

# INSPECTION REPORT

**CORPUS CHRISTI WITH ST ANNE RC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ancoats, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 131884

Headteacher: Suzanne Walker

Reporting inspector: Jan Thomas

17711

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 248866

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:	Carruthers Street Ancoats Manchester
Postcode:	M4 7EQ
Telephone number:	0161 273 2417
Fax number:	0161 273 5359
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Tim Hopkins
Date of previous inspection:	No previous inspection report

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17711	Jan Thomas	Registered inspector	English, history and geography	The school's results and achievements. How well is the school is led and managed?
19344	David Jones	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22578	Gavin Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology and music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well the school cares for its pupils?
16041	O. Lynn Thomas	Team inspector	Educational Inclusion Special Educational Needs Science Foundation Stage Art and design Physical education	How well are pupils taught?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Corpus Christi with St Anne Roman Catholic Primary School is much smaller than other primary schools. There are 100 boys and girls on roll taught in four classes, this includes provision for nursery children. Most pupils are of white UK origin, a small number have refugee status or are from traveller families. Only a very few have English as an additional language. Sixty five per cent of pupils receive free school meals; this is well above the national average. Thirty two per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational need. The inspection finds that about eight more pupils should be included, making this figure closer to 40 per cent, which is well above the national average and at least 50 per cent of this figure require additional support. There are two pupils with a statement of special educational need. The attainment of most pupils on entry to the school is well below what is usually found. A significant number of young children have speech difficulties and for many, memory and personal skills are very weak which holds back their ability to learn. The school is part of East Manchester's Education Action Zone; its social circumstances are very challenging. The area suffers from a significant degree of disadvantage, has very high unemployment and a pattern of depopulation. Urban regeneration is in progress. Movement of pupils into and out of the school other than at the normal time of admission is high. Three pupils have been excluded in the past year. The school has a number of pupils who are persistent non-attendees; this adversely affects attendance rates.

This is the school's first inspection since it was newly formed in 1999 from the closure of two neighbouring Catholic primary schools. During its relatively brief history, staff turnover has been very high including at senior management level. The school has been without a permanent Headteacher since July 2001. The current Headteacher was appointed as Deputy in September 2001. She was appointed as permanent Headteacher from the beginning of November 2002.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Corpus Christi with St Anne Catholic Primary School is fast becoming an effective school in many areas of its work. The school provides a well-ordered, calm learning environment. Improvements are very evident in pupils' achievements, attitudes, personal development, behaviour and attendance. These upswings are due to the very good direction provided by the recently appointed Headteacher since her arrival as the Deputy Headteacher in September 2001, and complemented by the commitment of staff; a well-focused governing body; the impact of the work of the Education Action Zone and the positive contribution of an increasing group of parents. The junior school pupils have many gaps in their knowledge and understanding and, given this, they are currently making good progress so that by the age of 11 they achieve well in reading, writing and number given their well below average starting base. Teaching in the infants and juniors is having a good impact on motivating pupils to learn and gives excellent guidance for pupils' behaviour and their relationships.

The governors, Headteacher and staff recognise that in spite of the extensive improvements already undertaken there is still much to be done in key areas but all are keen to rise to the challenge. The school has an above average income but nevertheless, the fast paced rally to recovery in leadership and management, good basic skills teaching, pupils' positive achievements, good behaviour and the climate for learning indicate it has begun to provide good value for money when set against the many challenges it faces.

### **What the school does well**

- Improvements to standards in reading, writing and number by the end of the infant stage.
- The Headteacher has given a very firm steer to the school's direction; firmly focused on raising achievement and establishing a team approach with governors, staff and parents.
- Teaching is mainly good in the infants and juniors; excellent behaviour management and the thorough reinforcement of basic skills have enabled good and for some pupils very good progress to be made.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
- Pupils' personal development is very well supported; their attitudes and behaviour are improving rapidly and are now at a good level from a previously low base.
- Excellent procedures for monitoring and securing attendance.
- Excellent systems for supporting and eliminating oppressive behaviour ensure the school is a safe and secure place for pupils to be. All pupils are very well cared for.
- The range and quality of the school's commitment to working with parents are excellent.

### **What could be improved**

- The curriculum offered to the youngest pupils.
- Raise standard for 11 year old pupils, in all subjects, but most especially English and mathematics.
- The systems for and use of assessment.
- The use of time and the organisation of the curriculum.
- The school improvement plan.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

There is no past inspection report against which to measure the extent of improvement. However, a number of significant factors can be used as benchmarks. When the school was opened in September 1999 it was designated as a 'cause for concern' by the local education authority. Very high staff turnover disrupted pupils' learning, set a poor climate for learning and behaviour and left the school vulnerable. Parents comment that this was so until the Headteacher's appointment as Deputy Headteacher in September 2001. The 'cause for concern' category was removed in February of this year. Many parents are vociferous in their praise of the Headteacher and staff and the improvements to the school. Staffing is now stable, morale is strong and all staff are highly committed. Governors are knowledgeable and committed to the school; they manage its resources well and are proud of the achievements so far, most notably in its work with parents, the pupils' behaviour and the impact of this improvement on their progress. Some support by senior staff from a neighbouring Beacon school has helped the process of improvement. External agencies and staff from the Education Action Zone share their agreement that in the past year change under the newly appointed Headteacher's leadership has been extensive and beneficial.

The extent of innovation needed to move onward and upward should not be underestimated but the school's position, once fragile, is now safeguarded. This is because of the governors' decision to secure strong leadership by permanently appointing the Deputy Headteacher as Headteacher. The whole school community has a first rate determination for success and there is no reason to doubt that if stability can be maintained the school is set to build well on its achievements so far.



## STANDARDS

The small cohort size and the disruption to this group prior to the tests suggests too much caution is needed for any national or similar school comparisons to be valid or fair.

Attainment on entry to the school for children in the nursery is well below what is usually found for this age. By the end of the reception class, children do not attain as expected in the areas of learning towards the Early Learning Goals except in aspects of personal and social development where progress is good. In all other areas their progress is adequate, but could be much better.

In the tests for seven year olds in 2002 a picture of improvement is evident, with the proportions attaining at the expected Level 2 in reading and writing in line with national figures. The test scores were just below national levels in mathematics by the equivalent of one pupil. This represents good and some very good progress given the well below average attainment on entry of many pupils. In day to day work, pupils attain broadly as expected by the age of seven in listening and reading but below in speaking and writing. This mirrors the school's efforts to improve pupils' attention and reading. In mathematics, pupils have a sound knowledge of number, shape and measures by the age of seven. They do not attain as expected in science because they have limited knowledge and understanding of the world around them and new learning is hard for a good number, but their progress is adequate.

In 2002, about half the pupils aged 11 attained as expected in the English, mathematics and science national tests. When the level of special educational needs within the group is taken into account, the results are a fair reflection of these pupils' abilities and the effort put into supporting them. The school attained only slightly below its own targets because pupils received plentiful additional help to make up for lost time earlier in their school career. Both boys and girls fared similarly. Standards of day-to-day work for the current Year 6 are below expectations in all subjects, with slightly more than half set to attain the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. This is below national expectations but represents good progress for these pupils who have suffered similar disruptions in their learning as the previous year group. There are no pupils who are attaining at higher levels and this reflects the very low starting point of many. The school's targets for this group are very challenging especially in English and place an unrealistic onus on the class teacher to achieve them. The school should review these targets. In ICT seven and 11 year olds attain within expectations in communicating information but not yet in other aspects. There is still a good deal of ground to cover before they are secure and meet expectations in all elements of ICT and the foundation subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The school has made first-rate progress in securing good attitudes. Pupils like school and enjoy the activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils know right from wrong and are guided well by the classroom rules. During lunchtime and break sessions pupils show self-discipline. Their play is friendly if a little boisterous.
Personal development and relationships	Good progress made. Pupils are improving in confidence and self-esteem. Improving initiative and taking responsibility are skills, which require a good deal more support.

Attendance	Below national levels but exceptionally well supported by the work of the Home School Liaison officer. A small nucleus of parents, do not meet their responsibilities in ensuring regular attendance. Lateness is rife.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall teaching is good and this is the cause of the pupils' learning moving forward well in the infants and juniors. A key feature of all teaching is the very effective behaviour management of pupils to keep their learning focused. The children like their teachers and relationships are strong. Teaching responds well to the fact that many pupils have weak concentration, perseverance and memory retention skills and there is plenty of repetition and reinforcement to the learning. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are mainly well taught but at times overly strict adherence to them is not best suited to these children's needs. Some very good teaching of phonics has helped improved progress in reading stories; pupils' abilities to retrieve information are weaker. Many have some difficulty in transferring taught skills to their daily spelling and writing. The teaching partnership with support staff is adding well to driving achievement upward, especially for pupils with SEN. In the Foundation Stage teaching is broadly satisfactory. Good intentions are diminished as the sound planning is let down by the subsequent methods used. To build on the good features of all teaching, use of time should be reviewed to help pupils with concentration during lessons; more regular help given to correct errors and improve skills of independent learning and targets set which are understandable to pupils and checked for success.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for all pupils is soundly planned, meets requirements and provides breadth over the year. It is not adapted well enough to meet pupils' specific learning needs or use time well. The school day is shorter than the recommended hours for junior pupils. Extracurricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good in the infants and juniors and adequate in the Foundation Stage because early identification of needs is weak and not based on accurate assessments of need.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision is very good and contributing strongly to preparing pupils for life as responsible citizens in a multicultural society.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Quality of pastoral care is very good. Assessment procedures are well improved; good quality data is collected but target setting has yet to push all standards higher. Excellent progress is evident in promoting positive behaviour, attitudes to learning and monitoring attendance.
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The school makes first rate efforts to work in partnership with parents and these efforts are being appreciated by an increasing number of them. Many parents support the school's work.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The Headteacher has made a very strong impact on pupils' achievements. The management of special educational needs is good. The organisation and management of the Foundation Stage curriculum requires review. The Headteacher holds too many key responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors support the school well. They have made up admirably for gaps in statutory responsibilities and all areas are now well in hand. A core group of governors know the school very well. The time is right to further their role in monitoring and linking with subject managers. The principles of best value are well applied and governors make very best use of funding to directly support pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school plan gives an extensive view of what needs to be done but requires simplifying to create a more realistic pace for steady improvement and innovation. Detailed plans for English, mathematics, ICT and SEN are useful and the action taken to meet targets in the core subjects has been very good so far.
The strategic use of resources	Good; resources are mainly well used. New ICT resources are used very well and helping enthuse pupils to learn. There is scope to use staff specialisms and time more creatively.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Most parents are very pleased with all aspects of the school's work. Notably they like the fact that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school expects their children to work hard;</li> <li>• the approachability of the school;</li> <li>• that the school is well led and managed;</li> <li>• the range of activities;</li> <li>• that their children like school;</li> <li>• that the teaching is good;</li> <li>• the school is helping their children become mature;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about how their children are progressing.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• The range of activities.</li> </ul>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • the progress their children are making. |  |
|---|--|

