taken note of the comment in the last report about the poor level of

resourcing for the subject and this is now good. The rate of pupil progress has improved from satisfactory to good. There have been recent improvements that are not specifically associated with the last report, for example, the use of an agreed format for teacher planning and an increased level of subject monitoring. Teaching is well monitored with written feedback being given to the teachers concerned. Common features identified during the monitoring of teaching are noted by the co-ordinator and it is planned to use this information to inform future staff meetings. However, there is still insufficient use of ICT in the subject. There is no system of recording the progress of pupils common to the whole school.

87. There is a clear action plan that outlines the future development of the subject, for example, the development of marking, assessment and investigational work. The good level of management by the co-ordinator is also a strength of the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

88. By the end of Year 2, pupils are achieving standards in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving standards that are below those expected nationally for their age group. Progress for the older pupils is unsatisfactory. The school's provision for the subject is not as strong as that outlined in the last inspection. It was not possible to observe any art taught during the inspection but available evidence was scrutinised and discussions held with pupils and staff.

89. Pupils in Year 1 have produced some self-portraits that demonstrate a developing ability to observe and reproduce what is around them. They have used colour well to produce pictures of random shapes. In Year 2 pupils have used their ICT skills to demonstrate their ability to design pictures and use colour on computers. They have also drawn and coloured pictures using their knowledge of different shapes, this constitutes a good link to their work in mathematics. Pupils in Year 5 have looked at the style of Piet Mondrian and have produced some good examples of his style on computers. In Year 6 pupils have copied the style of Degas in drawing and colouring action pictures, some of which included some well observed horses. However, older pupils lack a depth of experience in different art forms and the use of materials. For example, there were no three-dimensional pictures presented for scrutiny or on display in the school, and pupils' work shows a general level of immaturity even when allowance is made for their age. Pupils are not good at talking about their work and how it can be improved. There is insufficient coverage of the art forms of other cultures. The school has improved its use of ICT since the previous inspection.

90. Leadership is satisfactory. The school is aware that it needs to strengthen its provision now that it has developed English, mathematics and science. It also recognises the need to ensure that pupils are given an appropriate amount of time to develop their skills. There is a detailed subject development plan that recognises the need for a whole school system of assessment. Monitoring of the subject to ensure that the scheme of work is fully implemented is due to take place.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. By the end of Year 2, pupils are achieving standards in line with those expected nationally. By the end of Year 6, all groups of pupils are achieving at a level that is well below that expected for their age group. Inspection evidence finds that the low standards are because of the overall provision by the school for the subject, rather than with the pupils' ability to learn or with the quality of teaching. The subject does not meet statutory requirements, which is the same situation as that found in the previous inspection.

92. Currently, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in their work thanks to the good level of teaching provided for them. A very good lesson was observed in Year 1 where the teacher displayed a very good knowledge of the subject. The progress of all pupils in Years 3-6 is clearly unsatisfactory when their low level of attainment is taken into account. However, it should be noted that in the one lesson for older pupils observed during the inspection their learning was judged to be satisfactory as was the teaching.

93. It is clear from discussions with Year 6 pupils that they lack the background knowledge of the subject that they need in order to progress further. This has been recognised by their teacher who is doing whatever possible to try to redress the balance. Pupils in Year 6 are making satisfactory progress in their ability to design a moving vehicle powered by electricity because their teacher, using short term assessment well, has recognised their low level of knowledge about the design process and has repeated some work done previously. The designs that have been produced by the pupils demonstrate that the majority have the ability to perform in the subject to at least a satisfactory level if given the opportunity. Pupils in a Year 3/4 class have produced some imaginative designs for torches to perform a variety of functions, for example, torches to fit on a fireman's helmet and some to be used underwater. Their designs show an awareness of the importance of function, materials and presentation. In good links to science and literacy they have designed the necessary circuits to put into their torches and their designs are well labelled and contain instructions on the materials to be used.

94. The school fully recognises that because of its concentration over the recent past on the development of English, mathematics and science that design and technology has, as a subject, not been developed and monitored to a sufficient degree. The school has not met the statutory requirements for the subject by not ensuring that older pupils have had the experiences they need in planning and communicating ideas, working with tools to produce quality products and evaluating and improving their work. The contribution of the subject to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory.

95. Leadership is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and determined to improve the school's provision for the subject, and thus the attainment of the pupils. The school is now striving to improve the provision for the subject with a well formulated development plan that includes the introduction of a new scheme of work. The other improvements outlined in the plan are to improve teachers' knowledge, to introduce a system for the assessment and recording of pupil progress and ensure that the new scheme is properly resourced to enable its full implementation, following an audit of resources by the co-ordinator. Another important area that the school has recognised in its action plan as in need of development is the monitoring of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

96. By the end of Year 2, pupils are achieving standards in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving standards that are below those expected nationally for their age group. The progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The progress made by all groups of pupils between Years 3 and 6 is unsatisfactory. Inspection evidence finds that the drop in standards and the rate of progress of the older pupils since the last inspection is the result of the fall in the level of provision for the subject provided by the school since the previous inspection. The school is now following national guidelines and curriculum is being planned satisfactorily but this has not yet had an impact on improving standards.