The inspection agrees with the positive points raised by parents. In relation to what parents would like to see improved the information provided to parents is good; reports on pupils' progress are comprehensive and the school is very open to sharing information with parents. The amount of homework is supporting pupils' learning well. Some parents feel their children receive too much homework. This is a matter for the school to discuss with parents whilst ensuring no pupils are disadvantaged. The range of extra activities is good. Given its staffing, the before and after school care clubs, additional study support clubs to raise standards in literacy, the school could not reasonably be expected to do more.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The school's results and achievements are set against a background of considerable turmoil for the last three years. It is only in the 15 month period prior to this inspection that stability in staffing alongside the impact of the newly appointed Headteacher's very good leadership have improvements begun to take real shape. Raising standards is now the highest priority. Poor behaviour, negative pupil attitudes, disenchantment amongst parents and low attendance were strong factors in holding standards back. Evidence is clear that the pace of improvement in the school since it was opened in 1999 was far too slow and resulted in significant underachievement and low standards. Ongoing assessment to identify weaknesses in pupils' abilities is not available prior to September 2001 and this points to a significant deficiency in any action towards improvement. This is no longer so and the seeds are well bedded for recovery. Whilst the school is still feeling the ripple effect of the many deficits, there has been a culture change in leadership and management. A halt has been called to the unacceptable situation that prevailed, the tone set for vast improvement and the impact of decisions are already improving standards for infant pupils. Creating a positive climate for learning, improving behaviour and attendance, encouraging staff commitment and reviving parental confidence were the priorities for improvement and these all show good results. The pace of change has been rapid, improvements pronounced and widely acknowledged, not least by parents and pupils, but also by the school community and external agencies working within the school.
2. Standards are still low for the oldest pupils but progress is good and achievement increasing. For seven year old pupils who have had consistently good teaching in their infant years the picture is a very positive one. In the Foundation Stage which also suffered considerably during the uncertainties, progress is not as sure as it could be or should be. The school acknowledges this is the priority improvement if it is to be successful in the long term and rid itself of 'firefighting' low standards as the pupils approach national tests at the age of 11.
3. The task is most challenging for the older pupils in the school who have many gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects. Also, their attitudes, self worth and behaviour have been harder to shift. Still, progress is very evident and the high quality support aimed at Year 5 and 6 pupils is bearing fruit. Whilst only about half are close to national expectations, all are making good headway given their well-below average starting point, the history of disruption pupils' have suffered and its impact on the continuity of their learning.
4. There are very few pupils who could be classed as truly higher attaining; those who are better than average are making good progress. Those identified with special educational needs progress very well because of the skilled tuition they receive. Additional resources and staffing funded through the East Manchester Education Action Zone are impacting very well on pupils' progress and understanding. Pupils who are regularly absent are supported well on their return to school but often learning is lost when absence reoccurs. The very few pupils with English as an additional language do at least as well as their classmates because teaching takes the time to explain and reinforce key vocabulary.

5. Attainment on entry to the school for children in the nursery is well below what is usually found for this age. Many have poor speaking skills on entry and this then affects their progress in all areas, also their powers of reasoning and processing new information are weak. By the end of the reception class, children do not attain as expected in all of the Early Learning Goals. Their personal and social skills are as expected for their age and their progress is good here. Pupils are learning to share, make simple decisions and beginning to understand that they are one of many. In early reading and writing they are moving closer to the goals expected. They are gaining a liking for books and can turn the pages to make up a story of their own using the pictures to help them. All are beginning to understand that print carries meaning. Children by the age of five are recording their ideas and personal accounts; some do this by making marks, more show some understanding of letter shapes and a few scribe very plausible words in large uneven letters. In all other areas their progress is satisfactory, but could be much better.
6. Significant progress has been made in driving up performance in the national tests for seven year old pupils in reading, writing and number. Improvement is evident on last year's scores. Reading and writing results are in line with national levels and mathematics only fell behind slightly. The teacher assessments were well matched to results and this gives confidence that pupils' needs and abilities are clearly understood, being met and driven forward. Given the well-below average attainment of many of these pupils on entry to the school this represents good added value during their time in school. Day-to-day work for current seven year olds shows that they have already progressed well since September, notably in reading, and the school feels pupils have become much better at listening. Inspection findings would agree that listening is mainly satisfactory. Writing is a greater challenge and it is taking longer to move pupils into transferring what they know about letters and sounds to read words to using what they know to help them spell new ones. Progress is also held back because pupils have limited speaking skills; their range of vocabulary is low and many offer one-word answers and short phrases rather than replying to questions in sentences. This is improving but speaking skills and the ability to listen and follow instructions and interpret what they hear are vital skills, which require a good deal more attention and which hold back pupils' learning.
7. In 2002, about half the pupils aged 11 attained as expected in the English, mathematics and science national tests. The school attained only slightly below its own targets because pupils received plentiful additional help to make up for lost time earlier in their school career. Both boys and girls fared similarly.
8. Standards of day-to-day work for the current Year 6 are below expectations in all subjects with slightly more than half set to attain the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. This represents good progress for these pupils who have suffered similar disruptions to their learning as the previous year group. Good, stable teaching, firm behaviour management and high quality additional support are all ensuring pupils make good progress. The school's targets for this group are very challenging, especially in English, and place an unrealistic onus on the classteacher to achieve them. The school should review these targets.
9. In ICT, seven and 11 year olds attain within expectations in communicating information but not in other aspects. The use of interactive whiteboards for all ages is enthusing pupils to learn and helping speed learning along. A good deal of ground is yet to be covered before pupils are secure in their knowledge and skills to meet expectations in all elements of ICT.

10. Standards in all foundation subjects are below expectations by the ages of seven and 11 because in the past pupils have not been systematically taught the necessary knowledge and skills to understand the elements of the subjects and use their knowledge to record and communicate what they know. These subjects are planned against the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines but, have not been a strong focus of the school's development due to more pressing needs in the basic skills.
11. Since the staff have come together as a team they have expressed concerns that the approach expected of them in delivering literacy and numeracy does not best serve the pupils' needs. It certainly does not allow opportunity for the many gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding to be remedied. The inspection agrees that to drive standards forward for these pupils a more innovative approach which takes the best of the national strategies as a basis for teaching and learning but which also takes account of the inability of many to concentrate for long periods, or work independently would be better suited and help address past weaknesses which have resulted in accrued deficits in pupils' education.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and their relationships are good. Attendance rates are below national levels because there are persistent, long-term non-attendeers.
13. Parents are very clear that pupils' attitudes have undergone a radical change over the last year. The pupils' improved responses are testimony to the staff and their considerable achievements in encouraging good behaviour. Nurturing, caring but firm relationships have helped restore pupils' self-esteem and self-worth. Most pupils now respond well to the challenge of learning and participate in activities throughout the school day and beyond with enthusiasm. This represents very good progress.
14. Although many pupils start their school life with limited awareness of how to relate to others and to share, they readily respond to the guidance and firm behaviour management in school. In a lesson about mathematical shapes, reception class children were generally well behaved and attentive. Some showed their immaturity through calling out and were reluctant to share. However, they responded well to the quiet, assertive discipline of the teacher and lesson progress was maintained. During a science lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 they were learning how to use insulation to retain heat. They were a lively, demanding class requiring constant firm management. Because of the relationships with the teacher, pupils responded with good levels of self-discipline when moving to their groups and during the experiments. Pupils in a mixed class for Year 5 and 6 were practising handwriting. They responded well to the class teacher's excellent behaviour management, using his knowledge of individuals to support and encourage, and regular questioning to retain their interest. The pupils remained on task, worked hard to produce good work, and showed disappointment if they failed to achieve their aim.
15. The progress made by the school in achieving this improvement of pupils' attitudes is significant. Behaviour records from only 12 months ago indicate serious, consistent poor behaviour that restricted learning and the progress of lessons. Opportunities for the pupils to exercise responsibility and initiative are

- beginning to show an impact on attitudes and behaviour but there is still progress to be made in these aspects.
16. Through contributions to the School Council, such as organising a raffle to provide funds for new furnishings, and in their daily school life when they play cooperatively and are seen to wait and hold doors open for visitors and each other, the improving quality of pupils' behaviour is evident. They understand very well the impact of their actions on others.
  17. Attendance levels are unsatisfactory and are a reflection of a small but persistent group of parents who fail to support their children or the school. The school has appointed a Home/ School Liaison officer with support from the Education Action Zone. Despite her being in post for three years, building a rapport with those families who are least co-operative and giving extensive support to them, including collecting children to come to school, the school is only able to maintain levels about the 90 per cent mark. The same group exacerbates the problem further with persistent late attending. The local authority is currently pursuing prosecution of the most significant offenders.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

18. The overall quality of teaching is good, with instances of very good teaching of mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is broadly satisfactory and described in more detail in that section of this report. A key feature of all teaching is the very effective behaviour management of pupils to keep their learning focused and build up a positive work ethic.
19. In all classes the main strengths lie in the teachers' commitment, relationships, classroom organisation and management, direct teaching of basic skills and the management of pupils' behaviour. The teachers and support staff work very effectively together as a team to create a calm, positive atmosphere in classrooms and around the school generally. Teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils well and deal skilfully with their personal, as well as academic, needs. Many pupils require considerable emotional support. Staff use humour, endearments and coercion to sustain the pupils' attention and are quick to intervene when this falls short of expectations. Teaching has made a big impact on overcoming barriers to learning in pupils' behaviour and attitude. Learning is still very limited by poor concentration, retention of information and pupils' lack of perseverance to always give of their best. Many younger pupils find it hard to repeat what they have heard or to share what has been explained or remembered in sentences. The teachers generally pre-empt this by repeating and rephrasing questions and comments. Pupils benefit from these strategies and progress well in lessons, especially when the teaching is carefully structured, and when helped by skilled support staff. However, later in the lesson or day many will often show only partial recall of what they have done or how it was done. Considerable prompting to recall salient facts and key vocabulary is an ongoing challenge.
20. The teachers' knowledge is secure for most subjects. Clear objectives are set for most lessons, but they are written in technical language and not adapted to the particular needs of individual pupils. Planning for literacy and numeracy follows the structure of the recommended frameworks but is not always adapted to the needs of the pupils. In science, teachers are working to an agreed structured scheme of work in a systematic and effective way, which supports the pupils well and helps to raise achievement. Pupils are being taught effectively to develop their



investigative skills. However, in mathematics and the foundation subjects these skills have yet to receive the same level of focus, and standards in investigative and research work are not yet as good as they could be. The teaching of ICT has improved and all staff have embraced the use of interactive whiteboards to motivate the pupils. Effective use is made of some individuals' specialist knowledge; of particular value is the specialist music teaching which has a positive effect on the pupils' achievement in singing throughout the school.

21. Teachers and support staff expect the pupils to pay attention and behave well, which almost all of them do. They encourage them to concentrate on their work and to persevere with tasks. Accordingly most pupils respond very well and their attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons are almost always very good. For example, when Year 6 pupils were expected to work together in groups to investigate solutions, they responded with maturity, were sensible, cooperative and worked well in agreeing outcomes and presentation of their findings. Pupils with special educational needs generally make at least good progress, benefiting from the skilled staff who are committed to their welfare and academic needs. In Years 5 and 6 these pupils are making rapid gains in filling gaps in their learning because of considerable added high quality support. Tasks are usually well matched to their needs and reflect the targets in their individual educational plans, particularly in English and mathematics. However, there are a very small number of pupils on the special educational needs register who have a poor work ethic, are very immature, have a low level of self-discipline and who test this provision to its limit.
22. Teaching has been over cautious to adhere strictly to the framework of guidance for the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. There is a clear need to retain the very best of what the guidance suggests but to adapt it far more closely to better suit the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills and the pupils' broad needs. Time is not yet used to maximum effect to help pupils maintain maximum concentration during lessons. There are occasions when more regular intervention is needed to correct errors in pupils' recorded work or to improve their understanding. A continuing challenge for the teaching is improving pupils' language skills and their skills of independent learning.
23. Teachers mainly use the resources available to them well and the accommodation efficiently and to the best advantage. The pupils are developing positive work ethics and benefit from the team of staff members working to the common goal of providing an effective learning environment in which all the pupils, whatever their needs, have equal access to all aspects of school life.

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

24. The curriculum for all pupils is soundly planned to ensure coverage over the year and meets requirements. The curriculum that the school provides for children in the nursery and reception classes has some weaknesses in the methods used to deliver it, so progress towards the recommended Early Learning Goals is held back.
25. The length of the school day, for those pupils in the two junior classes, is shorter than the recommended time. As a result, pupils lose over an hour of lesson time each week.

26. The school has adopted the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies having received good support from the local authority. Teachers have felt obliged to follow the strategies closely and their teaching, when set against the frameworks, is often very thorough but not necessarily well matched to pupils' personal needs. For example, in both literacy and numeracy lessons, a whole hour for one subject is often too long for the pupils, whose concentration span is quite limited. Some lessons have too long an introduction with insufficient time to develop independent work and too little time to sum up and confirm learning at the end of the lesson.
27. Although the school plans its work in ICT in line with national recommendations, it is not yet able to deliver all of its planned work because of resource limitations. Similarly in music, whilst pupils have good access to recorded music and singing, their exposure to playing and composing is limited.
28. Staff have had training in aspects of personal and social education and this has helped teachers to raise the self-esteem of pupils. The School Council was formed following the establishment of a parents' club. Pupils have been involved in some decision-making and were pleased to discuss their various projects with inspectors. A drugs awareness programme has been successfully developed with the support of the school nurse. Healthy eating will be a further development in health education later in the year.
29. The school makes very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils are given very effective support within the classes and sometimes through withdrawal. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive the same quality curriculum as the rest of the pupils. Their learning is supported very well by the work of teaching assistants. There are very few pupils whose work is above average; whilst planning shows that different work has been planned for them, it is not always possible to see this in their workbooks.
30. The school provides a wide range of good quality extracurricular activities, which are appreciated by the vast majority of parents. The Breakfast Club provides a growing number of pupils with a good start to the day and prepares them well for school. Literacy and Booster Club activities are held at the end of the day and are well attended, giving good support to a range of the oldest pupils. There is good attendance at sports clubs organised by adults outside the school, but within the Education Action Zone. Staff from neighbouring football clubs come into the school and pupils enjoy this very much. The recently formed parents club, has done much to help parents gain understanding of conflict management techniques and knowledge of ways to help pupils improve their friendship skills.
31. Over the recent past, the school has been successful in re-establishing good links with the Parish, highlighted by pupils going to Mass each week and the setting up of a sacramental programme, linking pupils and their families more closely with the church. The senior citizens at The Mayes retirement home have also benefited from visits by the pupils. Links with local schools are good. There is a good link with St Brigid's Primary School and the school received some initial input from this Beacon School which has aided the process of improvement. The local football league gives pupils good opportunities to meet pupils from other schools through sport. Visits are made to the local secondary school and pupils from that school have helped at the 'Celebrating Science' Week and other school events.

32. The Education Action Zone has given good support to provide a comprehensive range of interesting visits and visitors for the pupils. It has supported visits from the Life Travelling exhibition and a travelling planetarium, as well as providing financial support for a range of class visits to support the curriculum. The school's involvement in the recent Commonwealth Games added significantly to pupils' understanding of places near and far and to citizenship.
33. Very good provision is made for the personal development of pupils; their moral and social development are very good, whilst their spiritual and cultural development are good. This a significant achievement for the school against a difficult background and is a tribute to the high level of pastoral care, teaching commitment and the role model and relationships provided by the staff.
34. The school's Catholic foundation provides a strong base for the development of spiritual values in the communal celebration of the mysteries and traditions of their faith. This is brought across in the celebration of worship when the pupils are made to feel special during the whole school worship learning about talents and they are invited to reflect on their own special qualities. Within the curriculum the wider concept of awe and wonder is revealed in their art studies, such as the TAPA display of Commonwealth flags in the style of Tongan tradition. In science, they have studied the life cycle of moths and butterflies and proudly display their work on electricity through a battery powered lighting circuit exhibited on the school corridor. They have recorded their sense of wonder at man's achievements through a collection of their science projects in a journal and displayed about the school. Pupils have less chance for appreciating and reflecting on musical works.
35. The quality of pupils' moral development has been rescued through the commitment of staff to provide a framework that favourably acknowledges and rewards good behaviour whilst firmly and consistently censuring poor behaviour. The pupils fully understand right from wrong and demonstrate that when given positive encouragement and challenged with valid expectations, they are capable of a mature response. Their behaviour in lessons and about the school is mostly good even when they are not directly supervised, and the school environment and equipment are well cared for and respected.
36. The role model provided by staff and their positive recognition and respect for the self-esteem of the pupils is the bedrock for the social development of the children. They are encouraged to care for one another through the 'Buddy' scheme and to act on behalf of others in their participation in the school council. Recognition of the need to care for others is revealed through contributions to charity, distribution of Harvest fare and pupils' visits to local care homes to sing for the residents. Their social development benefits from their interaction with pupils from other schools and the opportunity to visit places of interest. Pupils were seen to relate well to one another cooperating and playing without disharmony.
37. Pupils are introduced to the diversity of culture and tradition through the curriculum and in their contact with the ethnic group mix present in their school and the local community. They are better placed than many to experience this diversity. They display positive responses to minorities and engage in activities without discrimination. They were involved in the preparation work for the Commonwealth Games held in Manchester this year, and took part in the mass singing for the opening of the games. During a 'History' day held at school the pupils looked at a range of famous people from down the ages including Julius

Caesar, Florence Nightingale, Queen Elizabeth 1 and Tutankhamen among others. Some of the pupils have attended a Muslim church to observe the celebration of Diwali. Pupils remember this experience and speak respectfully about what they did and saw.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

38. The school makes very good provision for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils.
39. The pupils learn in an environment that is safe and secure; they enjoy a sense of self-worth and relationships that are trusting and supportive. Pupils and parents are keen to point out that bullying is not tolerated and all value this firm stance. Most pupils respond well to being challenged without fear of failure because they are confident in the high level of pastoral support available to them. This is necessary because many have pressing emotional needs. Provision is made for pupils to care for each other and the recently introduced 'Befriending' scheme whereby trained adults can provide advice and guidance for disaffected children is very valuable. Suitable risk assessment is carried out to ensure that the learning environment is safe. The good quality of behaviour is achieved through excellent management strategies that raise self-esteem and through the nurture of very strong pastoral relationships. Although attendance is an issue for the school this is despite the excellent provision to monitor, support and encourage consistent levels of attendance. First day and continuing absence is promptly followed up by telephone, and, where necessary, by personal visit. The introduction of the 'Breakfast' and 'After School' clubs has significant welfare benefits for the pupils, ensuring they are fed before school starts and encouraging their early arrival. The After School Care Club provides interesting activities and is a very good initiative, directly helping many pupils relax within a secure framework.
40. Overall a good start has been made on assessment procedures and practices bringing the school from a starting base of very little assessment made or used to one of satisfactory practice with some good features on which to build. The results of the national tests at Year 2 are analysed for the school and it uses data to support judgements on which pupils need extra support in aspects of English and mathematics. For example, in this current year, the school is placing extra support in Year 3 as a result of its analysis of Year 2 tests. The school is beginning to use the national tests as a starting point to set targets for what pupils might achieve by the end of Year 6. It has the information each year, taken from optional tests in English and mathematics, in Years 3, 4 and 5. However, once again its tracking system is not yet clear enough to give a "predict, achieve and check" picture, which teachers could use to note individual needs and then make adjustments to the curriculum in order to cater for pupils' needs on a much larger scale. Pupils complete a piece of writing each half term, which is graded. Whilst the grades are recorded, they are not then measured against the targets previously set for the pupils.
41. When children start in the nursery, the tests administered by the staff are not as accurately managed as they should be. They fail to give a clear picture of the abilities and needs of these youngest of children whose attainment on entry is largely very well below average. This has an adverse affect on early identification of pupils with special educational needs and holds back the school's ability to measure added value in children's achievement, and for teachers to understand the positive and negative issues surrounding the abilities of their children. Tests administered later, in the reception class, are more accurate and show that the

majority of children have made good progress in personal and social skills and adequate progress in other aspects of learning, but still enter full-time education with well below average ability, especially in speaking and listening skills, early reading, writing and numeracy skills. Currently, the methods used for recording baseline assessments do not give a clear picture of how to track pupils' progress as they move from one stage to another.