97. Pupils in Year 1 are developing their knowledge of their environment with well produced maps of their routes to school and pictures of some of the features of the local area such as shops and houses. They have drawn pictures of their favourite place and given an explanation as to why they

like it. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate a good level of awareness of the local area and are able to name some of the main feature and places associated with it. For example, they know that there is a super-store, library, games areas and other open spaces. They are aware of the factors that effect their environment such as cars, vandalism and litter and how it can be improved. They know that Reading is the name of their home town and that it is in England. Most of them talk about the different places they have visited and make comparisons between them and where they live.

98. Year 6 pupils identify the points of the compass and name the countries of the United Kingdom. Although able to discuss some of the more obvious differences between different localities they are not able to do so in any great depth. When prompted a minority are able to name some of the countries of Europe but had to be reminded about where it was. They can name some of the features that surround the British Isles such as the Irish Sea, English Channel and Atlantic Ocean. When discussing the environment they are aware of the need to preserve the rain forests but are unsure about why they are important to the world.

99. The school has no system of assessment and recording. The scheme of work used within the subject is relatively new and is still in the process of review by the school and as such is not yet fully effective. There is a lack of a rigorous system of subject monitoring that could be used to identify weaknesses in the school's provision and thus improve attainment and progress. The resources available for teaching the subject are generally unsatisfactory. The school is very aware that in order to improve attainment it needs to develop all of these areas and has identified them in its current subject development plan for action early in 2003. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and this was unsatisfactory because the pace was too slow and pupils did not make enough progress in their learning. There is insufficient use made of ICT within the subject and the quality of the work produced by pupils is in need of a review by the subject co-ordinator. There is a lack of challenge in some of the work given to pupils, in particular for the more able. The contribution of the subject to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory.

100. Leadership is satisfactory and there is a good action plan that shows the school is well aware of what it has to do to improve standards and the provision.

HISTORY

101. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve standards that are typical for their age and they make good progress in their learning. By the end of Year 6, standards are below what is normally expected. Currently all groups of pupils in Year 6 are making satisfactory progress in their learning and are enjoying the subject. However, their progress since the last inspection has not been good enough because planning and teaching had not enabled them to build on their knowledge and skills as they have moved up through the school. Because of this, standards have deteriorated since the last inspection. The school is now following national guidelines and curriculum is being planned satisfactorily and some good teaching was observed during the inspection.

102. By the end of Year 2, pupils can identify some differences between conditions in hospitals during the time of Florence Nightingale and the present day. They identify some ways Florence Nightingale improved conditions for both nurses and soldiers during the Crimean War. Pupils know there were no video cameras and videos because there was no electricity. Pupils are very interested in the work and they know Florence Nightingale was called 'The lady with the lamp.' Lower attaining pupils are working securely at the expected level of attainment. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are taught alongside Year 3 pupils. They can talk about the Roman invasion and have some understanding of the Roman soldiers. Pupils know Boudicca was Celtic and the daughter of the King of Icena. They can empathise with the Celts and give sensible reasons why the Romans army of 10,000

overpowered the Celts' army of 100,000. They suggest the Roman army was better organised and the men were fitter.

103. Currently, progress is satisfactory as pupils move through the school. In Years 3 and 4, pupils enjoy learning about the Tudors. Higher attaining pupils convert the cost of items of clothing bought in Tudor times to current day prices. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs find the research work using worksheet information over-challenging. By the end of Year 6, have developed some understanding of the conditions working people experienced after the Second World War and they are able to make some comparisons to the present day. They record differences between the 1960s and current day but the quality and quantity of recorded work is below what is expected for this age group. Factual knowledge of aspects of British history is limited and they do not have a clear understanding of historical periods.

104. Teaching is good in Years 1 to 3 and satisfactory in Years 4 to 6. No teaching was observed in Year 6. In the good lessons teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and develop pupils' understanding skilfully. Questions are well used to check understanding and encourage pupils to extend their thinking skills and to give reasons for their answers. The work is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils consequently pupils are very interested in the work. During a good Year 2 lesson, pupils learnt about the conditions in hospitals during the time of Florence Nightingale, the teacher made good links to reinforce learning about health education. When teaching is less effective teachers are limited by a lack of artefacts and resources to enrich learning. Children mainly use worksheets to research information. The pace of learning in some lessons slows down because pupils are engaged for too long in cutting out information and this detracts from learning about historical information. The use of literacy to enhance learning could be better although there was a good example in Years 3/4 where pupils studied and discussed a newspaper article about the murder of Caesar. Teachers do not use drama to enrich learning. There is some evidence to suggest teachers use ICT to research information but lack of software means that this is limited. Assessment is still to be developed.