42. Target setting is at a very early stage of development in the school. As a result of checks on progress in literacy, children have individual targets set for them. However, in practice, many are group targets and are not specific enough, neither are they written in clear enough terms for individual pupils to understand. They are not always in front of pupils as they work and often seem to have no particular "shelf life" as there is no place to record progress towards the target nor to signify when the target should be or has been reached. As a result, their impact on progress is limited.
43. Few pupils have taken on any aspect of self-evaluation of their work. In the Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher has made an effort to provide pupils with details of how their work might be judged. This is rather too complex for the ability of the pupils, even though it is an admirable first attempt. This type of activity is not fostered throughout the school, although much could be learned from its use.
44. Overall, teachers' marking of work is satisfactory and often good. It is good when it makes suggestions about how pupils might make further progress in their work.
45. The school does not use ICT to simplify and speed up the collection, amendment and presentation of assessment material. An opportunity to do so will shortly be available when all teachers have undergone further training on the use of the school's computer systems.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. The effort made by the school to work in partnership with parents is excellent and parents view the school very positively.
47. The school makes extensive provision for parents to be informed of their child's progress, involved in the life of the school and to contribute to the children's education. Most parents who responded to pre-inspection enquiry expressed support for this provision. Over one third of parents replied to the questionnaire and their views were very largely positive. Parents like many things about the school not least the improvements over the past year, especially in their children's behaviour and the progress they are making. A group of parents have participated in a school initiative for conflict resolution and they are involved in providing support for after school activities. During an assembly, several of these parents were presented with certificates for completion of their training. A number of parents share Mass with the pupils in the local church. Comprehensive annual reports of pupils' progress are provided which parents say they understand and feel inform them well. Not all feel this way but the inspection judges the school's efforts to be very good in providing information and being open to parental questions and enquiry. Parents are responsible for setting up the school council initiative and some sit in the meetings to decide with the pupils on projects to be considered. This partnership makes a significant contribution to the ethos of the school and to encouraging a positive response in the pupils' attitudes and relationships.

48. The Headteacher, governors and staff are very pleased with the increasing involvement of parents and see it to be a major step in improving the quality of education for the pupils.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

49. The educational direction given to the school by the newly appointed Headteacher since she was appointed to the school as Deputy Headteacher in September 2001 is very good. It is the prime reason why the school has moved from a position of fragility to one of steadfastness, ready to springboard to further improvement. Parents, governors and staff are quite clear that it is her determination and drive to success on behalf of the pupils that has created a climate of confidence in the school. She has built up staff morale and a good team spirit. Governors have considerable confidence in her and monitoring by the local authority confirms the school is on the right track; the cause for concern was removed in February of this year. The Headteacher's commitment and strength of determination not to accept second best for the pupils are instrumental to the heightened expectations, warm, welcoming ethos, and raised achievement now forged in the school's work. A key feature of her success is the recognition of the importance of the links between good behaviour, attendance, pupils' self-esteem, parental confidence and staff competence in raising achievement and ultimately standards.
50. The school's approach to the inspection was a positive one in that the Headteacher, staff and governors felt it opportune to have an objective external measure of the progress so far since they became a team recently. Documentation was thoughtfully prepared, honestly evaluative and gave a good basis for exploring the most important issues at pre-inspection discussions with governors, staff and management. This enabled the inspection to be focused on key information to search in depth for what matters for the future. Staff worked openly and professionally with the inspectors to ensure evidence was broad, fair and accurate.
51. The Headteacher recognises the importance of using the strengths of key staff to best effect. Some re-organisation in teaching responsibilities, in forming a senior management team and allocating support to the areas of greatest need has shown results. There is still more to be done in this respect. A conflict for the Headteacher is in knowing what needs to be done but not having enough hours and all of the necessary resources to accomplish the tasks. This is no more evident than in the extensive school improvement plan, which catalogues all challenges facing the school. Whilst the inspection agrees these jobs need to be tackled, realism suggests that a simpler focus on what is essential, necessary and desirable would allow a more manageable approach to be taken to allow for critical reflection of what works well and what does not. The outstanding efforts by the Headteacher, governors and staff to plug the gaps in the oldest pupils' achievements, inspire parental confidence and improve staff morale and the impact of teaching on learning are paying off. The school has been in a 'catch up' situation and it has gone a long way to addressing some key weaknesses through careful monitoring, evaluation and action taking. The time is right to take a more rational view of what needs to happen next and why, and to ensure innovation and improvement go hand in hand to better meet the particular needs of the pupils in this school.

52. English, mathematics, ICT, special educational needs and the Foundation Stage of learning have detailed action plans. These plans have clear aims and specific intent. Much has been done to implement the necessary actions for English, mathematics and special educational needs although there are still important improvement targets to be secured as outlined by this inspection. The action taken so far has impacted very well on improving resources, and raising pupils' achievements. The plans for the Foundation Stage and ICT have put into place many practical, resource and organisational matters; they have not yet struck at the heart of what impacts best on the pupils' education. This is understandable given the scope of what needed to be addressed. The Foundation Stage organisation and management do not have a sufficiently high profile for improvement and need to be accelerated, not least, stressing that a senior manager should have responsibility for this key phase. The Headteacher has the required expertise. However, she already carries responsibility for English, the curriculum and assessment as well as the day-to-day management of the school. Careful thought to re-designation of responsibilities is required to ensure more equitable distribution and to gain maximum effectiveness and efficiency from available staff resources to determine better provision in the areas of greatest need.
53. Coordinators have made a good impression on their areas, including temporary staff and non-teaching assistants who have adopted the co-management of science, physical education and ICT. Their own practice is good and could be valuably used through the school. The Foundation Stage teacher has specialist music skills that are not yet exploited fully. Non-teaching assistants play a vital part in supporting special educational needs, supporting attendance and behaviour. The impact of their work and its subsequent contribution to standards raising is very good in the infants and juniors.
54. The management of special educational needs has been given high priority. The coordinator has made good efforts to improve her skills and keep up to date with new requirements. Special educational needs provision is enhanced considerably by the input of staff from the local authority learning support service and staff employed via the Education Action Zone. The Chair of Governors has played a vital role in securing extra resources to directly support pupils' needs.
55. The governors use their knowledge of the school community, the local area and their own expertise well to support the work of the school. For example, the Vice Chair of Governors, one of the parish priests, is round and about the school regularly and the pupils know him well. Governors are well informed about the areas for celebration and the challenges the school faces. Governor meeting minutes are informative and show that they play an active role in shaping the direction of the school. A fine example of this is their decision to permanently appoint the Headteacher from acting capacity in November of this year.
56. Whilst the school's income is above average, it is carefully deployed to maximise making the best of what is available, including grant funding. The principles of best value are well applied. The finance committee meets regularly and monitors financial decisions. The school had a large carry forward in the last financial year. The planned surplus for this year is much smaller and a note of caution is needed to ensure vital support is safeguarded.
57. As yet not all governors actively monitor the day-to-day work of the school on a regular basis nor do governors have links with coordinators to hold them to

account for the success of their action plans. The governors have identified a number of statutory requirements, which require improvement and these are planned for or, are already in draft form. In relation to the curriculum the governors meet soundly their responsibilities. The Foundation Stage curriculum is not yet a statutory requirement but is adequately in place with considerable scope for improvement.

58. Staffing, resources and accommodation are good and well used. Staffing is now stable. High turnover in permanent staffing has had a very negative impact on pupils' achievement along with extensive supply teaching to cover for absence and staff vacancies. Although the school's income is high given the extent of the challenges it faces in terms of its very demanding social circumstances, the well below average attainment of pupils' on entry, the improvements to standards for pupils by the age of seven and the good and very good progress in many areas of its work, the school is giving good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

**59. The governors, Headteacher and staff now need to review, monitor and evaluate the degree of success in:**

### **Improving the curriculum offered to the youngest pupils by ensuring that:**

- assessments are made and used to plan against the stepping stones of learning; the input and impact of staff on learning is monitored closely; teaching knowledge of the phase is improved so there is a clear view of what 'best practice' looks like; targets are set for improvement and checked systematically for success and, senior staff have direct management oversight of this stage.

### **Raising standards in English and mathematics to ensure that:**

- planning for all aspects of English with a strong emphasis on improving pupils' speaking skills; pupils transfer taught skills to day to day work; pupils write quality pieces inspired by real experiences or role play; the teaching of handwriting to support spelling, presentation and note taking skills is improved; the use of worksheets is minimized and key subject vocabulary is prominently displayed and used to support writing.
- In mathematics, practical activity is given high profile to aid understanding; mathematical vocabulary is reinforced at every opportunity; accuracy of presentation is encouraged; opportunities for pupils to devise their own investigations are explored when planning work and the difference between solving problems and open ended investigations is understood by staff and pupils;

### **The use of time and the organisation of the learning to meet the particular needs of pupils in this school by ensuring that:**

- the time allocated to teaching is brought up to the recommended time in the juniors; the teaching of the national strategies is adapted to suit the learning of the children in this school and the use of time in the school day is reviewed to give opportunity for shorter sessions to aid pupils' memory skills; planning for the non-core subjects includes key basic skills to be reinforced; classroom environments and all learning is planned to stimulate investigation and inspire discussion and, personal and social skills, notably independence, initiative and responsibility are given higher priority in planning.



**Improving the use of assessment by ensuring that:**

- systems of recording and transferring information are reviewed to safeguard simplicity and efficient use of time; end of year/stage and test data is used more precisely to plan the next steps of learning; target setting is closely matched to pupils' needs; pupils are involved in assessment of their own work and formal personal and social records are maintained;

**Improving the school plan by ensuring that:**

- the content is reduced to focus on what is essential, necessary and desirable in the short, medium and long term; the plan differentiates more clearly on improvement and innovation tasks and accountability and monitoring for success are very specific and measurable.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	12	10	2	0	0
Percentage	0	8	46	38	8	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 four 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)	15	85
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	66

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	0	32

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	6	7	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (79)	85 (79)	85 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (79)	85 (93)	85 (93)
	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	11	5	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	4	5
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	8	7	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (47)	44 (68)	50 (74)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	9	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (47)	56 (58)	56 (63)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Caution should be exercised in interpreting these scores because of the very small cohort sizes in the school.

**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	80	2	0
White – Irish	0	1	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

**Teachers and classes**

**Financial information**

**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	23.75

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4.25
Total aggregate hours worked per week	88

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	0

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	444,452
Total expenditure	475,631
Expenditure per pupil	3,523
Balance brought forward from previous year	33,843
Balance carried forward to next year	2,664

Total aggregate hours worked per week	124
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9.7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.4

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	100
Number of questionnaires returned	34

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	29	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	41	0	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	44	0	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	41	3	9	3
The teaching is good.	62	32	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	26	21	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	21	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	12	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	26	3	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	74	24	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	32	0	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	68	18	3	9	3



## **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**

59. There has been a significant level of instability in the staffing, organisation and management of the youngest pupils since the school opened. Provision is now stable. The teacher in charge has worked very hard to make sense of what is available and offered but much remains to be done. School policy and the detailed action plan for the Foundation Stage make it clear that the nursery and reception children are to be taught within a cohesive Early Years unit. The recently designated teacher, together with two support staff, are working adequately towards this goal. In a short time they have achieved success in providing a welcoming atmosphere for parents and visiting adults and a caring ethos where the children feel safe and secure. The long and medium term planning is satisfactory in its content; it is focused on the Early Learning Goals and the provision of activities, which cover all of the required areas of learning and safeguards coverage of the curriculum. Procedures for assessing what the children know, understand and can do, both on entry to the nursery or during the children's subsequent journey into the reception class, are weak. Planning is not well driven by assessment of children's abilities or needs. Consequently, short term planning fails to map out a clear pathway through the "stepping stones" (the steps that the national guidance sets out as significant markers along the way to attaining the Early Learning Goals) for the youngest nursery children through to the oldest reception children. This also has an impact on early identification of children who may have additional learning needs. Sound progress has been made in the arrangement and equipping of the rooms to meet the needs of the children, and the materials in each area are appropriate, well-organised and clearly labelled. However, procedures are not well embedded to enable the children to learn independently or to encourage them to take responsibility for their own actions or show initiative.
60. The action plan outlines the need for improvement and the management of the school recognises that a stronger focus on progressing learning in this phase is essential if children's learning is to have the firmest of foundations.
61. Children enter the nursery with a very low level of skill and understanding in all areas of learning, particularly in speaking (many have speech problems) and listening. All of the children generally make satisfactory progress. This means that by the end of the reception year, standards have risen from well below to just below the standard expected for their age, with a significant number on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals for personal and social skills and physical development. The school recognises that there are a number of children with special educational needs who are not receiving the additional support needed for them to make satisfactory progress. Appropriate strategies to remedy this weakness are outlined in the special educational needs action plan.
62. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Relationships are very good as is behaviour management in supporting these young children to learn that they are one of many. The quality of additional support is too variable and not always

impacting well enough on helping children improve in the nursery. The teacher is not a specialist in this phase of learning. However, she has a determination to provide valuable experiences for the children but does not have the knowledge to know how to develop them in depth. Although training has been provided from outside the school, messages about what effective practice looks like have been too mixed and have merely confused the teacher's pursuit of doing the best for the children. Professional development activity thus far has not offered added value for the children or the teacher in charge.

63. The tasks and activities prepared for the children by the teacher in large part match the content of the school's Foundation Stage policy. For example, having shared the story of 'Goldilocks and The Three Bears' nursery children enjoyed making porridge whilst the reception children talked about sending the bears a letter of apology from Goldilocks for eating their porridge. However, links to the Early Years national guidance need to be made explicit in order to focus the teaching more sharply. Opportunities are being lost because the planning does not outline possible ways for the adults to interact with the children in order to support their individual needs and extend their knowledge, understanding and skills. Lesson plans rarely go beyond a description of the activity, for example, "Children make thank you cards". The task is relevant but of limited value as the adults are not clear as to how they will use the experience, what they should emphasise and what they will try to find out about the children as they make the cards. Evaluation of the activity does not go beyond 'the card making went well, the children enjoyed the activity' to a more detailed discussion of why it did and what individual children and adults learned along the way or what they need to do next. There is insufficient opportunity for children to describe what they have done and what is going to happen next. A precise understanding of the role of the adult in the plan-do-review process to raise the level of the children's descriptive language is missing.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

64. Nearly all of the children enter the nursery with immature personal and social skills. By the time they are ready to leave the reception class, many have achieved a good deal in the area of dispositions and attitudes, self-care and behaviour and self control but have some way to go before achieving all of the learning goals in this area. The foundations of self-control and good behaviour are being laid in the early weeks of the nursery class. For example, when the children enter school in the morning, they are expected to select "early morning snack" by choosing "milk bottle tabs" and to settle down quietly to enjoy their choice. Support staff spend time with the children, asking them about their needs and teaching them the social rules of eating together through modelling such questions as, "Have you eaten enough now?" and "Did you enjoy that?" The same activity is offered to the reception children, with no planned difference being made in the level of interaction by the adults to raise the quality of learning or language gained by the older children through the activity. This does not support the children's progress well.
65. Children in the reception class learn to concentrate during focused literacy and numeracy activities. They respond well initially to the teacher's introduction particularly when their curiosity is heightened by her use of interesting artefacts such as large, colourful mathematical shapes. They are enthusiastic to take their turn in retelling the story of the Three Bears and show some restraint in response to the teacher's plea of "one at a time." When they are expected to work in small

groups, they start off well, managing to do it independently, for example, when asked to write to the Three Bears to say sorry for eating their porridge. However, their progress is hampered by:

- a. their own lack of concentration and perseverance to stay on task;
  - b. interruptions by nursery children curious as to what they are doing. Soon these distractions become too great and they are up and looking for other things to do;
  - c. failure of some staff to engage fully at times with the nursery children to keep them focused and interested in what they are doing so as not to disturb other groups' learning.
66. All of the children are learning how to take care of their personal needs, such as deciding when to wash their hands, to put on an apron or to visit the toilet. This is having a positive effect on the overall structure of the day, cutting the amount of time taken between activities.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

67. Children come into the nursery with communication, language and literacy skills that are well below national expectations. They do make progress over time but it could be very much better and needs to be. Some children in the nursery can barely speak at all, still using gesture and facial expression to communicate. Although the children make good progress in listening attentively and appreciatively to stories and rhymes, they make much slower progress in developing language for communication and language for thinking. Children's speech is often indistinct and they often reply in one-word answers rather than in a sentence. Insufficient quality time is being given to the nursery children in particular to develop their vocabulary and use of speech across all areas of the curriculum. At whole group session interaction is good, with adults sharing talk and asking questions. Those children who do not talk have learned to listen well. Children enjoy following a story on headphones at the listening centre, but most quickly turn all the pages and close the book before the story is finished. Despite the fact that the teacher and support staff provide a range of experiences and activities to develop and extend the children's language and literacy skills, the majority make slow progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals across all aspects of this important area of learning. The reason for this is clear; all adults do not interact effectively to bring on children's talk and encourage them to express their ideas or describe what they are doing during structured activities.
68. In the nursery, the children are developing an enjoyment of stories, poems and rhymes. They are beginning to share Big Books and to remember events and characters in the story from previous lessons. In the reception class, the children's knowledge of words, letters of the alphabet and their sounds is satisfactory, given their low starting point. They are confident and willing to respond, for example, when asked the question, "Who had eaten the Three Bears porridge?" they had no difficulty in coming up with 'Goldilocks', but almost all of the children find communication difficult, and rarely go beyond one word answers. The adults have to work hard to involve them in the process of dialogue. However, the level to which individual members of staff have the skill to encourage and support the children to speak at length, by clear explanations and effective questioning, is inconsistent and on occasion unsatisfactory.

69. Boys and girls willingly have a go at writing on their own. In the nursery the children make marks as “writing” in the writing area with pencils, in the play area with chalk and in the painting area with paint. Following the shared reading of ‘Goldilocks and the Three Bears’ many of the children busied themselves with writing, drawing and painting about the events in the story. Many were willing to share their scribbled attempts, some successfully picking out letters that appeared in their own name. A number of nursery children attempted to write a shopping list for Goldilocks, alongside the reception children who were busy ‘writing a letter’ from Goldilocks to the three bears. When asked to share the letter a higher attaining child pretended to read, “Goldilocks is sorry, she is sorry for eating their porridge, breaking their chairs and eating their porridge. Love from reception.” Most older children know that sentences begin with capital letters and end with a full stop and can ‘read’ what they intended for their letter to say, when prompted and supported by the teacher. In a subsequent activity the reception children successfully matched their individual flash cards depicting objects beginning with the letter t, g or h. However, they were unable to repeat their success when the teacher removed the prompt cards requiring them to work from memory.

### **Mathematical development**

70. The children make satisfactory progress in the nursery and reception classes but they are not yet on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all aspects of mathematical understanding. A good number are likely to reach the standard expected for their age in using numbers for counting to five, but are less secure in the beginnings of calculations and using mathematical ideas. Across the classes there is some visual support for the children in the wall displays and the teacher makes real objects available wherever possible for the children to handle. However, the range of mathematical resources and activities for the children to work with independently of the adults is not extensive and requires improvement.
71. The support staff make effective use of opportunities with the nursery children to count and to recognise numbers. For instance, the children know that different ingredients are needed to make biscuits and that they should to be measured. They enjoy stirring their porridge and need no encouragement in counting out loud the number of stirs. Their knowledge and understanding are reinforced through the singing of counting songs and chanting of rhymes. Nursery children traced mathematical shapes in the dry sand but without the necessary discussion from the adults to consolidate their knowledge.
72. The teaching of mathematics is better focused for the reception children. A daily session by the teacher follows the structure of the National Numeracy guidelines. For example, children learned to recognise and describe the properties of mathematical shapes when a group used every day objects to print patterns using the different faces and edges of the shapes they had selected and named, sharing in simple terms their knowledge and understanding with the teacher. Others constructed buildings using different shaped solid wooden blocks.
73. Overall, the assessment of what each child can do and not do is not being used well enough to set a suitable level of challenge in the tasks. At times, the activities are too ambitious for some and too easy for others; this mis-match hinders the children’s progress. Some opportunities are taken to develop mathematical skills through other activities but this does not happen as often as it might.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. The staff work hard to teach the children about the world around them and the children make satisfactory progress against a background of very poor knowledge and understanding of the world on entry to the school. The children do not attain as expected by the age of five. It takes a great deal of time and skill for the nursery staff to develop and then build upon the children's latent curiosity and to give them the language to be able to express their ideas and the confidence to express their feelings. Many struggle to meet the expected standards in exploring and investigating and asking questions about how things work. They also show a limited understanding of time, place and of cultures and beliefs. They learn about computers and also in developing a sense of place in reception. For example, they are able to progress the narration of a story being shown on the interactive whiteboard without direct supervision from the teacher. However, there is too little hands on use of computers for all children to explore what they can do using a 'mouse' to control or select objects on a screen and many children will still be working towards the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception class.
75. Planning and photographic evidence show that the members of staff stimulate interest in living things by bringing in small creatures such as tadpoles so that the children experience the awe and wonder of life and growth. There are also trips in and around the school and visitors to help prompt the pupils' interest and their zest to explore. In spite of these efforts the children have difficulty in recalling much of what they have seen or in verbalising their reactions.