105. Leadership is satisfactory. There is a clear and appropriate action plan to develop the subject. There are currently no opportunities to use local historical sources and learning and there are too few visits or visitors to enrich learning in history. Resources are unsatisfactory; teachers have to rely on photocopied worksheets to research their information. There has been no recent training to develop teaching and learning in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

106. Standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally, but standards by the end of Year 6 are below what is expected. Year 6 pupils are making good progress considering their prior attainment and the previous lack of adequate provision, which they experienced during their earlier years in the school.

107. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress improving standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Training has helped to improve teachers' confidence and knowledge. Planning is now good and contributes to improved standards. The school has created a computer suite and all classes have weekly access to it, with additional time for using ICT across the curriculum. The school is beginning to use ICT to enhance learning in other curriculum areas but it is not as strong as it could be. Resources are still unsatisfactory. Classrooms have a computer but these are not well used and need to be up-dated. The school has insufficient software to enhance learning across the curriculum. There are no scanners or digital cameras.

108. By the end of Year 2, pupils use computers confidently. They know how to type a capital letter and use the shift key and space bar. They know how to move the cursor backwards and forwards and they can delete unwanted work. Higher attaining pupils can use the spell check. They type text from the 'Christmas story'. Pupils can open programs and they are able to save their work on disc. They use drawing software to produce their own attractive pictures and use the computer to type poems and English work. The quality of this is good. Pupils use capitals appropriately and spelling and punctuation are accurate. Pupils in Year 2 produce the text for their own version of the Christmas story.

109. Pupils are making good progress as they move through the school. Year 3 and 4 pupils enter data and produce a bar graph and pie chart. Lower attaining pupils present work as a pie chart and pupils with special educational needs are well supported and complete work alongside their peers. Year 4 and 5 pupils use ICT well to enhance learning in other subject areas but this aspect needs to be more evident throughout the school. They create a good plan of the computer room and their own classroom. They show increasing confidence in their use of computers and they are able to research information from the Internet and use what they have found in their studies. They find information about the solar system using the Internet. Artwork is produced effectively on the computer in the style of Mondrian.

110. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average because pupils are still covering work missed in earlier years. They are currently working on work normally seen in Year 5 in some aspects of ICT. In a good link with numeracy, Year 6 pupils know how to enter numbers into a spreadsheet to help them plan the cost of a Christmas party. They are challenged to keep the total cost to £160 for 16 pupils. They know data can be collected and presented in different formats. Average and lower attaining pupils enter numbers into a spreadsheet but need support to use simple formulae. Higher attaining pupils use simple formulae to calculate the total cost of the party items. They complete spreadsheets to help them with their times table. They have not used spreadsheets to explore changes in results or to apply their knowledge. Work using machines to control movement is limited but pupils have visited a local centre to experience control mechanisms. No pupils have experienced sending mail electronically. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 combine text and pictures when they create birthday party invitations using a range of different font styles and colours.

111. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory given the lack of use across the curriculum but there are some good lessons in the computer suite. Teachers have worked hard to improve their own skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT and they are following national guidelines for their planning. Pupils clearly enjoy their time in the ICT suite and develop their personal skills sharing the computer with others. Lessons are well organised and all teachers have their own record sheet that is also used for assessment. When teaching is less effective pupils sit on the carpet for too long before they use the computers and work is not always planned for higher attaining pupils. In some lessons lower attaining pupils were reluctant to use the mouse and often let their partner be the dominant one making the decisions.

112. Leadership is satisfactory and the co-ordinator has produced a clear and appropriate action plan for the development of the subject. The co-ordinator has been responsible for ICT since the beginning of the term. The school follows national guidelines for planning the curriculum.

MUSIC

113. The standard of attainment in music by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is typical for pupils of this age. All groups of pupils are making satisfactory progress. Since the last inspection standards in music have slipped from above average to average. This is because the school no longer benefits

from specialist teaching. The teachers have, however, adapted well to teaching their own music lessons. Music is not celebrated enough during assembly.

114. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve average standards in performance, listening and appreciation of music. The quality of singing is good and pupils enjoy music. Pupils learn and sing a range of songs from memory and can sing in two parts. They sing confidently changing tempo, rhythm and pitch appropriately. Pupils aged five to seven perform confidently for their age opening their mouths well and singing all the words clearly and with expression. They accompany their singing with simple appropriate movement gestures. By the age of seven, pupils make good progress using their voices to respond to pitch shape cards. They can regulate their voices up and down following a simple pattern. They use their voices confidently when they sing 'Take the hat.' Pupils select appropriate percussion instruments and consider the sound appropriate to accompany the story 'Peace at last.' The majority of pupils know how to hold and play instruments such as the triangle because the teacher guides pupils and ensures they do it correctly. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to listen to and comment on the style of the music. They are encouraged to listen to music and use their imagination to consider how the music could represent scenes from Jack and the Beanstalk. Pupils are challenged to explain why they like the music and what it reminds them of. They talk about the large steps of the giant when he chases Jack in the Jack in the beanstalk story.