## Physical development

76. Most pupils are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals in manipulative skills by the end of the reception year in general physical development.
77. The children are developing fine motor skills adequately by the age of five but have too few experiences in the nursery of making marks, patterns and shapes on large sheets of paper before they move onto handling smaller tools. For example, pencil control is on the timetable for the nursery before they are anywhere near ready for this skill. Older children handle tools such as pencils, crayons, scissors and brushes with growing confidence. Planned activities involve them in the use of a wide range of equipment to develop their skills in assembling and making models. Baking provides opportunities for them to mix, roll and cut.
78. In the classrooms, the children develop good skills in moving around confidently and safely, because space for floor and table activities is well-organised, resourced and labelled clearly. They go out to play and spend time in the outside secure area and school hall on a regular basis. Resources are good to develop their gross motor skills, including, large toys, fixed equipment for climbing, sliding, balancing and crawling. This provision and sustained opportunity has helped the children to develop their imaginative use of the wheeled toys and their ability to work in a large area. They show skill in manoeuvring the large toys and in controlling their ability to changing direction, stopping and starting safely. They are aware of safety issues and are beginning to slowly respect the needs of others.
79. In a movement lesson the reception children made good progress in developing their awareness of space and in their ability to control the movement of their own body. They also gained sufficient confidence to move away from the teacher and to use all of the floor space of the hall. The children listened carefully to the

teacher as she sang a song to which they stretched, curled and twisted their bodies in time to the rhythm of her voice. They responded further when the teacher made good use of a tambourine to beat out a series of different rhythms for them to move to. They volunteered the names of animals whose movements they would like to imitate to the beat of the tambourine. The activity took them from being curled up as a frightened mouse to roaring around the hall as huge lions. They showed great delight in the tasks and put their hearts into being as small as possible before gleefully making the loudest of noises.

### **Creative development**

80. In this area of learning the children make variable progress and most will not attain all of the Early Learning Goals set because of their very low starting point and that the tasks are not systematically developed to build on skills. The children explore colour, texture and space in their paintings. Nursery children attempt cutting and sticking to create pictures under good guidance from an adult. The self-portraits on display give a very good insight into the children's attempts to record what they look like and reveal the very low conceptual level of many when drawing a human figure. Children in the reception class can mix powder paints to make the colours they need for printing. They use a range of materials such as paper, cardboard, fabric, foil and glitter to good effect.
81. The children know a range of different songs and rhymes that they sing tunefully, with good rhythm and dynamics. They know the names of different percussion instruments and enjoy playing along to music. They know how sounds can be made louder or softer, faster or slower or longer or shorter. The teacher's musical expertise comes through in the children's knowledge of songs and enjoyment of making music.
82. The teacher and support staff encourage the children to use their imagination in drama and general play. There is a variety of opportunities for creative play but planned intervention to develop their language is missing. There is not a sufficiently detailed programme of structured and child initiated activities allowing them to explore their own feelings and experiment with ideas, materials and activities where they are well supported by adults who give them the freedom and time to work out their own ideas, finish their work and talk about what they have done.

### **ENGLISH**

83. Pupils aged seven and 11 are achieving well against their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are making speedy progress, and especially 11 year old pupils, who are given extensive support to help them catch up with gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. By the end of Year 6 about half of the pupils work at the expected level including the very few more capable ones. This picture echoes the test results in 2002 for 11 year olds. By the end of Year 2 most pupils make good progress and are set to attain standards as expected in all elements of the subject. It is likely that more will attain at the lower end of Level 2 in writing than reading. More boys are 'lazy writers', paying less attention to presentation and spelling. Speaking and listening skills are adequate but no better. Test data has been analysed and strengths and weaknesses noted, resulting in a whole school target of improving reading performance. The impact of the action can be seen in better quality reading and understanding of stories; as yet pupils'

library and research skills are still quite weak. Few turn readily to books to seek out information.

84. The literacy action plan is well focused on what needs to be done and actions are showing good effect to raise standards. The thrust this term has been to improve reading and understanding by improving pupils' abilities to attack new words (phonics), improve guided reading sessions and especially improve speaking and listening for the infant pupils. Planning for all staff has been reviewed to ensure it focuses on key vocabulary and questions. Teachers use questions very well but key words need plentiful reinforcement. Pupils have been targeted for extra support and non-teaching staff trained to support literacy. The school makes good use of Early and Additional Literacy Support (ELS and ALS). Year 6 pupils are targeted for Booster support. Teaching outcomes are due to be monitored later this term to measure the success of the inputs. The school focus next term is on writing and in the summer term it will be on the use of assessments and test data to inform planning and identify support needs for pupils and teaching. This cycle is proving to be a productive one because it is specific and has measurable outcomes, which are wholeheartedly directed at raising pupils' achievements. The literacy coordinator is knowledgeable and she is keen to use the best of the national strategy on which to base a more flexible teaching framework, homing in on basic skills but to offer more opportunities for linking the use of these throughout daily work. This approach would be beneficial as it would add more reinforcement and repetition, which many of the pupils so need to make their learning meaningful.
85. Teaching is good overall in the infants and juniors because of the quality focus on basic skills and the excellent management of behaviour. The teaching of phonics in the infants is very good and exceptionally well supported by non-teaching assistants. The teaching of reading is actively encouraged and although pupils say they enjoy reading and clearly learning is moving along well; few turn readily to books of their own accord.
86. The teaching of speaking skills is satisfactory, and of listening, it is good. Pupils' speaking skills are very low when they enter the school. Many require the support of speech therapists. For half a day each week learning support staff are working with staff in the infants on story telling, the focus is on the pupils creating story ideas, telling them out loud and then recording them on tape for others to listen to. This is a valuable activity; it promotes speech, confidence and writing skills. Pupils listen well when motivated by the teacher's good role model in a poetry session. They offer answers about what type of poem they are reading and almost all are confident to say that the poem has rhythm. In a discussion session on 'feeling good' these pupils show some reticence to contribute a wish to be enjoyed by everyone; only with the teacher's encouragement do they respond.
87. By the age of 11, pupils' speaking skills are better but only about half have adequate levels of skill. Listening skills are broadly average by the age of 11 but still too many find difficulty in interpreting questions and at times in following instructions. The pupils listen because the teachers persevere with making explanations simple. In the juniors in Year 3 and 4, pupils listen hard and show a willingness to contribute to discussion about locating information. Many try very hard to explain their answers but take some time to do so. In Year 6 pupils add expression to words when following the teacher's good role model for reading aloud the poem 'City Jungle', some struggle to answer questions in sentences. It is an ongoing challenge for the school to improve pupils' speaking skills and

encourage them to speak with confidence and more frequently in full sentences. Listening centers are used but evidence of pupils' recording their talk and playing it back to improve what they have said was not a strategy planned for or used except in the infants. Some introductions to lessons are overly long and this is a weakness through the school because pupils, whilst using talk through question and answer sessions are spending too long listening and not enough time taking the lead in speaking aloud. Plenary sessions focus on what the pupils have done but more time should be allocated to these with a stronger focus on pupils sharing ideas aloud whilst others ask questions of them.

88. The teaching of reading is at least good and in Years 1 and 2 it is very good. Standards in reading are satisfactory for most seven year olds because they have made good progress overall given their prior attainment. Progress is best in technical reading competency and this is supported by direct attention to phonics teaching and the additional support of non-teaching staff on a regular basis. There is a very good focus on pupils identifying ways to help them read new words. Many still have a long way to go in understanding what they have read. By the age of seven pupils know to look at the pictures for a clue, say the sounds, stretch the word to break it up and read ahead. They recognise most high frequency words. They are regularly and systematically taught letter and word sounds. The teacher and support staff prepare stimulating resources and games to motivate the pupils. Without exception, pupils showed great enthusiasm for the phonic sessions on the carpet and gained considerably, consolidating old skills and learning new ones. The tasks were very well matched to the pupils' abilities. Some of this very good learning is lost when pupils do not then receive the teacher's time to check on the follow up tasks and ensure skills taught are being well used. In this respect not enough thought has been given to adapting how time is used to maximise teaching input.
89. When reading to an adult, few pupils self correct their errors and often they replace actual words for similar ones. Considerable attention is paid by teachers to improving memory retention skills which is a key weakness for many pupils and hinders their progress because each lesson needs to start with a careful and detailed recap of the last. Pupils by the age of seven are receiving good role models for reading with expression but this is not readily transferred to how the pupils, themselves read, which is often timid and without great expression. By the age of 11, most pupils can 'read' the words in the book they have chosen. Their analysis of characters is adequate and most can give a fairly accurate but brief summary of the story plot. Pupils enjoy reading as a group but some lack confidence in reading aloud on their own. They do however always receive the greatest encouragement from their teacher to 'have a go'. Pupils are reading good quality texts relevant to their age. They can name some famous authors they like for example, Jacqueline Wilson and Roald Dahl and discuss loosely other books they have written. Only the least able pupils have difficulty in naming authors. Most pupils say they read at home to their 'mum' and they all read regularly in school. Year 6 pupils need to think carefully when asked how to find a book in the library. The Dewey system in any form is a mystery to most. They do not readily offer answers to questions about index, contents and glossaries until prompted. The school library is currently being updated and re-catalogued; it will be beneficial when pupils use it on a regular basis and use the Internet and CD-ROM's more often to search and access information.
90. Standards in writing are generally low but pupils are making sound progress. The teaching of writing is satisfactory but has considerable scope for improvement.



The inspection acknowledges that reading has been the focus of attention. Pupils of all ages do not think carefully enough about using their knowledge of letter sounds to spell unknown words. Few show signs of attaining at the higher levels at this stage of the year. It is quite likely that by the age of seven a good proportion are likely to be at the lower end of Level 2. This, nevertheless, represents good progress given their prior attainment. All pupils in both the infants and juniors have targets for improvement but not enough consideration has been given to phrasing these in words understandable to the pupils. Handwriting is taught well in Year 1 and 2 with the teacher conscientiously checking on how well pupils shape and size their letters. However, in Years 3 and 4 the teacher scribes well the letter strings to be practiced and then leaves the pupils to practise them without checking how they are doing; this results in a good start from most with laziness quickly setting in. Opportunities to write short, quality pieces with the aid of word banks, dictionaries and where pupils check their work for correct punctuation and grammar are not regular enough. There is not enough evidence of pupils' writing linked to the other subjects. The adage of 'a little often' is not well used; teachers are not ensuring all pupils write neatly and accurately in their day-to-day work so that anyone can easily read it back. Year 5 and 6 pupils try very hard to improve their presentation and more are producing well-shaped, legible scripts in handwriting sessions but not in their daily work. By the age of seven pupils write for a broad range of reasons. They describe 'How to make a cup of tea' step by step and use lists to present the writing in an understandable way. By the age of 11, pupils have used writing to produce autobiographies, describe life in Ancient Greece and Tudor times and label diagrams about the course of a river and the water cycle. Few pupils readily use paragraphs in their writing and need prompting to use speech marks. More emphasis on pupils drafting and editing their work for improvement could play a strong part in improving quality and standards.

91. The key features for improving writing are to broaden the pupils' experiences, so that they have real reasons to write using other subjects as a stimulus; improve the role models for writing, linking to the work in reading and emulating how authors work to capture their audience's attention. Presentation of work is not consistently good and spelling needs improving. These are weaknesses across the school. Handwriting is an area for improvement and the time is right for a review of the purposes and approaches expected for handwriting, its link to spelling, fluency and speed writing and in enhancing the final piece of work to ensure it is worthy of reading and that the reader does not have to struggle through it. In some lessons the intervention could drive the learning of individuals forward more quickly by prompting the children to check their own work and improve it.
92. Pupils enjoy the well-organised tasks, security of success and caring relationships established by the teaching. Too few pupils offer creative effort to their learning and their own knowledge of what they have learned is hindered by poor recall skills and the inability to memorise information when not prompted by the teacher. The introductions to lessons support learning very well but caution is needed to ensure they do not dominate the opportunities for pupils to talk and show what they know. The use of ICT and especially the interactive whiteboards is grabbing pupils' interests very well and focusing their attention on the texts. Pupils know how to use them and offer their teachers ready guidance if something does not work.
93. The delivery of English has significantly improved of late and meets requirements. Its greatest weakness is slavish adherence to the national strategy, which is

hindering pupils from improving speaking skills. Its strengths lie in the very good action plan for improvement to drive learning forward and the recent emphasis on reading.

## **MATHEMATICS**

94. Pupils in Year 6, in 2002, attained standards in the National Curriculum tests, which were below those of similar schools nationally. Whilst this shows a slight fall in standards, compared with the previous year, it is not surprising since there were well over two thirds of pupils in that year group with special educational needs. This group of pupils had also been taught by a large number of teachers over a two year period, making the continuity of learning very difficult and causing them to make slow progress in gaining skills, knowledge and understanding and leaving gaps in all of these.
95. The results of pupils in Year 2, taking the 2002 tests, showed a more positive picture. Even though results had fallen slightly since the previous year, they were still above the average noted for similar schools. Here, the adverse effect of the large percentage of pupils entering and leaving the school over the course of the four-year period from Year 3 to Year 6 is not felt so severely.
96. Although standards seen in classes, and in the scrutiny of previously completed work, shows that, a significant minority of pupils, reach the expected levels in both Year 2 and in Year 6, there is equally a large group of pupils that do not. It is therefore likely that the school would be close to its target of 56 per cent of pupils in Year 6 achieving the expected level at the end of this academic year, but just below it. This improvement has been made as a result of consistently good and sometimes very good teaching.
97. Whilst standards of work may well be lower than expected in terms of comparisons to national norms, pupils achieve well, when their low starting point is taken into consideration. They are achieving well in both the infants and junior classes. The school provides for pupils with special educational needs, very well and as a result they too make good progress in their learning.
98. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were seen practicing telling the time, with some pupils needing several different types of explanations and examples before understanding the quarter to and quarter past times. Many are able to give the doubles of such numbers as six, seven and eight, whilst others need support to do this. Through scrutiny of previously completed work, it is possible to note pupils working with metric measure, converting metres to centimetres and measuring the lengths of small objects in the class. Some pupils are able to show a fraction of a whole number such as a  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 12, whilst others find this difficult. In spite of encouragement, many pupils find it difficult to apply their knowledge of mathematics to problems they are faced with. They can find the next number in a sequence, but find it much more difficult to decide which operations they should use in order to solve a mathematical problem set in words.
99. In Years 3 and 4, pupils were seen consolidating their knowledge of fractions by orally answering questions such as half of 24 and half of 16. Making the number an odd one, thus giving them a remainder to consider, extended their knowledge. Several pupils knew that this could be considered as a half, in such a question as half of 27 giving an answer of  $13\frac{1}{2}$ . Pupils understood how to collect data in a tally chart and were beginning to understand how to show this information in a

block graph. Much of their previous work, noted in their books, is concerned with understanding the basic skills of using the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

100. The oldest pupils were seen working well at improving their mental agility with tables and extending number squares. They showed a basic understanding of place value and could see the patterns in the seven and nine times tables. Their work in number is fast becoming broadly in line with expectations. Scrutiny of their previous work shows that the majority of pupils, understand aspects of the equivalence of fractions and are able to write the time using the 24 hour clock method. Many can calculate the perimeter of a simple rectangle, with some able to do this for more complex shapes. They have had experience of drawing graphs and understand the range of probability when discussing things, which are likely, unlikely or certain to be true.
101. Although good improvements have been made in Years 5 and 6 since September, due to the many gaps in their knowledge and understanding, there is still a great deal to do before the majority of these pupils will achieve the nationally expected level of understanding.
102. Of the four lessons seen, two were very good, one was good and one was satisfactory. In the very good lessons in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6, the key features, which made the lessons very successful were that the teachers showed very good direct teaching skills. They understood the need to constantly repeat and revise the work, using many different strategies and approaches in their teaching. Their behaviour management skills were based on very good relationships which meant that as little time as possible was lost during the lesson. The pace of the lessons was brisk, keeping pupils motivated and on task, whilst the balance of the lesson was good, so that pupils were not sitting doing one particular thing for too long. As a result, most pupils responded positively, although there were still some who found, even in the best lessons, that concentration was difficult and initiative lacking.
103. The school uses the National Numeracy Strategy satisfactorily. It has yet to examine more closely how it might adapt the strategy in order to address the particular issues it is faced with, of pupils with gaps in previous knowledge, short spans of attention and a lack of retention over time. There is also room for teachers to make better use of the assessments they make of pupils' abilities in order to further fine-tune the work they set for them, so that it is more closely matched to their needs, whilst then setting them realistic individual targets for improvement.
104. Teachers make good use of ICT, in particular their use of the interactive white boards. They were seen being well used in two of the lessons. They made explanations clearer and were eye-catching for the pupils, who took note of what was on the screen.
105. The coordinator, who is also a leading teacher of mathematics, is well aware of the standards in the school and of the needs of the pupils, but has not yet felt confident to suggest alternative approaches to the teaching of mathematics, which may have a more positive effect on raising standards. Her plan for action to improve the subject is fully written and includes further monitoring of teaching, support for class assistants and the extension of support for pupils through the use of specific resources for pupils in the junior classes.

## SCIENCE

106. Standards are below average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Factors that partly explain the situation are the well below attainment levels of most pupils on entry to the school, the gaps in their previous learning, their poor retention of information and their poor reading skills which often deter them from reading information carefully, and more importantly, from interpreting written instructions correctly. This keeps the overall standards down. However, pupils throughout the school including those with special educational needs, have made good progress in the development of enquiry skills and scientific knowledge because of recent good teaching, a firm emphasis on practical and investigative work and the use of a good range of resources. They achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. This position of strength has been reached through the delivery of a well-structured programme of activities, which is in line with the nationally recommended scheme of work, but adapted to match the needs of the pupils.
107. Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives and teachers give due consideration to building on what pupils know, understand and can do. In a very good lesson, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils extended their understanding of the properties of solids, liquids and gases well. The teacher used skilful questioning to assess the pupils' understanding and level of recall of information from the previous lesson. He re-visited the crucial teaching points to help jog their memories, then used this as a firm beginning for the well-structured investigation into studying 'change'. The strategies were very effective; the pupils worked enthusiastically in groups with a good deal of questioning and comment about what they had observed, such as, "Why are bubbles coming up from the mixture?" "I think the bicarbonate of soda is giving off gas?" The pupils made good progress in predicting, hypothesising, reaching a conclusion and recording how the different white powders changed when mixed with water. Similarly, in a good lesson, Year 3 and 4 pupils investigated how best they could keep water hot using a range of different materials as insulators. Effective questioning by the teacher teased out their level of understanding and challenged their ability to share their knowledge using precise language such as, "materials which are good thermal insulators," in their explanations. Pupils' attitudes in both lessons were generally good. They listened carefully and responded well to the teachers' questioning and prompting. They worked cooperatively, with enthusiasm and interest and shared equipment and tasks with patience and consideration for others.
108. No lessons were observed in the infant class. However, scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils show that teaching is at least satisfactory. Pupils acquire a sound range of basic scientific facts and learn how to predict, hypothesise and record their findings through the use of an agreed structured report sheet. Although the majority of activities are teacher determined and not initiated by the pupils, every effort is being made in looking for opportunities to give pupils the chance to think for themselves and determine some aspect of the investigation for whenever possible.
109. The subject is well managed and its delivery is having a good effect on the pupils' personal development, particularly in their spiritual and social development. Assessment procedures linked to specific modules of work are being used and information gained is supporting the tracking of pupils' progress. The accommodation and resources are used well to support the delivery of the

subject. An interactive whiteboard was used to good effect in the Year 5 and Year 6 lesson to illustrate the sequence of the investigation and act as a reminder for the pupils on the reporting procedure. Effective use is made of the school environment, educational visits and visitors to broaden the pupils' knowledge of the world around them and of scientific phenomena generally. For example, the school's science week initiative entitled 'Celebrating Science' proved to be a brilliant stimulus for engaging the pupils in a wide range of interesting investigations. Wall displays, booklets and photographs gave tribute to the pupils' efforts and the quality of learning provided by the staff, parents and other adults who volunteered their input into the venture.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