115. By the age of eleven, pupils clap simple rhythms, following others and creating their own rhythms. The good progress in singing continues throughout the school and Year 6 pupils confidently sing a range of songs including 'Bongo Bobby' and 'Down by the river-side'. They accompany their singing playing percussion instruments and their rhythmic response is well developed. Pupils are able to sing the same tune changing the lyrics. They make good progress learning about notation. Pupils are beginning to understand basic notation and higher attaining pupils can identify flat and sharp notes. They know that the white notes last longer than the black notes. There are insufficient percussion instruments for pupils to have one each.

116. There are currently no opportunities for higher attaining pupils to receive peripatetic tuition in music. There is one choir practice held once a week. Music could be a strength of the school but needs enrichment through extra-curricular provision to enable pupils to extend their singing and performing skills. Performers such as local musicians visit the school and enrich pupils' experience of music. There are good links with local music providers but these often entail pupils paying for lessons.

117. Teaching is good overall. Teachers are well organised and plan lessons well but higher attaining pupils are not always challenged or extended in lessons. Teachers are following a published scheme of work and are making good progress in developing their own confidence teaching music following previous specialist teaching in music. Teachers give appropriate attention to all aspects of learning in music. Pupils respond well when given freedom within a framework structure to create their own musical compositions. Teachers are well prepared and follow planning carefully maintaining a good pace in learning. Assessment in music has not been developed. There are insufficient links with literacy and ICT, the school is aware of this and has identified this in its planning.

118. The co-ordinator has recently taken over responsibility for music and has not yet had time to make an impact on the development of the subject, however there is a clear action plan for the development of the subject. There has been no monitoring of teaching and learning in music. The school is aware of the need for professional development for staff. Resources are unsatisfactory; there are insufficient percussion instruments for two classes to use at the same time. However, the contribution of the subject to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that expected nationally but by the end of Year 6, standards are below average. The decline sets in because pupils only have one lesson per week and this is insufficient to ensure progress in the main activity areas. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, but by the age of eleven, progress is unsatisfactory.

120. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained in Years 1 and 2 but have slipped to below average by the age of eleven. Pupils in Years 1-3 experience lessons in gymnastics and games. Older pupils experience games but there is very little evidence in planning that they experience gymnastics and dance and because of this the school does not meet the statutory requirements for the subject. All pupils swim and make satisfactory progress.

121. By the end of Year 2, pupils' ability to use space is not as well developed as it should be because they are told exactly where to run in the hall and consequently they do not develop their own ability to use space well. Pupils jump and land with control and can combine several different movements such as a skip, turn run and jump. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to travel on hands and feet using cartwheel actions. They travel on their feet and other body parts in different ways. Pupils know how to lift and carry apparatus safely and they work with others well. Attitudes are good. Knowledge of the effect of exercise on the body is limited and this is a weakness.

122. Teaching observed was satisfactory. However, pupils are often over challenged or not challenged enough. Insufficient resources make it difficult for teachers to organise effective lessons. In a Year 5 lesson pupils only had two balls between the whole class. Throwing and catching skills are below average because pupils are not able to develop their skills appropriately. Higher attaining pupils can explain the basics of how to gain and retain possession of the ball in a competitive games situation. They are aware of the importance of fair play and good sporting behaviour. Pupils are unable to explain clearly the effect of exercise on their body or give appropriate reasons why it is necessary to warm up prior to activity. Discussion with pupils in Year 5 and 6 indicates that they have had very little gymnastics or dance since Year 2 and 3. Consequently their knowledge of gymnastics and dance is poor and reflects the general lack of provision for a broad curriculum in physical education for older pupils. Pupils swim during Year 3 and 4 and most pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. There is no satisfactory planning for physical education and assessment is not developed. The use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are not well used to enhance learning in physical education.

123. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular clubs and activities and these are well attended. The school has recently introduced lacrosse and together with football, netball, rugby, rounders and cricket make a satisfactory contribution to extending the curriculum. The school takes part in local sporting competitions.

124. The co-ordinator has been responsible for the development of the subject since the beginning of the term. He is enthusiastic and keen to develop the subject but has limited experience of the national curriculum requirements for physical education. He has prepared an appropriate plan to improve the provision and standards in physical education and this is already having an impact on games but there is limited provision for gymnastics and dance for the older age groups.