110. Pupils attain as broadly expected in communicating and handling information by the ages of seven and 11. This is a good stride forward. The school is not yet able to ensure that its pupils reach the expected standards in all four strands of the work set out in the National Curriculum for this subject, by the time they leave the school, because they have not systematically built these skills up over time. Work in the communication strand of the subject shows that pupils can write stories, laying out their text carefully, making use of different fonts and different sizes of print. They can use a spell-checking device and know how to move text around the screen. They have made their own certificates by adding text to graphics, but have not yet had the opportunity to produce multi-media presentations, combining different forms of information from a variety of sources. Linking with some of their work in numeracy, pupils have collected data and have created graphs from their saved information. They have looked at a small number of Internet sites in order to collect information for a history week, for example.
111. In the area of modelling, pupils have used a digital camera to make "wanted" posters and are currently working on spreadsheets, on to which they place information in order that they might make calculations. They have not had enough experience of using computer generated information about such subjects as history and geography, whereby they might enter into a program and experience details of the life in Roman or Greek times for example.
112. It is in the area of control technology and data logging that the pupils have had least experience. Younger pupils have had little opportunity to use programmable floor toys into which they might enter instructions in order to move the toy as they wish. Older ones have not had experience of giving similar instructions to an on-screen image, in order that they might effect movement and draw shapes. The use of ICT systems to sense physical data and log it is not part of their knowledge.
113. Many of the omissions in the work are due to a lack of hardware and software, combined with a lack of teacher understanding and confidence. The latter will be addressed early in the New Year, when teachers will receive their appropriate training.
114. Although only one lesson in ICT was seen during the inspection, teachers were noted making use of computers, laptops and an interactive whiteboard in literacy and numeracy lessons. They used the latter very well and with confidence, enlivening their teaching and involving pupils as far as possible. In the lesson in the Year 5 and 6 class, the teacher had good subject knowledge and was confident about what he was teaching. However, in spite of the good teaching,

pupils had a great many gaps in their knowledge, over a period of years, making progress slow in the lesson and the outcomes barely satisfactory. Although making slow progress, pupils enjoy their experiences of ICT, work hard at their tasks, but often fail to remember what they have learned in previous lessons, making progress slow.

115. Evidence from around the school shows that ICT is now being incorporated well into aspects of both literacy and numeracy. Newspaper articles have been written in Years 3 and 4 whilst Years 1 and 2 pupils have made good use of a paint program. Years 3 and 4 have also taken digital photographs around the school and used them as the basis for sketches in art lessons.
116. The support of the Education Action Zone in providing laptops and interactive white boards, has been a significant positive move in improving the resources and the teaching of ICT in the school.
117. The time is now appropriate for the school to review its development plan for the subject and create a much more rigorous timetable for improvement, including clear success criteria and more exacting timescales for completion.

## **THE FOUNDATION SUBJECTS**

118. Reporting on the foundation subjects is brief because the inspection focus was on the school's work in improving standards in the core skills of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology along with the Foundation Stage of learning. However, some lessons were seen and work scrutinised to secure a view about attainment. Standards in most foundation subjects are below what is expected by the ages of seven and 11 because since the school's opening in 1999 pupils have not been systematically taught the necessary knowledge and skills to understand the elements of the subjects and use their knowledge to record and communicate what they know. These subjects are now planned against the nationally recommended guidelines but have not been a strong focus of the school's development due to more pressing needs in the basic skills. They are delivered regularly but the inspection does not have the evidence to make overall judgements about pupils' progress.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

119. Only one lesson was observed and a limited amount of work scrutinised during the inspection, making it difficult to make an overall judgement on standards. Discussions with pupils about what they know suggests they do not attain as expected by the ages of seven and 11. The school improvement plan details the need to enhance pupils' attainment through the development of a structured, skills based approach to the subject, based on suggestions taken from the nationally recommended scheme of work.
120. In the lesson, led by a parent, Year 3 and 4 pupils were given the opportunity to explore the possible annotation of a 'Dream Theme'. They watched the opening demonstration of the sketching of ideas on the whiteboard and were eager to contribute their ideas for what might appear in the picture. The shared activity went well, the pupils' contributions adding to the success of the session. However, progress suffered when the pupils were required to re-organise themselves into groups, their lack of self-discipline and ability to take responsibility for their own learning coming to the fore. The teacher had to constantly intervene

to keep the pupils on task. Once settled the pupils produced work of satisfactory quality, sketching with reasonable skill and dexterity for their age using line, tone and texture successfully.

121. Effective use is made of the school's environment and accommodation and resources are adequate for the delivery of the subject. Planning includes a school's 'Art Day', giving the pupils opportunity to broaden their knowledge of the world around them and how they may represent their ideas and feelings in a variety of different ways using a range of techniques and media.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

122. Although no lessons of design and technology were available to be observed during the inspection, a scrutiny of planning, a portfolio of photographs and a discussion with pupils support judgements made about standards.
123. Whilst individual topics involving designing and making activities show reasonable levels of skill in cutting, joining and finishing products, overall standards are unsatisfactory as there has not been the systematic build up of skills, knowledge and understanding over a number of years in order that pupils might achieve nationally expected standards.
124. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 made winding mechanisms in relation to moving 'Incy Wincy Spider' up and down linked to the nursery rhyme. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 made purses. They used sewing skills well, marked and cut out their designs and finished them with beads and other decorations. Pupils in Year 6 were given the task of designing a bridge, which would take a specific weight. They had limited materials and had to design their bridge on paper before construction.
125. Pupils have yet to experience the full range of equipment and tools associated with work in a primary school and have yet to make choices from a wide range of materials. Their experiences of food technology are limited and their ability to write clear evaluations of their work has not been developed over time and with the help of writing frames. In this way, the links between literacy and design and technology are not as strong as they might be.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

126. Pupils enter the school with a very limited knowledge of the world around them. Standards are low for seven and 11 year olds but progress is satisfactory in acquiring new knowledge and learning about places near and far. Pupils' historical and geographical vocabulary is limited. Their sense of chronology is weak and their understanding of how and why events happened as they did or why people moved from place to place is limited. Pupils have limited recall of topics previously covered. They require a prompt, such as their recorded work or a display, to jog their memories about what they have studied. A recent history day when pupils dressed up as characters from history stimulated their interest in the past and many can recall the day well. This gives a clue to the fact that the pupils respond best to concrete experiences and that these aid their memory.
127. Currently Year 1 and 2 pupils are comparing different places with Ancoats, where they live. They are learning about what life is like on an island in Scotland. A very attractive display with key questions gives them a focal point for discussion and helps them recall their studies. In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 pupils have studied Ancient Greece and the Tudors, each class taking different elements and exploring separate issues. This work has involved pupils in writing from the perspective of a Tudor child; a number recount vividly that boys played football with 'pigs bladders' and express their distaste. Year 6 pupils can use the correct vocabulary to describe the course of a river. They label their well-presented diagrams with 'confluence, waterfall, flood plain and meanders'. When asked they can talk in simple terms about each one and broadly say where they occur in the life of the river, for example, that the waterfall is near the beginning.



128. The school makes suitable use of places of interest to enthuse the pupils' learning. The Commonwealth Games were used very well this summer to support knowledge about life in some of the countries competing, for example, the excellent display on life in Tonga.

## **MUSIC**

129. No music lessons were seen during the inspection, making accurate judgements about standards very difficult to make. However, singing in assembly was of good quality. Pupils were heard singing, 'Sing it in the valleys' in tune, with enthusiasm and good diction.
130. The overall curriculum plan suggests that whilst singing and listening to music are provided satisfactorily for the pupils, their access to playing a range of instruments and to composing is very limited. The school acknowledges the need to improve its range of provision and is actively seeking to use a commercial programme to support teachers in delivering the subject.
131. No teaching of music was seen during the inspection, although one teacher was seen accompanying an assembly on guitar and taking a music club after school. At both of these, the quality of playing and instruction was good.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

132. Only one lesson in gymnastics was seen during the inspection, in the Year 1 and 2 class, where the pupils attained in line with national expectations. It is not possible to make a judgement on standards and teaching in other aspects of the subject or by the time pupils reach the age of 11.
133. However, scrutiny of the recently adopted policy, teachers' planning, photographic evidence and discussion with pupils show that all aspects of the subject are delivered in a structured, skills based programme of activities. All classes, including the nursery, have regular weekly sessions in the main school hall, which is well equipped with a range of large apparatus. Each year group follows a detailed scheme of work recommended by the local education authority which safeguards continuity and progression throughout the school. The pupils also have access to a range of additional activities, whose quality has been strengthened through the staffs' involvement in the national 'TOPS' (Teaching of Physical Skills) training. These include, TOPS PLAY, TOPS football and a PE Club held weekly each Tuesday after school. The school also makes good use of professional coaches to extend the teaching of game skills. Plans are in progress to improve transition links between the school, its neighbouring high school and the Action Zone specialist Sports College to help raise standards and the pupils' participation in a wider range of sporting activities.
134. Teaching was of good quality in the lesson observed. On entering the hall, the pupils immediately travelled around in a quiet, controlled way, living up to the teacher's high expectations for good behaviour. They enjoyed the 'warming up' exercises, and listened carefully to instructions; this allowed the change from one activity to the next to flow smoothly. They carried out floor movements and balances well, changing direction, pace and sequences with a good level of skill and confidence. They rose to the challenge of setting out the large apparatus well. They were aware of the health and safety issues, swinging out the wall bars, setting out the climbing frames and benches and handling and carrying the large

mats successfully through good teamwork. Whilst on the apparatus the pupils concentrated well and persevered in improving their ability to move in different ways and to get on and off the apparatus in a controlled way.

135. The pupils have a positive attitude for the subject and enjoyed describing the range of physical activities offered to them. The subject makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development, particularly their social skills, perseverance and using their initiative, and in taking responsibility for developing their skills.